



UFF-FIU Chapter Meeting Minutes October 30, 2020: 10:00pm-12:00pm

In attendance: Martha Meyer, Amy Paul-Ward, Heather Blatt, Deanne Butchey, Teresa Lucas, Tim Downey, Maria Reid, Rebecca Christ, Lorna Veraldi, Eric Scarffe, Peter Clarke, Maria Lovett, Gene Rosenberg, Marc Weinstein, Charles Shields, Daniel Saunders, Jason Kostrna, James Burns, Christine Lisetti, Jacob Berglin, Elizabeth Scarbrough, Umut Caglar, Tania Santiago Perez.

I. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve minutes: Deanne
2nd: Maria
Minutes approved unanimously

II. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve agenda: Deanne
2nd: Amy Paul-Ward
Agenda approved unanimously

III. Legislative Affairs Update

We have been engaging in a social media strategy. Josh has posted on Facebook and Twitter information on voting including where to vote.

Legislation is not in session until January. We anticipate that they will try to introduce a bill to decertify unions.

We will keep an eye on funding and the state's budget.

IV. Treasurer's Report

We had approved our budget last year. Our fiscal year starts in September. Due to the pandemic, our plans didn't work out, so we had to make some adjustments to the budget. We didn't change the total amount. We reallocated money and modified some line items. We moved money from some items into other items. For example, money that we had

allocated to special events moved to marketing/publicity to purchase the polos. We also moved money to software/technology to cover the cost of zoom meetings, slack, and dropbox.

We were under budget. Taxes will be filed soon. They have to be filed by January 15th.

V. Bargaining Report

We are in the middle of big book bargaining. We expect to have something ratified in the Spring. Big book means that anything in the CBA is up for negotiation including assignments, evaluation, and promotion. We are taking a comprehensive approach to engaging with the document more holistically.

We are finishing up a survey that will be sent to faculty after the presidential election. Spring ratification will start November 9th.

Don't forget to attest to COVID-19 vulnerability if you haven't done so.

We engage in interest-based bargaining, with the goal of having a shared understanding of ideas. We have working groups that meet prior to the bargaining session. Working groups are administrative preparation meetings. During working groups, we discuss data. At bargaining meetings, we talk about the language.

Question about salaries. The focus will be on equity. For example, exploring the issue of associate professors who get paid less than newly hired faculty.

This year, everyone got the 1% to the base at the start of the year (January). Merit allocations are in process and units have been notified. Merit allocations will follow guidelines from each unit, so make sure that you know the merit policy in your bylaws. Chair recommendations need to be made by November 20th and raises will be retroactive to September 12. People considered will be faculty who were in unit at the end of last academic year and who are in the bargaining unit now.

Discussion about College of Nursing and Health Sciences issues. Departments might not have independent bylaws as everything is operated at the college level. There have been a lot of issues with departments not having autonomy. The only remedy for this sort of issue is a grievance. Anyone in unit can bring one.

VI. Grievance Report

Our 6-month report includes 4 changes in department chairs due to grievance processes. One chair was assigning himself as instructor on Canvas courses from his department and making changes to faculty's assessments and grading. We have an investigation in another department, so this might be a common practice that we need to pay attention to.

We have seen a phenomenon of retaliation where there is no evidence of CBA violations, so we don't have the support to act on. In order for cases to be grievable, we need good stories, and documentation/records.

We have also gotten some questions about equity. We have groups of faculty who are all together paid low.

We have some faculty on-campus that do not have assignments. This creates issues with evaluations and promotions. One example is a faculty member who did not have an assignment and was assigned different tasks every 2 weeks.

Question about any interesting stories in tenure and promotion cases. We have a handful of cases with concerns, particularly about faculty being assigned courses on their terminal year. Also, we had a case of a female faculty member whose file was stronger than files that were submitted the previous year. There were votes against her tenure despite the files from previous years being favorable. This might have been a case of sexism. We have seen that women are more often treated unfairly in tenure and promotion, so we might have cases of sexism.

Discussion about extension to the clock due to COVID-19. Union might create guiding documents to create fairness. Evaluations for faculty who stopped tenure clock might be tricky because they might have stopped some research but not all, and they are still engaging in teaching and service. We have seen that the tradition is for people to be judged on their publications. However, the CBA indicates that faculty are reviewed based on their assignment.

It might be time for the union to take back the tenure and promotion workshops and invite administration instead of administration being in charge and only giving 2 minutes to the UFF-FIU team.

Junior faculty need to be aware of evaluation timeline. We have a 45-day rule on assignments and evaluations. Bargaining team is discussing timing of this as evaluations fall under summer, which is a term outside of the 9-month contract.

VII. President's Report

President attended the UFF leadership meeting and learned that other SUS universities and state colleges have been experiencing greater difficulties than we are:

UCF chapter had to file a chapter grievance concerning the return to campus policy as administration is requiring a signed off letter from a doctor within the parameters of "vulnerable populations". Faculty Senate and UFF-UCF are working together.

At UF, faculty are having a difficult time getting doctors to sign paperwork because of ethical concerns.

At FAU, full time faculty teaching requirements had changed 3 times.

At Religious institutions, conflicts of interests are happening with unions. St. Leo Chapter is no longer recognized. This came after a recent NLRB decision where Trump's appointees ruled that it's an infringement on "religious freedom" for faculty to have a union at a religious institution. We need to think about efforts across the state to support this union. They have had a union for 40 years.

At the state meeting, there were budgetary conversations and the general conclusion is that there are going to be more cuts.

USF College of Education Dean decided to close all undergraduate programs and just leave graduate programs.

State colleges are in worst situations than we are.

Suggestion from state is to urge students to vote.

The AFT is having a bus tour visit at the African Heritage Cultural Arts Center on November 1st at 12:00 pm. This is the link with the information: <http://www.uff-fiu.net/wordpress/2020/10/30/aftvotes-bus-tour-in-miami-sunday-november-1st/>

The Chapter council for UFF-FIU have approved mini grants to fund faculty and students' work on labor and social justice. Be on the lookout for an announcement with the guidelines. Peter will be part of the committee.

Membership report from chair, Heather: Since last spring we lost 18 members, but have gained 43 new members. We now have 635 dues-paying members, our membership represents 44% of in-unit-faculty.

We need people who are interested in outreach efforts. The idea is to have department stewards who can reach out to people in their department. Many new members are not living in Miami yet and are excited to talk to folks about what it is like living here - so even if you are not in the same or similar department, that's a way to make a connection. Talk to fellow faculty members about what the union is doing.

Faculty senate passed a resolution on Tuesday, November 27th thanks to Thomas Breslin who crafted the language to be included in the resolution. protect vulnerable populations: Teaching assistants, learning assistants, adjuncts. There is now a better policy for research assistants and teaching assistants.

We have a lot of protections thanks to the bargaining unit. Members do not know how other universities are doing. The only other university in the SUS system that has support from their Provost and administration is FSU.

Discussion about apathy of some in-unit faculty. Some faculty members might feel as if units have problems that are not addressable. Discussion about engaging existing faculty by targeting specific communities of faculty and creating a report of membership by unit. Maybe we can have model cases to share, so faculty have guidance. The union has

routinely had reports of membership (members and non-members) by department/ College in the past. All these ideas are good, but we need more people involved.

Discussion about members not being informed about the contract. It is up to themselves to learn about the contract. Idea about informing faculty about budget and having meetings to attract faculty. Discussion about individual faculty being identified as the "union person" in their departments. (As if we had department stewards.) Some of the responsibilities that union stewards take on could be tiring if they don't get help.

Discussion about state budget. 6-8% has been held back and there is a push for educators to go back to the classroom in January including K-12 and higher education. Discussion on budget cuts have also mentioned percentages of between 8-12%. We need more people in Tallahassee lobbying. This is going to be very political. We need to be attentive about what at the administration level. Stay tuned to the discourse that is happening with administration.

Discussion about focusing on the report about how FIU spends its money. We need to understand the university budget to get engaged with projective cuts. We need to be aware of how they have been stewarding the money that they have been given by the state. We need to let them know that this study is underway. We're due for such a report, but I don't think we can depend on Ali for a report this time.

- UFF-FIU photo- Wear red
- VII. UFF-FIU Listens - Member's voices

Open floor to share ideas and tell the union leadership about what you want the union to do or focus on.

Discussion about UFF-FIU emails going to clutter email of faculty. They can mark them uncluttered or add UFF-FIU email as a contact.

IX. Old Business

X. New Business

November 30th: Union social hour. 12-1pm. Be on the lookout for the zoom link.

Let us know if you know anybody who needs support or is celebrating something. We are sending cards to members.

Youngstown State university had a faculty strike when they found out that their cuts were greater than the cuts that administrators received. In Florida, public employees may not legally strike. The K-12 teachers in W. VA went on strike 2 years ago even though it was "illegal" to strike. They basically said "let them try and replace 17,000 of us."

XI. Good of the Chapter

Big shout out to Martha for the great work she is doing as President of the Union and with the Faculty Senate.

XII. Adjournment

Move to adjourn: Heather

2nd: Maria

Meeting adjourned