

As we begin a new academic year, I'd like to extend a warm welcome on behalf of the UCF chapter of the United Faculty of Florida and give you a short update on news and events of interest.

**NEW FACULTY:** UFF-UCF sponsored events began this year with our annual reception for new faculty members in the Burnett Honors College. It was delightful to meet our newest colleagues and we wish them a successful first year with us.

**WELCOME RECEPTION:** On Thursday, September 6<sup>th</sup>, we will be hosting our annual welcome back Fall social at Azteca D'Oro (11633 University Boulevard) from 4-7 p.m. We look forward to seeing familiar faces and greeting new members. Other member events planned for the Fall include workshops on applying for promotion, tenure and sabbaticals and an end of semester social. We will update you on these events as details are finalized.

**CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS:** UFF-UCF's bargaining team has been meeting regularly with the Board of Trustees (BOT) negotiators and working toward agreement on a successor contract to the one that expires on August 31, 2012. We believe we are making progress toward a contract that further protects faculty rights and strengthens benefits. We hope to complete negotiations in the next month or two. We know improved salaries are also important to our members; we will do our best to negotiate a reasonable salary package within the context of a University budget hard hit by deep legislative cuts.

**NEW PROCEDURE FOR 9% RAISE FOR INSTRUCTORS:** This year does promise raises for some of our hardworking, long-term instructors who—thanks to last year's bargaining efforts—will receive the overdue opportunity to apply for promotion and an accompanying 9% increase in salary.

**UCF BOARD REJECTS SAME-SEX PARTNER/FAMILY BENEFITS:** We had also hoped, on the basis of last year's bargaining efforts, that UCF would begin offering same-sex partner and family benefits this Fall. Unfortunately, the MOU (memorandum of understanding) agreed to by both UCF's administration and UFF-UCF and subsequently ratified by the bargaining unit last spring, was voted down by the UCF Board of Trustees in a July 2012 meeting. Needless to say, we were both shocked and deeply disappointed by this turn of events. President Hitt has indicated that he wishes to keep the matter open for further discussion, however, and so we have returned the issue to the bargaining table as part of our current negotiations.

**GRIEVANCES PROTECT FACULTY RIGHTS:** UFF safeguards your contractual rights when they have been violated. Often, problems can be resolved informally once a grievance has been filed. Last year, UFF helped faculty address inadequate overload pay, inequitable course assignments, impaired TIP eligibility, promotion irregularities, and unfair annual evaluations. UFF has also stopped the university from firing faculty members without due process. In cases of particularly egregious violations of due process, UFF has also provided formal legal assistance.

**HOPING TO HAVE OUR 3% PAYMENT REDUCTION REVERSED:** At the state and national levels, UFF and its affiliates, the FEA (Florida Education Association), the NEA (National Education Association), and the ATF (American Federation of Teachers), are also working to protect your rights and benefits from harmful legislative edicts. Last year, for example, the Florida Education Association filed a lawsuit seeking to stop the 3% tax on teachers, school employees and other public workers imposed by the Florida Legislature and signed by Governor Scott. In March, a Circuit Court judge ruled in FEA's favor. On Sept. 7, the

Florida Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in the case, determining whether that 3% of your salary will be returned to you. We will keep you apprised of the status of this case.

**JOIN OUR EFFORTS!** If you are not yet a member of UFF-UCF, please join. Your membership strengthens our efforts to protect the rights and benefits of higher education professionals. In addition, UFF membership provides you with professional representation in the grievance and arbitration process, \$1,000,000 of professional liability coverage, representation at the Florida Legislature, state and national organization membership benefits, and important networking and mentoring opportunities. If you are already a UFF member, please join our recruitment efforts. By speaking to just a few of your colleagues you can further strengthen the voice of UFF at UCF and across the State. An online membership form is available at <http://www.uffucf.org/membership/>

I wish you all a productive and enjoyable year. If you have any questions or comments about UFF-UCF events and activities or would like to become more involved in our efforts to protect your rights and improve our working conditions, I would be pleased to hear from you.

In solidarity,

Shelley Park  
President, UFF-UCF and Associate Professor of Philosophy  
shelleypark@gmail.com