

THE ORGANIZER

Newsletter of UFF-UCF: The United Faculty of Florida

Raises & Sabbaticals

In 2014, UFF-UCF and the UCF administration agreed to a 3% across the board raise for all bargaining unit members, and a 2% merit raise. Months ago, UFF-UCF proposed a three-year schedule of salary increases, with 2.5% across-the-board each year and an additional 2.5% annually for either merit or to address compression, inversion, and market equity. The administration still has not responded to our salary proposal. However, the administration agreed to our proposal to increase the number of Type I (competitive) sabbaticals by 50%.

Membership

In 2014-2015, UFF membership increased from approximately 25% of the bargaining unit to approximately 30%. Last year our chapter won a membership award from the FEA (Florida Educator's Association). The greater our numbers, the more effective we can be at the bargaining table!

Did You Know?

In 2015, our UFF-UCF union initiated a weekly email newsletter called "Did You Know?" to all members of the bargaining unit to explain our rights and responsibilities found in the CBA (Collective Bargaining Agreement), UCF policies, and state and federal laws. If you have suggestions for a "Did You Know," please let us know! Contact barrymauer.UFF@gmail.com



Welcome from the President

Scott Launier, Writing and Rhetoric

On behalf of the entire UFF-UCF leadership team, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2015-16 academic year! As a collective faculty, we have an opportunity to make this an excellent and meaningful year.

I am excited to announce that UFF-UCF has been working through the summer to support and advance faculty working conditions. This work helps all of us contribute to the university's missions, and build UCF into a premiere university. But achieving our many goals this coming year depends on participation from the entire bargaining unit.

Who is UFF-UCF?

UFF-UCF is our faculty union. We currently have over 1,300 faculty members (including librarians, advisors, researchers and other academic positions) in our bargaining unit, and the contract



UFF-UCF Leads Efforts to Keep Guns off Campus

The 2014-15 session of the Florida Legislature included a bill which would have allowed the concealed carry of firearms on college campuses. The bill nearly made it through both chambers. UFF-UCF took a leadership role in opposing the bill. Our senate passed two resolutions, one opposing the bill and the other calling for a "right to vacate" should the concealed carry bill become law. These UFF-UCF resolutions were distributed to lawmakers, administrators, other chapters of UFF around the state, and media outlets (the story was picked up by several of them, including the *Orlando Weekly*, the *UCF Future*, and even *Cosmo*). Our members participated in rallies, hosted a forum, collaborated with groups such as the League of Women Voters, the UCF Police Department, and the Democratic Party of Florida, and we formed a legislative committee to deal with issues that concern faculty at UCF.

If you would like to organize around legislative issues of concern to faculty, please let us know!

("Welcome from the President" - Continued)

agreement we reach with administration applies to all in-unit faculty. However, not all in-unit faculty are currently dues-paying members of our union. By increasing our number of dues-paying members, and by having more faculty members actively participate, we can become a stronger union.

Our union council has four officers (President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary), three committee chairs (Bargaining, Grievances, and Membership) and 30 Senators and Alternate Senators. But anyone may actively participate in our union. For example, a "Building Our UFF" group was created last year as a way of gathering dues-paying members to discuss issues and implement plans for addressing them. One outcome was the formation of a "Family Life/Work Balance Working Group" that conducted and presented influential research at a recent bargaining session. In addition, several new senators have come from this group.

What Does UFF-UCF Do?

First and foremost, our union represents the entire bargaining unit in negotiating a contract (the CBA - Collective Bargaining Agreement) with administration. Second, our union makes sure that the contract is upheld and participates in a grievance process when doing so is deemed necessary to correct a contract violation.

But our mission goes beyond bargaining and grievances. Our union works to *support and advance the practice of our academic professions*, including teaching, research and service. As part of our mission, we have created three initiatives in addition to bargaining and grievances: building community among faculty, giving back to faculty, and connecting with the broader UCF and Central Florida communities. Our vision is to make UCF a premiere university, and to make our values real in the world, including the advancement of intellectualism, peace, and social justice. Clearly, there is plenty of work to do here, and plenty of opportunity for every member of the bargaining unit to participate.

A Message from Our Treasurer

Barry Mauer, English



Being treasurer of UFF is more than just writing checks and checking balances (though it includes those activities). It's also about figuring out how to use our precious resources wisely to benefit our organization, our community, and our members. That's why, of all our activities, I am most proud of our efforts to give back to faculty through programs such as the Travel 'Gap' Grant, which helped fund professional travel for our members when other sources of travel money were insufficient. I am also proud of our "Theater Night" program, which gave our members a night out and supported a UCF production. We had a TIP Award workshop for members in which we paid for their lunch. We paid for activities of our subgroups, such as Family-Focus, Building Our UFF, and others. And we hosted faculty and their families and friends for our fall and spring socials.

Currently, we spend a bit more than we take in from dues but we still have some surplus from previous years. We see this spending as an investment and believe it will pay off in many ways: increased membership (and thus more dues money coming into the group), a higher quality of life at UCF, a greater sense of community among faculty, and ultimately, an organization that more effectively serves all of its members.

("Welcome from the President" - Continued)

What will UFF-UCF Accomplish this Year?

This year, we will continue to move forward with our initiatives. We expect to complete bargaining a three-year contract. We will continue to provide oversight so that each dues-paying member has her/his contractual rights honored. We will continue to build community among faculty, hosting beginning- and end-of-the semester social gatherings, nights at the UCF Theatre, and "Building Our UFF" meetings. We will continue to give back to faculty, offering grant opportunities such as the Travel "Gap" Grant, and workshops designed to help dues-paying members win UCF awards, plan for retirement, and participate in additional professional development opportunities. And we will continue to connect with the broader UCF and Central Florida communities, attending the biannual state-level UFF Senate meetings, continuing our position on the Jobs with Justice Steering Committee, our membership on the Racial Justice Committee of Organize Now, and our presence on the Central Florida Labor Council. And we will continue to look for and create opportunities for advancing and supporting the practice of our academic professions, and increase our influence to make our values real in the world.

Our union strives to better support the practice of our academic professions, and to increase our influence to make our values real in the world. Together, we can do more. But we do need to be together in this mission. We need more dues-paying members, and more active dues-paying members. Together, we can make this a phenomenal academic year! Please contact any union leader to ask how you may contribute to our collective mission.

I hope you enjoy and find inspiration from this edition of our UFF-UCF newsletter (as I have).

Thank you,

Scott Launier

A Message from Our Incoming Vice President

Lee E. Ross, Criminal Justice



The purpose of this article is two-fold: (1) to provide readers with some personal background information and (2) to reflect on a few things I have learned since assuming the role of Vice-President of the UFF-UCF local union chapter. I will begin with a brief introduction.

I have been an Associate Professor since 1997 and a faculty member at UCF since 2003 in the Department of Criminal Justice. A graduate of Rutgers University, my research interests span a variety of areas, from my seminal work on religion and social control theory to more recent work in the areas of critical race theory and criminal justice systems responses to domestic violence. As editor of *Continuing the War against Domestic Violence* (2014), my scholarship can be found in a variety of academic journals, including *Justice Quarterly*, *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *Journal of Crime and Justice*, and the *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*. Some of my more recent publications examine the effects of mandatory arrest policies and the dynamics of domestic violence among African-Americans. Prior to teaching, I spent several years as an officer with the United States Customs Service (now known as ICE). As a former Provost Fellow, I have been the recipient of various awards. Included among these are a Teaching Academy

Fellow, the COHPA Research Fellow, and the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Mentor of the Year (2011). Within the Criminal Justice Department, I have served in various capacities, including graduate coordination for Criminal Justice and Coordinator to the doctoral program in Public Affairs.

Early Reflections after April Elections

Since the April elections, I have enjoyed a very busy four months as the in-coming Vice-President of UFF-UCF local chapter. Officially, my term begins in the fall, but I have volunteered in the interim to serve on various committees and have found these to be interesting, educational, and challenging. For the most part, my impressions of UFF-UCF union activity are very positive and encouraging.

I am first impressed with the leadership, especially those holding key positions, including Scott Launier (President), John Fauth and Barbara Fritzsche (Chief CBA Negotiators), Barry Mauer (Treasurer), Yan Fernandez (Membership Chair) and Daniel Murphree (Grievance Chair). Collectively, these individuals are full of energy and appear highly dedicated and committed to their roles. Thanks to their generosity and willingness—not only to share, but also to educate—I have already learned quite a lot from each of them.

While I do not have a year full of insights to share, I can say that the last four months has enhanced my learning along several lines. Of the numerous lessons learned, I will focus on three in particular.

- (1) First, I am learning that collective bargaining is a meticulous matter where all sides have to do their homework in order to best represent the interests of their constituents.

("A Message from Our Incoming Vice President" - continued)

As a new member to the negotiating team, I am learning that there is a very delicate balance between giving and receiving as well between sacrificing and keeping. For many of the articles under renegotiation, the devil appears to be in the details. While both sides have bargained in good faith, I have learned that each side has to challenge each other to qualify their positions.

- (2) The second thing I am learning is that I have a lot to learn. Becoming more active in the union places you in a state of transition, which requires a lot of reflection, planning, and trust. As with any period of transition, there is a great deal of uncertainty. As such, I have learned to try to stay informed of issues as they develop and to be able to provide helpful ideas and responses. Lastly, I am beginning to learn that the union is a very multi-faceted, complex, and large enterprise with endless

parameters of involvement. As I settle into my new role, I look forward to becoming more involved in terms of promoting faculty interests and rights.

- (3) Third, and perhaps the biggest thing I have learned is that very few of our members are fully aware of their rights as faculty. Furthermore, I have learned that there are many faculty who neither understand the grounds to file a grievance nor the procedures involved. That is why the weekly "did you know" (DYK) is not only appealing but also vitally important to an informed membership. These reminders are especially beneficial in terms of ensuring fair treatment during annual assignments, potential disciplinary proceedings, and annual evaluations. Toward this end, I am open to any questions, concerns, or suggestions about what the union can do to further protect and promote faculty interests.

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COME TO OUR FACULTY DINNER SOCIALS!



UFF-UCF traditionally holds two to four annual dinner socials open to all in-unit faculty: always at the beginning and end of the academic year and often in December and January. For the past few years, socials have been held at Azteca on University Ave. Food and beverages are free for all faculty (even if you are a non-UFF member) and friends and family are welcome. Please join us for fun, comaradarie, and information about UFF activities! Our next social is Thursday, August 27 at Azteca D'Oro on University Avenue , 4 - 7 pm.

Researching Family Leave Policy

Yovanna Pineda, History



I began to research the topic of family leave at the University of Central Florida (UCF) because I was concerned about the stress that women and men felt in negotiating some type of medical leave for an upcoming birth. Anecdotally, I had information across departments and colleges about negotiations—some women were terrified to announce their pregnancies, others tried to "hide" their pregnancies to hold off making an announcement, while another felt infantilized as negotiations about her pregnancy leave were discussed among men and without her input.

I decided to quantify these stories and ask specific questions about what parents would like to see as part of a family leave policy at UCF. My primary aims were to show the administration the need to implement a family leave policy and to emphasize how it could be done in a cost effective manner. I used the UCF Faculty Parents' Network to announce my mini-research study, and I told people by word of mouth. I had 15 people/couples speak to me. Although it was a small sample, it was representative of beliefs across the UCF campus, the couples were diverse, including people of color, of all ages, men and women, LGBT, and across departments in five colleges. I also gathered university statistics on female and male faculty from the UCF Office of Institutional Knowledge. The data showed that though UCF had 41% female faculty as of fall 2014, among the highest in the nation, most female faculty were in non-tenured instructor positions, and held fewer of the

tenured and tenure track positions. Hence, their vulnerability might have reduced their voice to demand family-friendly and leave policies. In Fall 2014, comparatively with 13 peer institutions, UCF ranked nearly at the bottom when it came to leave and family-friendly policies. Also, of the few policies in place at UCF, they were not well advertised or caused confusion. For example, UCF automatically stops the tenure clock for pregnancy leave, but no one among my sample nor most department chairs had known it was automatic.

In conclusion, I presented this information to the Board of Trustees' negotiation team in December, and the union is in negotiations about a family leave plan for the next bargaining contract. Indeed, a new family leave policy would enhance the quality of life/work balance on this campus. As the largest undergraduate state university in the country with a high representation of female faculty, UCF has a moral responsibility to set an example of supporting family leave for other institutions of higher learning.

Upcoming UFF Events

2015 Fall UFF Council Meetings

Aug. 12, Wednesday 10:00 - 12:00 in PSB 445
 Aug. 27, Thursday 1:30 - 3:30 PSY 228B
 Sept. 17, Thursday 1:30 - 3:30 in PSB 160
 Oct. 1, Thursday 1:30 - 3:30 in PSB 160
 Nov. 5, Thursday 1:30 - 3:30 in PSB 160
 Dec. 8; Tuesday 2:30 - 4:00 at Azteca D'Oro

2015 Fall Bargaining Schedule

Sept. 10, Thursday, 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. in MH 395
 Sept. 24, Thursday, 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. in MH 395
 Oct. 22, Thursday, 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. in MH 395
 Nov. 12, Thursday, 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. in EDU 305
 Dec. 3, Thursday, 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. in EDU 305
 Dec. 10, Thursday, 2 p.m. - 5 p.m. in MH 395

Beyond Paid Leave: Efforts to Promote Work-Family Life Balance at UCF

Beatriz Reyes-Foster, Anthropology



While the question of paid family leave—and our lack thereof—continues to be of importance to faculty members at UCF, faculty members have frequently pointed out other ways in which it is difficult to balance academic work with family life as UCF employees. From the absence of changing tables and high chairs in campus public spaces to the difficulties of dealing with separate academic calendars between UCF and the Seminole and Orange County school systems to unclear and sometimes confusing policies regulating the use of family, bereavement, and medical leave, faculty members and other in-Unit employees have noted the need to make UCF a more family-friendly workplace beyond the question of paid parental and family leave.

To this end, in the Spring 2015, we created the UCF Family Life Focus Group, a caucus group sponsored by UFF. The UCF Family Life FocusGroup emerged out of conversations held at Building our UFF meetings in the fall 2014

semester, where many of us found common ground in the challenges we faced balancing family life with our academic careers at UCF. The UCF Family Life Focus Group is made up of UCF faculty members committed to the improvement of quality of life and work-family life balance for all faculty members. "Family" is not only limited to parents raising children, but is also inclusive of faculty members living with spouses and domestic partners, faculty members caring for sick or elderly parents, faculty members living in extended family households, and any other definition of "family."

Our group began meeting once a month in January of 2015 and met regularly during the spring semester. Meeting topics included discussions about leave at UCF and beyond, the role of collective bargaining in making progress on these issues, brainstorming about small, concrete ways to make UCF more family friendly, and a conversation with Linda Walters of the Center for the Success of Women Faculty (CSWF) on collaboration, advocacy and making small, tangible changes. Through our collaboration with the CSWF, we were able to get the Student Union to purchase high chairs for their dining hall. We also initiated conversations on adding changing table to campus bathrooms and began a Little Knights playground initiative to seek the creation of a family-friendly space on campus. Unfortunately, the administration has rejected the idea of building a playground for families on campus, citing safety and liability concerns -we will have to return to this in the fall semester.

To join the UCF Family Life Focus Group email list, please email Beatriz Reyes-Foster at ucf.family.life@gmail.com. We will begin regular monthly meetings in the fall. Anyone is welcome to join our group. If you are interested in interacting with other UCF faculty and staff parents, consider joining the UCF Faculty Parents Network on Facebook, a closed group for UCF faculty and staff.

A Message from Our Bargaining Chair Chief Negotiator John Fauth, Biology



I inherited the chief negotiator position from the able hands of Jim Gilkeson, who became UFF-UCF's President for one year before being appointed Program Director of the Integrated Business degree. Barbara Fritzsche (Psychology Department) and I negotiated last year's contract and are working on the current renegotiation of the entire contract. UFF-UCF Vice President Lee Ross (Criminal Justice) joined our negotiating team this semester.

Our philosophy is that great faculty make a great university, and the interests of great faculty and great universities align >99% of the time. With this in mind, we offered several proposals that will increase faculty productivity and strengthen UCF's position as an up-and-coming research university. Several of our proposals already were tentatively agreed to by the Board of Trustees' bargaining team, including strengthening the article on academic freedom (and updating it for a digital world), and increasing the number of competitive sabbaticals.

Last fall, we used a survey that asked our bargaining unit to identify bargaining priorities. Our proposals are very responsive to the results of that survey. We continue to negotiate a paid parental/family leave program, and the administration recently indicated their desire to implement a program in the upcoming academic year. Why? Because paid parental/family leave increases faculty productivity

and retention, and strengthens UCF as an academic institution and as a supportive community of scholars. We also are negotiating tuition benefits for the families of bargaining unit members, to help UCF catch up with benefits already offered by several other state universities in Florida, and many others nationwide. We will continue to seek win-win situations like these to strengthen our faculty and UCF, and to turn the relationship between UFF-UCF into a mutualism that benefits everyone. We are all on the same team.

A Night at the Theater

UFF-UCF sponsored a free "Night at the Theater" on March 20th this year. Over 30 union members and their family members and friends joined their colleagues to watch "Nine," a production of the UCF Theatre program. The play and the production were fantastic and everyone had a great time that night.

We look forward to hosting another "Night at the Theater" this fall for dues-paying members. If you are a dues-paying member of UFF and would like to join us at the theater, please look for future announcements. These offers will be First-Come-First-Serve!

UFF TIP Workshop

The Teaching Incentive Program Award adds \$5000 to an employee's base pay. UFF held a members-only TIP award workshop to help faculty prepare their TIP binders. Four UFF member panelists (with 7 TIPS among them) gave advice and answered questions. 19 members attended. 5 went on to win the award (the ratio is even higher if you consider that some attendees were not eligible for TIP this year). The winning attendees are

- Terry Thaxton, English
- Dina Fabery, MLL
- Sybil St. Claire, Performing Arts
- Kristina Tollefson, Performing Arts
- Seth Elsheimer, Chemistry

Congratulations to all our winners!

A Message from Our Grievance Chair

Daniel Murphree, History



I have been an Associate Professor of History at UCF since 2011. Like many in UCF's UFF chapter, I became active in the union due to a combination of personal principles and higher education experiences. I'm fiercely devoted to the notion of academic freedom and the process of collective action to protect faculty rights and achieve institutional change. At the same time, I believe universities work better when faculty and administrators work together, formally and informally, to advance the goals of the university and its students. Since becoming Grievance Committee Chair in January 2015, I have learned the following about my role in helping faculty and administrators resolve disputes.

1. Ignorance is Usually the Culprit: Based on my experience so far, rather than intentionally and maliciously attempting to break the rules, faculty members and administrators become involved in disputes largely because neither group is aware of or understand provisions in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). More often than not, getting faculty and administrators to read the CBA's articles and realize their transgressions

related to them, tends to reduce tensions and lead to satisfactory resolutions of disagreements.

2. Diplomacy is Key: Grievances are rarely resolved through passionate displays and unyielding self-righteousness on behalf of anyone involved. Even in the most black and white cases, persuasion and compromise are often needed to get either side to see the situation with clarity. Ignoring ad hominem comments and responding positively to faculty and administrator perspectives often leads to easier and quicker resolutions of problems.

3. Listen Rather Than Talk: Always the best policy in my opinion.

Equally important, as Grievance Committee Chair I'm reminded on a daily basis why defending against violations of the CBA is so important to faculty and the overall mission of the university. Over the course of just a few months I've witnessed how the successful resolution of grievances has led to faculty promotion, the halting of an unjustified faculty transfer, and the protection of faculty from unfair accusations regarding their classroom performance, just to name a few. Resolution of each of these situations has allowed good teachers and researchers to resume their work on behalf of the university without fearing for their job security. Consequently, insuring that the CBA is protected on a routine basis is a rewarding endeavor that I believe benefits faculty, administrators, and the education of our students.

UFF-UCF Launches Travel 'Gap' Grants

Barry Mauer, English

This past year, UFF-UCF started several initiatives to build our chapter while giving back to faculty. One of these initiatives is our "Travel 'Gap' Grant."

The UFF-UCF chapter wants to close the gap between travel expectations and travel resources for faculty. While some departments have the resources to adequately fund professional travel, others provide little or no travel money. Since the legislature cut funding for higher education after the financial collapse of 2008, we have seen many departments drastically cut their travel budgets, sometimes to zero. Yet expectations for professional travel still govern faculty via job descriptions, promotion and tenure guidelines, and annual evaluation guidelines.

In response, many faculty members have all but eliminated professional travel. Others choose to travel but end up paying a large portion of the expenses out of pocket. Requiring faculty to travel while cutting their travel budget results in unfunded mandates that hurt faculty and disciplines.

To address this gap, the UFF-UCF chapter offered 10 awards to our members of up to \$500 each for

travel to professional conferences, workshops, and other professional events. Awards were to be used for travel and/or registration expenses only. Applicants had to provide evidence from within their departments or units of expectations for professional travel as well as evidence about the limits of available funding. The UFF-UCF chapter plans to use the information to press for additional resources for travel from the UCF administration.

The UFF-UCF "Travel 'Gap' Grant" award was for members only. Part of our rationale for this program and other give back programs is to encourage non-members in our bargaining unit to become members.

We have awarded all ten "Travel 'Gap' Grants." Now we will evaluate the effectiveness of our program and determine whether it has produced the anticipated outcomes, which are to build membership and to empower us to press for more travel funding at the bargaining table. At that time, we will consider whether and when to continue the program.

The following articles come from two of our "Travel 'Gap' Grant" award winners.

UFF Presents Free Retirement and Financial Planning Workshop for All UCF Faculty



Jacquie Bletzacker, Senior Financial Advisor, VALIC

- Financial Planning
- Investment Planning
- Asset Allocation
- Mutual Funds
- Retirement Planning
- Wealth Accumulation
- Life Insurance
- Brokerage/Cash Management Accounts College Planning
- Fixed And Variable Annuities Disability Insurance
- Estate Planning Options
- Insurance Planning
- Long-Term Care Insurance
- Tax Planning Options

**Wednesday,
September 9,
3:00-4:30
PSB 161**

Thank you!

Thank you to the UFF members who served on the Travel 'Gap' Grant committee this year. They included: Christopher Harris, Kathy-ann Daniel-Gittens, Lee Ross, Patti McCall, and Barry Mauer. If you would like to serve on a UFF give-back committee (we have several in the proposal stage for this year), please contact Barry Mauer:

barrymauer.UFF@gmail.com

Disability Studies Now

Keri Watson, Art History



The UFF-UCF Travel Gap Grant made it possible for me to attend the 28th Annual Society for Disability Studies Annual Conference, "Getting it-right/s," held 10-13 June 2015 in Atlanta, Georgia. I presented in a session titled "Disability, Contemporary Art, and Performance," chaired by disability studies scholar and art historian Ann Millet-Gallant. My paper "Difference and Disability in *You Have Seen Their Faces*" examined Margaret Bourke-White's images of people with physical disabilities found in her 1937 bestselling photo-book *You Have Seen Their Faces*. I argue that Bourke-White was unusual in her attention to disabled bodies and that her photographs both challenged the anxiety that surrounded disability during the Great Depression and opened up space for the deconstruction of raced, gendered, and abled identities. My presentation was an excerpt from a longer piece "Difference and Disability: The Photographs of Margaret Bourke-White," which also includes a discussion of a series of photographs she took in 1933 at Letchworth Village, a state residential institution for people with disabilities that operated in Thiells, New York between 1911 and 1996. The article is included in *Disability and Art History*, an anthology forthcoming from Ashgate Publishing.

The SDS Conference hosts a diverse group of attendees, including scholars, activists, artists, policy makers, and students, some able-bodied and others with physical and cognitive disabilities. As an art historian specializing in modern and contemporary art and the history of photography, I was honored to present my research alongside leading disabilities

scholars Rosemarie Garland-Thomson and David Mitchell, veteran activists Mike Ervin and Mark Johnson, and award-winning artists Riva Lehrer and Carrie Sandahl. A particularly memorable panel discussed the DisArts Festival (<http://disartfestival.org/>) recently held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, which provides exemplary programming for those interested in disability and the arts.

In addition to the many benefits one derives from presenting at a scholarly conference, including the chance to share one's research, the opportunity to learn from others, and a space for networking with other scholars, the SDS conference offered other unexpected benefits, such as the opportunity to be surrounded by people often considered non-normative and thus marginalized by mainstream society. At the SDS conference, able-bodies are in the minority, which forces one to reconsider the positions of power and privilege that govern everyday life in contemporary society.

The SDS Conference offered a variety of sessions, and I was excited to attend a panel that addressed the need for disability studies programs and centers at universities. Disability studies offers a scholarly foundation to the work being accomplished by disability and accessibility offices and activist groups. Rather than viewing accommodations and ADA requirements as legal or medical requirements that must be met in order to avoid lawsuits, disability rights is a civil rights issue, and universities should be leaders in offering accessible programs and in explaining the scholarship that underpins them. I am proud of my affiliation with the University of Central Florida, especially in light of recent initiatives, such as the renaming of Student Disability Services to Student Accessibility Services, as well as the University's establishment of the new Inclusive Education Services program, which will provide a comprehensive postsecondary experience to people with intellectual disabilities. Still, there is more to be done to not only meet the needs of people with disabilities, but to include the diversity of the human

("Disability Studies Now" - Continued)

experience in all of our programs. With the 2010 census indicating that nearly 20% of the U.S. population is disabled, it is crucial that we acknowledge the history of disability and that students and citizens of all ages have regular and sustained contact with both disabled and able-bodied people. As disabilities scholar Lennard J. Davis argues, "It is crucial that disability studies be included in the curricula of schools so that when Rosa Parks and the civil rights movement are studied, when films on Stonewall are screened, Chicano authors are read – that disability history and culture be included as well."

Moreover, we need to be cognizant of the needs of those around us. The SDS conference modeled best practices in universal design and accessibility by offering interpreters, CART transcription services, and reduced stimulation environments, and attendees were encouraged to wave rather than clap and to abstain from scented toiletries. Presenters were instructed to read slowly, to avoid jargon, to thoroughly describe visuals, and to provide large-print copies of papers, which were also available online. These lessons can be applied to any environment or classroom, and the more often these considerations are made, the more normalized they become.

The 28th Annual Society for Disabilities Studies Conference coincided with the 25th Anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, a seminal event in the history of the United States, and I look forward to the future of UCF as we join other universities dedicated to providing opportunities for all members of society. This was an especially exciting forum for the presentation of my work, and I am grateful to the School of Visual Arts & Design and the UFF-UCF Travel Gap Grant for supporting my attendance. If you are interested in learning more about the Society for Disability Studies, including information on next year's conference in Phoenix or how to join this professional organization, visit <https://www.disstudies.org/>.

Caribbean Studies

Marie Leticee, Modern Languages and Literatures



We all know the importance for faculty to remain connected to their field of research. However, while library research, memberships in professional journals and organizations certainly fulfill this purpose, nothing can replace the interaction one can have with peers at local, national and international conferences. Sadly, nationwide budget restraints on institutions of higher learning have affected faculty travel.

I am grateful for our local UFF chapter which saw the need to assist faculty in this area. I was awarded a travel grant this past Spring semester which allowed me to travel to New Orleans to attend the 40th Caribbean Studies Association conference. My participation in this conference did not stop at just merely giving a paper. It gave me the opportunity to interact and network with peers from other areas of the world.

I am pleased to announce that thanks to the opportunity to attend this conference given to me through the UCF UFF Travel Gap Grant, I will be collaborating with a colleague from Spelman on a project and will be participating in a Caribbean literary festival in Haiti this coming Fall... pending travel funds ;-)

A Message from Our Membership Chair

Yan Fernández, Physics



First an introduction. My name is Yan Fernández and I am an Associate Professor in the Physics Department, having been at UCF for ten years (and a dues-paying member of UFF for much of that time). I have been active in membership work for our chapter for about three years, and have been the chair of the Membership Committee for over a year. I joined our union because I believe that faculty make UCF what it is, and that faculty should have a strong voice in higher education issues at the local, state, and national level.

Through the Membership Committee I have the privilege of working and talking with faculty in many colleges and departments. Let me just mention how terrific for me personally it has been to interact with engaging, thoughtful, and fascinating faculty beyond my own usual academic group. I have noticed some common themes that run through many of these union-related conversations, which I will elucidate here.

Many of us feel that our workload is large and that there are many tasks on our plate. We worry how to efficiently manage our work responsibilities while maintaining a healthy and sociable life beyond the office. There is nothing wrong with hard work, especially since we do enjoy many of the tasks we have to do, and

since we all acknowledge that it takes effort by both faculty and administration to keep a university of UCF's size running, but this reality of just trying to keep our noses above water makes it difficult sometimes to step back and think about larger issues. What scholarly and pedagogical pursuits am I missing out on? What does it mean to be a faculty member and an intellectual at a public university? Why does the university do what it does?

This last point is especially important and can have far-reaching repercussions on our work and our work environment. Even though it can sometimes feel like we work in a vacuum, we do not, and the administration has goals and priorities for UCF that they (too!) work hard on every day. We as faculty deserve an authentic, independent voice in the decision-making process, and indeed UFF can act as that voice in many cases. Without that voice, many things at UCF would happen in a completely top-down (and potentially inequitable) way.

Another topic that comes up in my meetings is the perception of separateness between the union and the faculty. Admittedly, in the past, the lines of communication between faculty and UFF have indeed often been unidirectional, sparse, and decontextualized. But your current chapter leadership has made it a priority to fix that by hosting events, distributing surveys, providing more info, and having dialogues. It is important to remember that the union *is* the faculty, that there is really no separation, and that when the union leadership speaks as the voice of the faculty, they have to be confident that they know what faculty are thinking. And the union leadership is not omniscient; sometimes things happen at UCF that UFF only hears about after the fact, after the time to influence the

("A Message from Our Membership Chair" - Continued)
outcome has passed. UFF relies on faculty to let us know what is going on!

I'll mention one more frequent conversation point that comes up when I chat with faculty who are not UFF members: dues. It is true that a commitment to join UFF comes with a financial commitment as well, that 1% of gross salary. It is also true that everyone's financial situation is different, and that some people are reluctant to make that membership leap for completely valid reasons of cost. But in these chats I try to convey the idea that the dues means you're buying into an idea of shared governance, of protection of academic freedom, of good working conditions, of fair and equitable treatment, of due process. Your dues tell the administration that these are your priorities. Your dues tell the administration and your fellow faculty members that you don't want to leave the business of fighting for those priorities to others. Your dues say that you are going to be heard.

You're also in a very concrete sense buying into the idea that you want to help the community of faculty. For example your dues money goes in part to pay the legal costs that other UFF members would incur when they have suffered from a contract violation. Your dues money goes in part to help a UFF member travel to that research conference when grants and departmental funds just happen to be lacking. Your dues money goes in part to let us set up workshops that will help UFF members win a TIP award. And of course you yourself can take advantage of these benefits as well!

Lastly, in a more raw sense, your membership in UFF means that we are just that much more likely to get a good deal for you at the bargaining table, a deal (in e.g. raises) that will easily make up for the dues cost itself. For example, the raises we won in 2014 mean that effectively UFF membership for every faculty member who worked at UCF in 2013-2014 is free forever.

In this past academic year, we saw wonderful growth in not only UFF membership but in the amount of engagement that faculty had with university issues. Looking forward, the Membership Committee hopes to continue this growth in the 2015-2016 academic year. UCF is a dynamic, cutting-edge university, and faculty need to be engaged in the university-level and state-level issues of higher education. I look forward to chatting with more of you in the Fall and Spring about membership, the union, or any department/college/university issues you have on your mind. Please feel free to contact me at yrf@me.com. Your union listens.

Member Spotlight

Joanna Mishtal, Anthropology



I am a medical anthropologist and an associate professor at UCF in the department of anthropology. I joined UCF in 2008, after obtaining my PhD at the University of Colorado at Boulder in 2006 and completing a Postdoctoral Fellowship (2006-2008) at Columbia University. When I was invited for my UCF campus interview in January 2008, I learned from the Department of Anthropology Chair at that time, Arlen Chase, that the UCF faculty have a prominent union. This information was crucial in my decision to accept the faculty position at UCF. I joined UFF as soon as I began my appointment here and maintained my membership since then. In my conversations with colleagues who work at other universities, we often discuss employment issues that arise in

("Member Spotlight" - Continued)

academia, and I am always eager and proud to bring up the fact that our Florida faculty are unionized, and that UFF is such an important and active player in protecting our rights and negotiating our status and benefits. Without exception, my colleagues at other universities wish they had a strong union to support them.

I have greatly benefited from my union membership. In particular, I found the various UFF-sponsored workshops immensely useful. In these workshops, experienced faculty help more junior colleagues prepare competitive binders for teaching awards and tenure review process. I attended every UFF workshop I could fit in my schedule, in addition to those put on by, for example, the College of Sciences (COS). I realized quickly that unlike workshops put on by COS which are rather formal and generally repeat information already available on websites, the UFF workshops give the "inside scoop" on how to best present one's case for P&T review and various awards. For example, the teaching awards workshops led by Keith Folse were priceless for me, and I credit them for my successes in receiving the College of

Sciences Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award in 2013, the University Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award in 2013, and the Teaching Incentive Program Award in 2013.

I also took advantage of UFF workshops in preparation for my promotion and tenure review, which I secured successfully in 2014. In fact, I cannot imagine going up for tenure and promotion without the support of the union behind me, and I especially encourage my pre-tenure colleagues to take advantage of the support offered by the UFF.

In 2015, I was fortunate to receive the UFF-UCF Travel GAP Grant, which contributed \$500 to my travel this summer in Poland. This grant filled a gap in my funding and helped me complete my 2-year fieldwork on infertility health care regulation, a project which is part of my long-term research agenda in the area of reproductive health and policies in Europe. Completing this project is very significant for my career at UCF, and directly impacts my ability to publish and seek future funding. I am grateful to UFF for launching the Travel GAP Grant as it fills a glaring void in internal funding support so necessary to my ability to seek advancement.

Opportunities to Get Involved in UFF

In 2015, a group of union members, many of them new to union activity, got together to administer the new UFF Travel 'Gap' Grants. The group developed criteria for the award, assessed applications, wrote award letters and administered funds.

Another group, called the Family-Focus group, got together to make UCF a better place for faculty with families. They researched family benefits at other institutions and compared them to UCF's benefits, they surveyed faculty about their needs, they proposed changes at UCF and coordinated with the bargaining team to get these changes into our contract.

UFF has several groups working on projects that directly improve the conditions for us as

employees. Please get involved. We have many opportunities, including

- Bargaining
- Grievance
- Membership
- Family Focus
- Communications
- Events
- Legislative
- Building our UFF
- Community Outreach

You can even start your own group within UFF. What do you want to see happen at UCF? By all means, tell us! Even better, join us and **make** it happen! Contact our membership chair, Yan Fernandez at yrf@me.com.

Join us!

Please send this completed form to:

Yan Fernandez, UFF Membership Chair

Campus mail: Dept. of Physics, Physical Sciences Bldg, Zip +2385

US mail: Dept. of Physics, 4000 Central Florida Blvd, Orlando FL

UNITED FACULTY OF FLORIDA DUES CHECK-OFF AUTHORIZATION FORM

I authorize the University of Central Florida to deduct from my pay, starting with the first full biweekly pay period commencing not earlier than seven days from the date this authorization is received by the University, membership dues of the United Faculty of Florida in such amount as may be established from time to time in accordance with the constitution and bylaws of the UFF and certified in writing to the University by the UFF, and I direct that the sum so deducted be paid over to the UFF.

UFF dues payments are not tax deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. However, they may be tax deductible under other provisions of the Internal Revenue Code.

The above deduction authorization shall continue until either (1) revoked by me at any time upon thirty days written notice to the University and to UFF, or (2) my transfer or promotion out of this bargaining unit. Unless this Dues Check-off Authorization is revoked in the manner heretofore stated, this authorization shall remain in full force and effect in accordance with the provisions of Section 447.007 Florida Statute.

Date

Employee's Signature

Employee Identification Number

Name-printed

Department/Unit

College/Area



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