

Comments to the FGCU BOT on Oct 9, 2017 from our UFF-FGCU co-Presidents Morgan T. Paine and Win Everham

[Morgan] Good Morning. I am Morgan Paine, Associate Professor of Art

[Win] and I am Win Everham, Professor of Marine and Ecological Sciences and we are co-presidents of the United Faculty of Florida/FGCU chapter.

[Morgan] We have both been here at FGCU for more than 20 years. We are appearing here as UFF representatives under article 1.3.B which gives the UFF the right to address the Board on issues concerning wages, hours, or other terms and conditions of employment. Since Florida is a right to work state, union membership is not a requirement of employment, membership is voluntary and 209 of our faculty feel strongly enough about their membership to contribute 1% of their wages to belong to our Union.

[Win] Let us start by thanking you for the time and effort you have dedicated to providing service and leadership to the University. The responsibility you have assumed is critically important. From our perspective as faculty members, the role of the Board has clearly evolved over the years; we have watched the Board's role change from being essentially ceremonial to being one that is much more managerial. In our opinion FGCU needs a Board to provide guidance and insight to our President - the Board represents, and in many ways is the closest part of our organization to both community interests and needs. You all have a vital role in advocating for support from our local, regional and statewide- governmental stakeholders and in guiding us toward meeting their needs.

[Morgan] American public higher education has always been complicated and Florida's higher education system has been more complicated than most. We appreciate your willingness to be a part of this community, as we appreciate how messy the system is and likely it is to continue to be. As the nature of the Board's engagement with the University has changed, the faculty has not always felt in step with the Board. We hope to support a dialog that will bridge whatever misunderstandings that might exist. We hope to continue to work to make FGCU a better place, one worthy of the support and confidence of our students, their families, and our business and cultural communities.

[Win] It is important to recognize that the UFF represents ALL FGCU faculty in regards to the terms, conditions and wages of employment. University faculty are a unique workforce. The values and practices that shape and inform a faculty are distinctive. Faculty have an expectation, based on industry practice, of shared governance; we also have an expectation of academic freedom to pursue truth wherever it leads us, and finally we have both individual and communal commitments to the three-legged stool of job performance that requires us to be committed to exceptional teaching, active scholarship, and service to our profession, this

institution, and the larger community. In a comprehensive university we cover many disciplines and professions, we have many perspectives and we relish the opportunity to disagree, but we recognize that we are always stronger together.

[Morgan] If we had addressed this Board in June, that might have been the extent of our comments. We wanted to express our commitment to this institution, where we have made our careers and this community where we have raised our families. However, much has happened since June. Most recently Hurricane Irma impacted the campus, and we would be remiss if we failed to honor the extraordinary efforts of students, staff, faculty and administrators to get us back up in business. This place is about people.

[Win] We have been engaged in Collective Bargaining talks since early in the Spring to complete our 2017/18 contract. After prolonged discussions we have not yet come to agreement on a wage settlement for the 2017-18 year. We know that the institution is challenged by cuts to performance-based funds. However, we feel that the solution is to support the people doing the work. Our current budget has already resulted in cuts to programs intended to support the activity of faculty and staff. And, when we see an additional \$3 million in legislative allocations, efforts to spend down carry over funds by \$15 million, and see a successful \$130 million fund-raising campaign, it is difficult to accept that there is no budget available to support faculty. And, as we continue these negotiations, for the first time in our history faculty who were promoted last year go into October without seeing a change in their pay. The success of the university is dependent on all of us, faculty, staff and administrators, but we cannot continue to attract and retain the best faculty when our salaries are not sufficiently above market averages to off-set our non-tenure contracts.

[Morgan] We are providing you with this information and perspective because we feel that our faculty voices have not been consistently provided for your consideration. We are available and willing to discuss these matters with any or all of you. Early in the discussion of this year's budgets challenges we often heard mention the large proportion of our budgets allocated to salaries, usually as a problem that made balancing the budget more difficult. Perhaps we need to see that as our strength. Our product is people. Our mode of production is people. Investing in those people holds greater promise for our future. We both came here to help create an extraordinary place and are excited about what has been accomplished, and what the future can hold. Thank you!