

2018 Newsletter

Opening a New Chapter

What started as a rough academic year due to Irma last year seems to end with a pleasant summer breeze at our chapter. If you are wondering whether you picked up a weather newsletter, you didn't. A summer breeze is the forecast that the executive team is working toward for our chapter.

Remnants of unfulfilled negotiations from the last year and the reopening of our Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) set the course for the UFF Executive Team this year. The revitalization of the team with two Co-Presidents Dr. Win Everham and Dr. Morgan Paine also took the chapter to a new and stronger direction. With a change in administration which the team did not foresee, the bargaining position took a turn for the better without hurricane force winds.

Many chapter members were unhappy about the extension of the Fall semester due to Irma. At one point, the team had to compute work days during the semester across SUS to determine whether the extension is the right course of action. With a lot of deliberation after Irma between the administration, the Faculty Senate, and the executive team; the best decision for the faculty and the University was to go along with the extension.

This year, the team scheduled monthly executive meetings, and meetings with the Provost. One of the priorities this year was to increase our membership as the state legislature brought back the House Bill that required PERC recertification of union chapters that fall below a 50% membership threshold. At the end of the session, the



bill passed affecting K-12 unions setting a potentially disastrous path for university chapters if it emerges during the next session. The issue is of importance as it sets precedence for losing the power of interest based collective bargaining.

A recent topic of discussion is on instructor classification and moving instructors up the rank after level three. The matter is given thorough consideration so that a best outcome is reached.

There are many other matters the chapter faces and the team is prepared to handle them with strength.

Bargaining

The academic year started with discussions that would get the faculty who have been promoted get their raises paid. After many bargaining meetings, an agreement was reached and the faculty were paid retroactively and their raises were applied.

Patrick Niner stepped down

as bargaining chair and Scott Michael took the charge.

Items pertaining to salary raises were brought up at the bargaining table. The team wanted to change promotion percentage raises from 9 to 12% and 12 to 15%. The language on promotion is also planned to be

modified so promotion raises are applied automatically without requiring a bargaining agreement to apply raises retroactively.

Currently, the position of UFF at the bargaining table is positive and proceeding stronger as modifications are made to the CBA.

What's New?

- Presidents
- Re-opening the collective bargaining agreement.
- Grievance team
- Bargaining team
- Labor and management representation

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Grievance Matters



David Steckler stepped down as grievance chair after five years. During his time, there were no grievances and he attributed this success to be partly due to the presence of a permanent representative of the administration on the team, and the complexities of the informal resolution process.

The chapter searched for a grievance chair and Dr. Carolynne Gischel stepped in. She formed a grievance team by recruiting members from our chapter.

Ten members from the membership responded and the chair accepted all ten volunteers to be members of the grievance team.

A training on grievance is scheduled to happen in April. In addition, Carolynne completed grievance training at the state UFF meeting this Spring. A meeting with the Provost is also planned before the team is trained. One of many indications of a healthy commitment to shared governance.

UFF was contacted by faculty who applied for promotion

this year and wanted a resolution to their grievance that their portfolios weren't accepted due to late deadlines. An informal resolution was reached on this matter.

The new team hopes to maintain the climate of no grievances, however, would fight relentlessly if one may occur.

“No grievances, better bargaining, positive change”

Labor and Management Committee

As we are reopening the CBA, the administration and the UFF brought the defunct Labor and Management Committee back.

The primary responsibility of the committee is to offer recommendations for any bargaining matter based on research and new ideas supported by evidence.

The initial charges for the committee were summer teaching, overload pay, and

uncompensated teaching. As the bargaining progressed in a positive direction earlier in the Spring this year. Summer teaching is likely to have a resolution. The current charge is to make recommendations on uncompensated teaching. Uncompensated teaching is time devoted by faculty on dissertation supervision, directed independent study, and other teaching related activities. The committee has met once this semester

and the second meeting is to be scheduled in the next two weeks. Recommendations will be made after a thorough analysis on the matter and delivered to the bargaining chair. The final agreement would be to reach an equitable way to pay as determined by individual colleges. The committee has twelve members with faculty from all colleges, and the administration. It is facilitated by Dr. Mary Ann Zager and Dr. Senthil B. Girimurugan.

The Reopener

Bargaining matters, including the “open book” negotiations (CBA reopener) have been carried out with faculty input obtained through multiple channels of communication. Your UFF-FGCU bargaining team has been actively pursuing changes to multiple articles as we strive to improve the employment environment for everyone at FGCU. During the past fall semester, as the university adjusted to our new administration, UFF-FGCU focused on team building and

opening lines of communications in Articles 1-4. We secured changes and clarification that UFF-FGCU is invited to attend and speak at Board of Trustees meetings, can communicate with any Board of Trustees member on any topic as long as bargaining does not occur away from the official bargaining meetings, and that UFF-FGCU can communicate by email with all faculty, not only UFF-FGCU members. The UFF-FGCU team feels strongly that more open com-

munication will benefit all members of the university community and will help drive further positive change. Other early efforts have included changes to Article 5 on academic freedom and responsibility where we have strengthened the rights of faculty to choose instructional materials and changes to Article 23 on salaries where new language will call for compression and inversion, diversity and market studies to be carried out on a four-year schedule.



More on The Reopener

Additional priorities include revisiting the pre-promotion process, increasing support for scholarship, clarifying the disciplinary process, implementing parental leave and updating the phased retirement process.

Of course, our first priority remains to negotiate raises that take into account recent cost of living increases, as well as equity with other SUS campuses. UFF-FGCU has shown management data correlating pay levels and outcomes in the Board of Governors' metrics. We are currently below average pay at all levels compared to other SUS campuses, par-

ticularly at early career advisor, instructor and assistant professor levels as well as at advanced career full professor levels. To be competitive among our SUS neighbors, we must be able to recruit and retain talented faculty who will drive institutional and student success. FGCU has received an additional \$13.7 million dollars in recurring state funding this year and we may receive additional funds in June depending on our ranking in the Board of Governors' metrics. UFF-FGCU is committed to prioritizing the use of this funding for salary increases.

The Bargaining team is chaired by Scott Michael and the members include Nora Demers, Win Everham, Shawn Keller, Patrick Niner, Morgan T. Paine, Monika Renard and Jaffar Ali Shahul-Hameed

The team thanks **Dr. Scott Michael** for putting together this section. His commitment to bargaining cannot be matched and he continues to work together to make us stronger.



Statewide Activities

Members of the executive team have attended two state meetings to address issues that affect all SUS Universities.

The Fall meeting was postponed to November due to hurricane Irma and the Spring meeting took place in February.

A recurring threat to the Unions is recertification of Unions when the membership drops below 50%. The K-12

system fell prey to it. UFF-FGCU, and the state UFF do not want this for our Unions.

UFF President of the state resigned as she had to relocate to a different university. A new President was elected during the Spring meeting. Jaffar was elected to serve as co-Chair on the elections committee. He was also asked to attend the National Education Association (NEA) Leadership Summit in Chicago, IL.

The state hired a new membership recruitment manager and advocate, Lauren Byers to help chapters recruit more members. She has been very involved in the recruitment process and made multiple visits to our chapter for this cause.

*“Rewriting
the CBA
for a
better
future”*

Other Activities and Achievements

- The chapter held the 2nd Annual UFF-FUN activity for both members and non-members.
- Our membership has grown to 215 members and the team expects this trend to continue.
- The chapter tried, and won, to receive our travel funds for professional

development back in the form of an enhancement award.

- The chapter has held executive meetings every month to address issues at hand that have a direct impact on faculty, particularly our members.
- The executive team meets with the Provost on a

monthly basis, whenever possible, to establish a good rapport between the UFF and the administration for the betterment of our faculty. Since the change in administration, the UFF has moved in a positive direction thus far and hopes to continue the momentum of positivity for our faculty and the institution we serve.

Stronger Together! —VP

