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# The Faculty Voice

The Newsletter of the FSU Chapter, United Faculty of Florida

Website: <http://www.fsu.edu/~uffinfo>

**Find your voice,  
join the UFF.**

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A division of the UFF, and through UFF, affiliated with FEA, NEA, AFT, and AFL-CIO

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## *Our top story*

### **Your Rights *At Risk***

The current collective bargaining agreement expires on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2003. This agreement is a key foundation for tenure, academic freedom, "just cause" for discipline, and numerous other rights.

UFF petitioned the state's Public Employee Relations Commission (PERC) in August to extend its previous certification, of UFF as a statewide SUS bargaining agent, to each of the BOTs that assume control in January. UFF also sought to keep the current contract in effect until an agreement tailored to FSU could be negotiated.

Our new employer, the Board of Trustees (BOT), assumes the role of our employer on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2003. FSU attorneys, acting for the BOT, filed a motion to dismiss UFF's petition, arguing that UFF's petition was premature since the BOT had not yet assumed control (but then why are they already acting on behalf of the BOT?), that the UFF's support among faculty and professional staff at FSU was doubtful, and that they planned and were already implementing substantial changes (did they consult you about this?) to the way we work such that it's going to be, in effect, "a whole new ballgame." Are you ready?

What this legal mumbo jumbo boils down to is that the BOT doesn't want you to be

represented or have a contract in effect when they take over. The PERC Hearing Officer accepted the BOT's argument that the UFF petition lacked "ripeness."

### **Why don't they want you to have a contract?**

Control. The absence of contractual rights would mean that the BOT is free to do pretty much what it wants. You might ask, "But wouldn't we still have a Faculty Handbook and an FSU Constitution?" Yes, but both of these documents are subject to change at will by the BOT and FSU administration.

### **What is the UFF, and what's it got to do with you?**

UFF, the United Faculty of Florida, is the legally certified exclusive representative of faculty and professional staff at FSU. In other words, UFF represents YOU.

UFF is an FSU tradition, having represented FSU professionals since the 1970s. UFF is a democratic membership organization, supported by its members' dues payments. Its leaders are elected from among the faculty and staff who belong to UFF by vote of the members. Leaders in our FSU Chapter are elected from among and by those who belong to the UFF at FSU.

### **Of, By, and For the Members?**

It's not quite that simple. State law requires that we represent *all* faculty and staff "in

unit." This amounts to about 1770 FSU employees, including most faculty members and many professional staff members. This means, for example, when UFF bargains a pay increase or a new benefit, all members of the bargaining unit, whether UFF members or not, receive the benefit. It means the contract applies to all "in unit."

### **UFF Members Are Scholars**

We're proud to say that many of our members are among the most productive and respected scholars at FSU. When you read about who is presenting, publishing, inventing, leading, etc., in publications such as the *State*, you are often reading about our members' activities. Most of the grievances that we file charging violation of faculty and staff rights, over 90% according to an estimate from our Chapter Grievance Committee Chair, Professor Ted Baker, come from *nonmembers*. Unfortunately, many folks don't think about UFF until they need it. And we freely admit that sometimes we defend unpopular causes or persons because there are important principles at stake, or because we are legally required to represent everyone in "in unit", whether we approve or not.

### **Proud and Independent**

We are proud and productive faculty and staff, proud of our work, and proud of our organization. It is *our* organization, not a creation of the BOT or FSU Administration.

### **If You Don't Like It, Change It!**

We urge all in-unit to join the UFF, and all UFF members to get involved. The Executive Council normally meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday each month at the Oglesby Union. Our meetings are always open to members.

### **Quote of the Month:**

"State Senator Jim King, R-Jacksonville, expected to become the next Senate

president, says legislative leaders know the state's in for a rough ride. *'We go in already under a fiscal cloud that's at, or at least near, crisis proportions,'* (*Florida Trend*, Oct., 2002, p. 57). The article, "Batten Down the Hatches," reviews reasons why this coming year's budget session is likely to be much tougher than last year's, and includes a subtitle stating *"Last year's budget crisis was a nickel-and-dime affair compared to what the state faces this year"* (p. 54). We recommend the article, although we admit that it's a little frightening. This year, the legislature didn't even try to cut pay for those covered by an agreement, having lost a key court battle with the UFF on that several years ago.

## **Seasonal Special: Julia Child's Thanksgiving Tip**

By Julia Child

*Ingredients needed:*

*1 Faculty Handbook*

*1 Pad of small post-its*

*1 UFF-BOR/BOE agreement*

This time of year many gourmets ask me for new ideas for Thanksgiving turkey recipes. I'm delighted to share the latest with you.

Take your Faculty Handbook. (You were given a copy, weren't you?) Now, flip through it, using the small post-its (those wonderful restickable note slips), to mark passages that refer to the UFF agreement on key issues, such as sabbaticals, termination, tenure, and the like. Isn't this fun!

Next, imagine that each of the post-its now fluffing out your Faculty Handbook is a feather. Voila! You have quite a nice-looking Thanksgiving turkey. What? You say it doesn't really look like a turkey? Oh my dear, we're not done. Of course we have to pluck the turkey. Now, to simulate plucking the turkey, remove all the post-its

and tear out all the pages that mention the UFF agreement, which represents what you have left without a contract to give the Handbook some real protection for faculty. Finis! Now you have a real turkey! I'm sorry if it looks a bit scrawny. Surely we can count on the BOT, appointed by our "education governor," to fatten it up.

## UFF's Dual Campaigns

The UFF is running two campaigns. The UFF-FSU Chapter is participating in both.

### Authorization Card Campaign

An authorization card asks you to designate the UFF as your exclusive bargaining agent for wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment. It is a confidential document, and will be seen only by UFF and PERC. We expect these cards to be used to call for a PERC election on whether UFF will represent FSU faculty, i.e., continue its current role.

We want 60% of those in-unit to sign before we go to PERC and request an election. That's roughly 1100 signatures. These cards could also be used to verify UFF majority support in the unlikely event that the BOT agrees to recognize the UFF voluntarily. In this case, the cards would be checked against the in-unit list by a trusted neutral party, such as a judge. *(We'll be happy to get a card to you for your autograph!)*

An authorization card is not a commitment to join UFF or pay dues. It *costs you nothing* to sign. It is part of the means by which UFF can retain its legal status as bargaining agent for FSU faculty and staff.

### UFF Membership Drive

Distinct from the authorization card campaign is the UFF membership drive. The legal right to represent faculty and staff is a "paper tiger" without membership to put

some muscle in those rights. Membership requires a substantial, but worthwhile commitment to pool a small part of each member's resources (1% of salary) for the sake of our common good. This gives UFF the resources to do its job for you.

Membership also gives us power at the bargaining table, by showing that faculty and staff support UFF in a tangible way.

Visit the UFF web site ([www.fsu.edu/~uffinfo](http://www.fsu.edu/~uffinfo)) for details on how dues may be tax deductible and in other ways a real bargain. 1% is a lot to ask, but you get what you pay for. Are you sure you would have gotten your 2.5% pay hike this year if UFF had not told the BOE that Jeb's proposed 0% raise for faculty was unacceptable? Join us!

## Minority Rule?

In its motion challenging the UFF's petition to continue representing FSU faculty and professional staff, the BOT asserts that UFF has never been demonstrated to be the bargaining agent desired by a majority of FSU faculty and professional staff. This is true, technically. The last vote on representation was a statewide vote held in 1984. The now defunct Florida Academic Congress received 27% of the ballots, UFF 51%, and the no agent option received 22%.

The BOT and administration seem to think this is grounds for assuming that "no agent" is the preferred option among FSU faculty and professional staff. At the September Faculty Senate, Provost Abele said, in effect, "We just want the faculty to decide."

As the "Church Lady" might say, isn't it *conveenient* that this wish is operationalized as a presumption that faculty want **no** representation? PERC rules have always provided a procedure for faculty to opt out of the statewide unit. Faculty have

not elected to pursue that option, but the BOT has taken it upon itself to implement the choice made by 22% of the voters in the 1984 election.

## Excess Reflection

### Dr. Ima Nutt, BOT's Top Medical Officer, Attacks Dreaded Disease

Dr. Ima Nutt announced today a campaign to end a dreaded disease afflicting many FSU faculty and staff, *Excess Reflection*. "ER," as Dr. Nutt calls it, results when faculty have insufficient class sizes, teaching loads, grant-seeking activity, research activity, and service obligations.

*"We have already taken major steps to reign in this terror"* reports Dr. Nutt. Studies funded by the BOR just a few years ago showed that Florida SUS faculty are extremely productive at a bargain price. Dr. Nutt says the BOT feels that there is substantial room for improvement in this regard. He expects that significant steps to eradicate the disease will follow expiration of the UFF agreement in January. Asked about UFF President Tom Auxter's proposal to substantially increase faculty salaries (17%) to bring Florida faculty to the levels prevailing at peer institutions, Dr. Nutt noted the BOT "was considering other options."

### Odds and Ends

**Bruce Stiftel** (Professor, Department of Urban and Regional Planning) has contributed to the search for a new FSU President through his analysis of presidential attributes at FSU peer institutions. Let's hope the BOT is listening carefully to faculty and professional staff.

The statewide UFF has endorsed **Bill McBride** for Governor of Florida.

Surely you knew that FSU **Trustee Stan Marshall** was once FSU's President. Some credit him with unwittingly helping found the UFF Chapter. Think about it.

## TOP TEN Reasons to Sign an Authorization Card or Join UFF

10. Signing the authorization card costs you nothing
9. Joining does cost you 1% of salary, but you get what you pay for.
8. Free professional liability insurance, legal consultations, and other members-only benefits.
7. The Governor didn't ask you who should be on the Board of Trustees.
6. Your recent 2.5% raise pays your dues for life.
5. The FSU Board of Trustees.
4. You want more of these newsletters.
3. Tenure, academic freedom, autonomy, merit pay, sabbaticals, just cause, intellectual property rights, etc.
2. Faculty and professional staff need a strong, independent voice at FSU.
1. It's the right thing to do.

## Poetry Corner

By Robert Frost

Tis a thing that is not hard,  
To take the pen and sign the card,  
They say the pen, it trumps the sword,  
Or would you have the Trustees Lord?

To join is too a noble thing,  
The might our gathered voice can bring,  
So let us raise the pen anew,  
And show what good our voice can do.

***FSU Works Because We Do!***