

Public Comment given at BOT Meeting on Thursday, February 13, 2025

by UFF-FIU President Tania Cepero Lopez

Re: Opposition to Proposed Amendment to Regulation FIU-1103 Textbook and Instructional Materials Affordability and Transparency

My name is Tania Cepero Lopez, I am the President of UFF-FIU

Buenas tardes,

For decades, our union has collaborated with this Board, current and previous Presidents and Provosts. The people in these positions, of course, have changed over the years, but our continued commitment to shared governance has propelled FIU's rise: making the impossible possible.

The regulation before you, however, tells our faculty that you do NOT trust us. That we are either not reading the materials we assign and/or that they are not appropriate.

I suspect we will hear that this regulation should NOT be understood this way, that you remain committed to faculty and academic freedom...

This requires our trust.

Through our work, we believe faculty have earned your trust. Unfortunately, many of the actions taken recently are eroding the trust faculty have in you. You can say we should trust you, but trust requires more than public statements; it requires action.

In the face of upheaval, the faculty at FIU have remained committed to collaboration and shared governance—believing our local board and administrators both understood our institution, as well as valued and respected the roles faculty play in shaping it.

In our view, this regulation stems from actions taken by an underpaid and overworked adjunct faculty member, but requiring faculty members to attest to the content in their courses does little to address this problem:

- Shouldn't we be talking about how to hire and retain more permanent faculty?
- Shouldn't we be filling faculty positions—the positions that have the greatest impact on our students through teaching and research—with the same urgency we saw the board exhibit last Friday?
- Shouldn't we be talking about how to properly fund our library?

At the Board of Governors meeting last fall, some Board of Trustee chairs expressed concern that the proposed changes to the presidential search regulation failed to demonstrate trust in the Boards of Trustees. As faculty, we similarly believe this new policy fails to exhibit trust in us.

- Why shouldn't faculty see this attestation as another nail to the to academic freedom coffin, especially when what is deemed "appropriate content," and who makes such a determination, keeps moving north towards Tallahassee?

I am providing comment to inform the board that faculty see this as yet another instance of the state forcing a solution to a non-existent problem. [was cut off at this point] And while these changes in isolation may be explained away, it is our mutual trust that makes this great institution work. And that trust is being eroded.

Thank you for listening.

We look forward to our continued collective success.