

UFF-FSU supports raises for FSU Faculty, including discretionary raises. Although some university officials continue to misrepresent the union's position, possibly from genuine misunderstanding rather than as a deliberate distortion, UFF-FSU has *never* taken the position that discretionary raises are unacceptable. On the contrary, UFF-FSU has tried to insure that *all* faculty who receive written offers from comparable institutions will receive counter offers from FSU, and *both the state UFF and its FSU chapter have always recognized discretionary raises as a rational part of any well-conceived compensation system*. In short, the claim that UFF-FSU opposes discretionary raises is simply false.

The reasons that discretionary raises have become such a controversial issue in 2007-2008 are specific to developments during this difficult financial year. There are three such developments.

First, it is not true that there were no raises given to faculty in 2007-2008. On the contrary, nearly \$300,000 in raises were given during this period, averaging roughly \$7000 each. What was not given was any raise pool to be distributed by department evaluation committees or to be negotiated through the union. That is, unlike most other years in which money has been available for raises, faculty had no say in 2007-2008 about which individuals merited raises or how much these individuals merited,. The role of administrators in distributing raises became controversial in 2007-2008 because no one else had a role. Discretionary raises ceased to be a rational part of FSU's compensation system and became the whole system. What UFF-FSU opposes is this arrogation by administration of sole authority to decide who deserves a raise. Its position has been that the elimination of any accountability to faculty for administrative raise decisions is both unjust and illegal.

Second, the administration in 2007-2008 has consistently opposed plans offered by UFF-FSU that would have allowed administrators to make discretionary raises *fairly and legally*. Far from opposing all discretionary raises, UFF-FSU has repeatedly put forward proposals that would have assured FSU's administration the legal authority to distribute at its sole discretion a sizeable portion of the money available for faculty raises, and it has encouraged the administration to make counter offers to *everyone* receiving a written offer from a university of comparable standing. FSU's administration has refused all of these initiatives. Its position has been that, because the legislature budgeted no money for raises in 2007-2008, FSU's administration should have *exclusive* authority to decide raises. In other words, the present stand-off between the union and FSU's administration on the issue of discretionary raises is not that UFF-FSU opposes the \$300,000 in such raises distributed to faculty this year. It is that FSU-UFF opposes the administration's refusal to allow the faculty themselves to participate *in any way* in these raise decisions.

Third, the effect, whether intentional or unintentional, of the administration's unilateral actions during the economically trying year 2007-2008 has been to deny individual faculty their rights under the law. The purpose of the Collective Bargaining Agreement is to make sure that, as much as possible, decisions on merit are supported by reasonable principles that the faculty approves as specified in by-laws that are voted on by

everybody in the unit as experts in the field. Salary decisions should be made in an orderly way, in accord with established procedures, and, with due allowance for collegiality and privacy, in the open. The effect of all \$300,000 in raises being distributed at the private discretion of administrators without accountability to any faculty body is that such reasonable principles become seriously eroded. With their deterioration, the university appears indistinguishable from a place of raw power. Perhaps all 2007-2008 discretionary raises were justified. But there are probably many more raises that could have been justified in a more systematic process. The union's position is that raises should be decided through a process in which allowance is made for the valuable discretion of both administrators and faculty. Collective bargaining is the name of this process. The issue for the union in 2007-2008 is not whether there should be discretionary raises or not—there should be. The issue is whether the faculty's legal right to representation will be preserved.