

Uncommon Sense

The Newsletter of the USF Chapter of the United Faculty of Florida
(UFF is a Florida Education Association affiliate)

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Join UFF today: visit our membership website at faculty.ourusf.org/join-uff/

Election Season

Each spring, USF's members of the United Faculty of Florida elect the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and UFF Senators and FEA Delegates for the USF Chapter of UFF. These positions are described in the article on *The Elective Positions* on page 2. Only current union members may make nominations, stand for election, run, and vote. We encourage all union members to consider standing for election, and to vote.

If you would like to stand for election, or if you think someone else would, please send a letter of nomination (or self-nomination!) to:

CHAIR, Election Committee
United Faculty of Florida
30238 USF Holly Drive
USF, Tampa 33620

Or email to: tauber@ourusf.org. The letter should contain: (1) your name, (2) the name of the nominee, and (3) the position the nomination is for.

All nominees are strongly encouraged to submit a short (250 words or less) self-description and/or campaign statement. In addition, all nominees should submit contact information (home & office addresses, phone numbers and email addresses; for details, see

<http://www.uff.ourusf.org/letters/nomination.rtf>).

All nomination materials must be received by February 11 to be included in the ballot materials.

Election will be by secret mail ballot; members will be responsible for getting their ballots returned by the deadline. **The ballots will be sent out in later February, and be due by March 24, when they will be counted at a chapter meeting on March 25;** all union members are invited to attend.

On April 1, newly elected officers and representatives formally assume their duties.

Come Check us Out

Starting in January, we will hold *Meet your Friendly Neighborhood Union Receptions* at all campuses. Times & places TBA in the Biweekly and in fliers. Come see what's happening.

And if you join UFF by January 31, you will receive a \$ 300 dues rebate in May!

Benefits of Membership

At the University of South Florida, the terms and conditions of employment – salaries, sabbaticals, tenure, layoffs, discipline, etc. – are not determined unilaterally by the USF Board of Trustees, or by the administration that the Board appointed.

The terms and conditions of employment are fixed by a contract that is bargained by the United Faculty of Florida and the Board of Trustees.

Actually, USF faculty and professionals working as volunteers bargain with the Board.

And since contracts are violated now and then, *the United Faculty of Florida enforces the contract by filing grievances within the contract's grievance procedure.* Again, volunteers file and handle the grievances.

The volunteers of UFF are in their fourth decade of making USF a better place to work.

And you can join the movement by sending in the membership form on page 3; the dues are 1 % of annual salary. This is much less than a Hollywood agent would charge for bargaining and enforcing a contract, and it's actually a fairly good deal as unions go.

So ... what do you get out of membership?

Insurance. If your contractual rights are violated, fighting the violation can be expensive. But UFF can represent employees – with dues

see **Benefits** on page 2

Benefits, from page 1

money paying the staff and consulting fees. But *UFF will represent an employee only if that person was a union member at the time of the violation*; pre-existing conditions are not covered. That goes for the million dollar insurance policy as well.

Clout at the Bargaining Table. There is a correlation between what a union can win at bargaining and what its membership is. It's basic politics: if a lot of employees are dues-paying members, management will be ... respectful ... of an organization with that level of commitment. On the other hand, if employees are willing to support being represented for free, management will not take bargaining as seriously.

In general, a union representing most of the employees in the bargaining unit will tend to win much higher raises at the table. Among UFF chapters statewide, those with high membership tend to win raises much higher than those with lower membership – the difference sometimes being several times the membership dues.

The union consists of employees standing together and working together, and the more people that join us, the more effective we will be.

The Elective Positions

The USF Chapter of the UFF consists of the members of the union in the USF UFF Bargaining Unit. The Chapter is a democracy, and policy is set at the Chapter meetings, and all union members are invited to attend.

The Chapter has three kinds of positions: elected executive positions, elected legislative positions, and appointed positions.

There are four elected executives. The **President** is the chief executive and chief spokesperson of the chapter. The **Vice President** assists the president, and fills the president's office if necessary. The **Secretary** composes minutes and other records of the Chapter. The **Treasurer** supervises the finances of the Chapter.

There are two kinds of elected representatives.

A **Senator** represents USF at the UFF Senate meetings, and there are typically two weekend

meetings a year in Tampa or Orlando; typically the meetings are in September or October and then in January or February. The UFF Senate is the legislature of the UFF, and sets policy for the UFF, and the number of senators from USF depends on union membership at USF (!).

A **Delegate** represents UFF at the annual Florida Education Association Assembly. The FEA is the preeminent union representing teachers in Florida. The Assembly is the legislative body of the FEA, and usually meets in October. Again, the size of the UFF delegation depends on the size of UFF's membership.

The Chapter has a Constitution describing these offices, and it is on-line at <http://w3.usf.edu/~uff/Laws.html>.

Logistics

The USF Chapter of the United Faculty of Florida publishes two newsletters, **Uncommon Sense** (see <http://w3.usf.edu/~uff/US/index.html>) and a UFF Biweekly (or, if you prefer, a fortnightly) every other Thursday, which presents news and items of interest (past articles are archived at <http://uff.ourusf.org/>) and announcing the Chapter meeting the next day. All members of the bargaining unit should be getting both newsletters: to get on the mailing lists, contact the UFF/USF Webmaster, Greg McColm, via uff_biweekly-owner@ourusf.org.

We have two websites, one on-campus at <http://w3.usf.edu/~uff/>, and one off-campus at <http://uff.ourusf.org/index.html>. Come and visit us!

This spring, the USF Chapter of the UFF will meet on alternating Fridays, starting on January 14, and continuing through the semester, on January 28, February 11 & 25, March 11 & 25, April 8 & 22, and into the summer. All meetings will be at noon, at a campus and location announced in the UFF Biweekly; the January 14 meeting will be at USF-Tampa, at noon in a room TBA. All UFF members– and non-members – in invited to attend. Sandwiches and soda pop are provided by the chapter. Come and join the movement.