

# THE ORGANIZER

**Newsletter of UFF-UCF: The United Faculty of Florida**

## Mission

To protect and support the practice of our academic professions, including teaching, research, and service.

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## Special Message from UFF President Jennifer Proffitt



The United Faculty of Florida (UFF) is your voice for building stronger universities and colleges across Florida. Whether it is standing up for academic freedom, bargaining for quality faculty salaries and benefits, or lobbying to advance, protect, and strengthen the university and college systems, UFF is there, representing more than 20,000 faculty members at twelve public universities, twelve state and community colleges, and at St. Leo University. In addition, UFF represents 8,000 graduate assistants at four universities. Together, we are making a difference for higher education in Florida.

During the 2016 Legislative Session, UFF was at the forefront of the debates on carrying guns on campus, performance funding, your health insurance, and many other critical issues impacting higher education and faculty in Florida. We were testifying and lobbying for positions advocated by the UFF Senate, which is our union’s legislative body. We prevailed on many of these issues, making a difference for you and the students at our colleges and universities.

The next Legislative Session began this month, and these same critical issues that impact you, your profession, and higher education as a whole—such as guns on campus, public records exemptions for

## Senators

Pat Angley  
 Seth Elsheimer  
 John Fauth  
 Yan Fernandez  
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 Christopher Harris  
 Scott Launier  
 Donna Malve  
 Barry Mauer  
 Dan Murphree  
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## Alternate Senators

Stacy Barber  
 Jonathan Beever  
 Mason Cash  
 Farrah Cato  
 Joe Cho  
 Melissa Dodd  
 Keith Folse  
 Alla Kourova  
 Weili Luo  
 Holly McDonald  
 Shelley Park  
 Adam Pritchard  
 Beatriz Reyes-Foster  
 Jennifer Sandoval  
 Charlotte Trinquet  
 Stephanie Wheeler

## Committee Chairs

Bargaining: John Fauth  
 Membership: Yan Fernandez  
 Grievance: Dan Murphree  
 Diversity: Stephanie Wheeler

president, provost, and dean searches, and performance funding revisions—will be on the agenda. UFF will be there to advance faculty interests, including securing adequate funding, protecting academic freedom and tenure, and ensuring safe and productive workplaces. For that reason, we are organizing legislative teams at most of our chapters. Faculty can best influence legislators from their home district and who represent voters in the region served by your college or university. The power of at-home lobbying cannot be ignored, and UFF chapters will be building a stronger legislative program in the years ahead.

Another priority is growing membership in UFF. In 2016, we added three new chapters and are working on organizing other chapters. Faculty at the new and newly organizing chapters recognize the need for faculty voices in decision-making. There is strength in numbers and UFF membership is not only important to you as an individual but important for the unity we must exhibit to be leaders in Florida's higher education system. We've got your back, but we need you to provide the clout necessary for a vital union of faculty members and graduate assistants. We must grow, and we will with your help and your membership!

As a member, not only will you be joining thousands of your colleagues in the effort to create the best higher education system possible, you will also be a member of the Florida Education Association, which advocates for K-12 professionals throughout the state, and the National Education Association and American Federation of Teachers, who advocate on our behalf nationwide. You are also entitled to many other benefits as a member, including \$1,000,000 in professional liability insurance, \$10,000 in life insurance, discounts on home and auto insurance, UFF representation should you need help in an unfair work situation, and more. Our collective bargaining strength grows exponentially with increased membership! If you are not a member, join UFF today and get involved. We need you and you need a strong UFF.

Join us in defending the quality of what we do for our students and the future of Florida!

Jennifer Proffitt is Professor of Political Science in the College of Communication & Information at Florida State University and President of UFF.

# MOSAIC Supports Diversity

One of UCF's goals is to reach 25% employment of underrepresented groups among tenured and tenure-earning faculty and full-time administrative and professional new hires and to retain these employees for 5+ years. To achieve this metric, the university must demonstrate that it has a plan to retain faculty and staff from underrepresented groups and to make them feel safe, appreciated, and at home in the university community.

UCF's Leadership Empowerment Program (LEP) is an initiative of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to recruit employees from underrepresented groups (such as women, people of color, and LGBTQ) and offer opportunities for the development of leadership and professional skills. Participants engage in self-reflection, mentorship, and the creation of a research project.

For her LEP project, Associate Professor of Art History and UFF member Ilenia Colón Mendoza founded MOSAIC, an organization focused on Mentorship, Opportunity, Support, Achievement, Initiatives, and Community. MOSAIC's goal is to provide a safe space for underrepresented faculty and staff and to foster collaboration and community with an eye towards institutional cultural transformation. This year the pilot phase of MOSAIC focused on the creation of mentorship pairs and community building.

Before its launch, MOSAIC was advertised by the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, the Center for Success of Women Faculty, and the Office of Faculty Excellence. Sixteen people responded, filled out an initial questionnaire, and 8 mentoring pairs were created. A Facebook group, UCF MOSAIC Underrepresented Mentorship Community, was established so participants could share information, member news, and events, as well as motivational posts and discussions.

Over the course of the 2016-2017 academic year, MOSAIC sponsored a:

- kick-off breakfast and information meeting
- health workshop
- laughter yoga session
- bilingual empowerment talk

This summer MOSAIC is hosting a book club where participants will read and discuss *Written/Unwritten: Diversity and the Hidden Truths of Tenure* (UNC Press,

2016). Edited by Patricia A. Matthew, *Written/Unwritten* reveals that faculty of color often face two sets of rules when applying for reappointment, tenure, and promotion. The explicit rules found in handbooks or determined by union contracts, and the ever-shifting implicit rules that operate beneath the surface. This second set of unwritten rules disproportionately affects faculty hired to "diversify" departments.

MOSAIC helps uncover this second set of rules and assists faculty in navigating the institution, while simultaneously seeking to change the system and increase recruitment and retention of faculty from underrepresented groups. Participants indicated unanimous support for the program and argued that it should be a permanent initiative. The major factor impacting attendance was lack of time to go to activities because of heavy service commitments.

Through meetings with targeted-opportunity program candidates who asked candid questions about the university's diversity climate, UCF's diversity initiatives, and the existence of community groups that support faculty of color, MOSAIC's plan has expanded. Next year, MOSAIC will include: increased opportunities to attend cultural events; more informal get-togethers such as lunches, meditation groups, and film screenings; partnerships with institutions such as the Florida Diversity Council; and presence at the Institute on Teaching and Mentoring.

Institutions recognize the need for diversity, but often struggle to make the goal a reality. MOSAIC is a targeted initiative aimed at assisting in the retention of faculty and staff from underrepresented groups. If you are interested in joining MOSAIC, email [ilenia.ColonMendoza@ucf.edu](mailto:ilenia.ColonMendoza@ucf.edu).



(from left to right: Yovanna Pineda, Ilenia Colón Mendoza, Wanda Raimundi Ortiz, Beatriz Reyes-Foster, Chantel Carter, Lisa Danker, Holly McDonald, Christian Ravela, Synthia Doaks, Fernando Rivera, M.C. Santana, Ann Shillingford-Butler, Coralie Solomon, Lyman Brodie and Anthony Major)

# UFF Supports Diversity

A critical part of UCF's strategic plan is to "become more inclusive and diverse," a goal that aligns with the hope that "the entire university community is empowered to identify, seek, develop, and capitalize on opportunities that arise in the future and meet the vision of the university." This project aligns with UFF's mission to create a diverse, engaged, and inclusive community of faculty, that has the potential to make UCF a model workplace and learning community. These goals are certainly a great start, but it's going to take more than that - it will take all of us working together towards these shared goals.

My name is Stephanie Wheeler, and I'm wrapping up my second year as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Writing and Rhetoric. Alongside my colleague Christian Ravela, a lecturer in the Philosophy Department, we have challenged ourselves to ensure this goal of diversity and inclusion is realized. Christian and I co-chair UFF's Diversity and Equality Committee, the first of its kind at UCF. Our committee is focused exclusively on faculty concerns and, unlike the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at UCF, is not connected to UCF or the administration.

At our first meeting this past January, those in attendance - and those who could not attend, but wanted to be a part of our project - brainstormed ways we can ensure that the entire UCF faculty feels empowered, supported, and heard. The committee sent out a survey to find out what we can do for you, UFF members, and from that survey, we compiled a list of top projects that you would like to see our committee carry out. These potential projects are guided by honoring four principles we identified: community, resistance, reaffirmation, and possibility.

## Community:

- Continue to engage with the community and build partnerships that align with our values
- Organize and coordinate events, activities, and groups for community-building among underrepresented faculty

## Resistance:

- Offer grievance training to committee members
- Improve training for department/programs heads on issues of diversity and inclusion

## Reaffirmation:

- Create a UFF-UCF Diversity event and/or diversity forums or workshops
- Strengthen diversity/equality protections and incentives into the Collective Bargaining Agreement

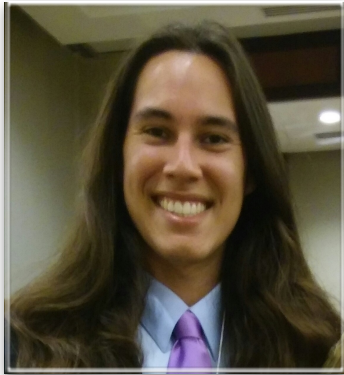
## Possibility:

- Investigate best practices at other institutions
- Develop a list of long- and short-term goals for identifying strategies for incorporating accountability, shared responsibility, and assessment into our culture
- Follow up regarding diversity recruitment efforts in searches

Our committee has begun examining and updating existing institutional diversity data to shape our future actions. And while this is an ambitious set of goals, I don't think it's outside our power to reach them if we work together. Christian and I invite you to contact us if you'd like to learn more about the committee, our projects, and how you can contribute.

Stephanie Wheeler is Assistant Professor of Writing and Rhetoric and Chair of UFF's Diversity and Equality Committee.

# UCF Students Support Diversity



**Leander Houston**

For sixteen years, education has drawn me to the classroom, where I see bright futures and examples of shining innovation. My love of education has drawn me to late-night grading tours, early morning coffee mugs, and the welcoming smiles of students and scholars. More importantly, education has shown me the significance of diversity and collaboration. Diversity goes beyond the racial and economic background of students to the individual ideas, perceptions, and exceptionalities that shape the human condition.

Diversity creates an environment of growth and prosperity here in Central Florida. The commitment to diversity is a cornerstone of UCF and it has led to the education of hundreds of thousands of bright minds. Diversity is what drew me to UCF and my belief in its importance underpins my desire to create an inclusive environment.

How does diversity compel the active mind to creation and discovery? It is the culmination of dissonant perspectives and enlightening experiences. Diversity forces us to challenge our preconceptions and adjust our framework to understand new situations. Diversity can involve a difficult process of adjustment, but all one needs is an open mind to start to empathize with the experiences of others.

Without challenge, there is no growth. Without collaboration, there is no innovation. It took 400,000 people of different professions, backgrounds, and personalities working together to send people to the moon. It takes a classroom of students from different intelligences, backgrounds, and experiences to create the next doctor, teacher, and inventor.

The purpose of diversity is not to fight over the differences we have, but to share our experiences and to help others grow. I believe it is the differences in people that bring them together, not the similarities. We, as a community here at UCF, cherish the diversity that makes us some of the most innovative people in the country. It is through our diversity that we succeed, and it is through diversity that we will continue to do so. We have proved it, time and again, and we will continue to prove it for many years to come. I hope to use what I know and have experienced as a student at UCF to help others, and to embrace diversity.



Leander Houston is a student at UCF the College of Education and Human Performance, a member of the Florida Education Association student chapter, and an intern with UFF.

# Is Collective Bargaining Effective?

## Is collective bargaining effective?

Here are the raises provided by the State Legislature over the last 10 years:

2016 - 2017: Zero  
 2015 - 2016: Zero  
 2014 - 2015: Zero  
 2013 - 2014: \$1,000  
 2012 - 2103: Zero  
 2011 - 2012: Zero  
 2010 - 2011: Zero  
 2009 - 2010: Zero  
 2008 - 2009: Zero  
 2007 - 2008: Zero

Inflation averaged 1.8% per year during this time, so state workers lost considerable earning power.

Economic conditions for those in the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Coral Reef Conservation Program became so untenable that almost the entire professional staff left for positions with county governments. Many people who work(ed) for the State of Florida experienced similar conditions and either have left already or are seeking other employment. Imagine if that sort of brain drain occurred at UCF or at Florida's other state colleges and universities?

One reason salaries at UCF did not flat line: UFF collectively bargained for salary increases, which are a mandatory subject of bargaining. Other mandatory subjects of bargaining include incentive pay, bonuses, promotions, workloads, sick leave, tuition benefits, health insurance, mileage and stipends, grievance procedures and, yes, even parking. All subjects directly related to terms and conditions of employment are mandatory subjects of bargaining.

However, even collective bargaining did not prevent salary erosion at UCF, as increases for faculty with

annual evaluations of "Outstanding" every single year averaged just 1.68%. Little wonder that >60% of respondents to the recent bargaining poll disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, "Faculty members are rewarded fairly for the amount of effort they put in." Respondents also ranked "Keeping up with the cost of living" and "Correcting existing salary inequities, including market inequities, compression and inversion" as the two top priorities for salary increases.

The collective bargaining team is introducing a salary proposal that includes an across-the-board increase commensurate with inflation to correct inequities caused by many faculty members being ineligible for (or not receiving) incentive awards despite years of consistently above satisfactory or outstanding work. This proposal also includes increases for faculty members who make less than beginning kindergarten teachers in the Orange County Public School system, as well as a merit increase.

## How can you support collective bargaining?

1. Come to the collective bargaining sessions. Sessions this Spring semester are noon - 2:00 pm in Millican Hall, room 395E on March 20, April 3, and April 17.
2. Tell administrators and the Board of Trustees that you expect a salary increase commensurate with your achievements – achievements that resulted in UCF being at or near the top in performance-based funding for four consecutive years.
3. Continue to provide ideas for the bargaining team. Next year, they begin bargaining the entire contract, and they need your help to address issues such as workload, compensation for non-course teaching during the summer, paid family leave, and parking.

# Does it Pay to be a Member?

## UFF Negotiates Summer Salary Increases



**Terri Susan Fine**

A few years ago, while serving jury duty, I noticed another UCF faculty member across the waiting room. I had never met this person but knew them by reputation; with nothing else to do but return to my novel, I introduced myself.

The conversation turned to our time at UCF, how, and how much, the university has grown, and what that has meant for us both personally and professionally.

I asked my colleague and new acquaintance about union membership. "Are you a union member?" The response was an emphatic "no—it costs too much and there is no benefit." I clarified that it is because of the union that most faculty earn more in many ways, including summer pay.

Let me explain. When I first joined UCF, summer courses paid 11% of one's nine-month salary per course. A full summer contract paid 33% of a faculty member's nine-month salary, which continues today.

What about those faculty who teach one or two courses each summer? Summer teaching is rarely full time—the summer budget allocation comes from a separate pool than the academic year budget, and the number of courses available do not represent the same number of courses that faculty would otherwise teach in a typical semester. Because most faculty are not assigned a full-time summer contract,

they earn less per week than during a regular semester.

Enter the union. UFF-UCF negotiated a change in the percentage paid per summer course so that the first and second courses paid 12.5% each, while the third course paid 8%. Pay for those on full-time summer contracts did not change, as full time summer pay remained at 33%, but those allocated one or two courses earned more because 11% of their nine-month pay per course increased to 12.5%.

That 1.5% difference is meaningful. A person earning \$60,000 per year under the old system earned \$6,600 per summer course while under the new system that person earns \$7,500 per course, a \$900 difference. Those faculty teaching two summer courses earns \$1,800 more.

Does that \$900 per course make a difference? Some might argue that, after taxes and other deductions, the \$900 difference does not make a difference. I would argue that it does. Under the old system, the person teaching two summer courses earned \$73,200 in 12 months, while under the new system that same person earns \$75,000. The higher annual pay increases retirement contributions and serves as a recruitment tool. Consequently, this one change achieves three benefits: it helps faculty earn more, it increases retirement contributions, and it supports recruitment.

I did not convince my new acquaintance to join the union, but for most of you reading this, and for most of our colleagues, this one contract change, which was secured by our faculty union, is meaningful.

Terri Susan Fine is Professor of Political Science and Associate Director at the Lou Frey Institute of Politics and Government. She has taught at UCF since 1989.

## UFF Travel Gap Grant

UFF has awarded more than \$18,000 to members from across the campus. At a time when university support for travel has decreased, the union has worked hard to mind the gap. Going to a conference and need support? Join the union today.



**Lisa Roney**  
Associate Professor of English

The UFF Travel Gap Grant I received in the Fall of 2016 has meant a great deal not only to my personal finances, but to my ability to support UCF's national/international literary magazine, *The Florida Review*. The grant provided funds to aid my travel to the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) conference in Washington, D.C., February 8-12, 2017. In addition, because I received this support, I was able to attend two smaller, regional conferences, as well as the Miami Book Fair where I was able to interview 12 well-known authors for our new online supplement to *The Florida Review*.

My attendance at this year's AWP conference was important for my individual career, but also for the future of *The Florida Review*, which has a distinguished 40-year history. This year's estimated attendance at AWP was 12,250, and most of the attendees visited the book fair, where we had a table promoting the magazine (as well as our MFA program and faculty) with special offers and several book signings, including one for our new annual chapbook. In addition, I was able to discuss submissions from several notable authors. I also presented on two panels during the conference.

I have spent approximately \$4,650 on travel this academic year. My chair allowed *The Florida Review* to cover most of one regional trip (about \$500), and my department travel allotment is another \$500. Even with the additional Travel Gap Grant of \$500, I will have spent more than \$3,000 of my personal money on travel. The grant makes a huge difference, and I am extremely grateful for the support.



**Martine Vanryckeghem**  
Professor of Communication Sciences

The UFF Travel GAP Grant I received in Fall 2016 gave me the opportunity to present at the annual convention of the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association in Philadelphia. I gave six presentations at the conference, three of which were in collaboration with colleagues from abroad and involved normative investigations with standardized tests that I co-authored for children and adults who stutter.

One included a graduate student from Ali Yavar Jung Institute for the Hearing Handicapped in Mumbai, India. She, a UCF alumna originally from India, and I worked on a Hindi and Marathi version of a test for school-age children who stutter. Another paper was delivered with a colleague from the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia; and a third presentation was with colleagues from Greece and involved a multi-site research collaboration. Three additional presentations were national investigations in the field of fluency and voice disorders that included UCF students.

The convention of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association is the premier annual professional education event for speech-language pathologists, audiologists, and scientists and brings together approximately 15,000 attendees. This convention provides unparalleled opportunities to hear the latest research and gain professional knowledge. By sharing my research with colleagues from around the world, I bring visibility to UCF, Florida, and the U.S. These endeavors are in accordance with UCF's internationally-based mission and President Hitt's goals for UCF.





**Maria T. Redmon**

**Associate Instructor of Modern Languages**

In fall 2015, I was awarded a UFF Travel Gap Grant to attend the premier conference for translators and interpreters, the American Translators Association (ATA). The grant contributed to enhancing my professional development and my students' success. At the ATA, professionals and professors of translation and interpretation meet, network, and exchange innovative ideas while sharing professional and academic experiences.

As a professor of Spanish translation and interpretation, the conference allowed me to expand my teaching and learning expertise in the related areas of medical, legal, conference, multimedia, social and business translation and interpretation. I also met with employers in the diverse fields of interpretation and translation.

Of particular importance to UCF, the networking sessions helped establish internship positions for our students who use technology to bridge the distance barrier that exists between the translator/interpreter and the client. In addition, I previewed new educational technology and participated in interactive sessions.

Universities from the U.S. and abroad presented their educational programs and experiences. Essentially, professional development opportunities open the door to future student exchanges and program development.

Through the knowledge gained and the contacts established at the ATA conference, I can revise existing courses, develop new course materials, and further my research in the field of translation and interpretation.



**Nichole Stack**

**Instructor of Writing and Rhetoric**

I've always looked forward to attending conferences, but aside from a 3-day workshop in summer 2014, my traveling has been prevented by lack of funding and by my son's need for high-level care.

As I continued to teach and take on more administrative tasks in the department, most recently as the Global Achievement Academy liaison, I found myself longing to travel more and more, for a number of reasons, including to keep up with discipline developments and to fulfill the necessary "ticks" for a good annual evaluation.

This year, thankfully, our caregiving situation changed, and we now have a qualified respite provider to help care for my son when I'm away from home. This means I have some time to travel, but what about the funds?

That's where UFF stepped in. With the UFF Travel Gap Grant, in addition to a travel stipend provided by my department, I was able to attend conferences this year.

In February, I traveled to St. Pete Beach to present at the Sunshine State Teaching and Learning Conference with three of my colleagues, and in March I will be attending the annual Conference on College Composition and Communication in Portland, where a number of colleagues will present, and many others of us will be there to participate and show support. Without the grant I would not have been able to attend both conferences, so I am incredibly grateful to UFF for affording me this opportunity.



## Does Tenure Matter?

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, tenure, or the legal protection against summary dismissal without just cause, was first introduced to American colleges and universities in response to the increasing dismissal of politically-outspoken faculty members.

One of the most celebrated cases involved Elisha Andrews, the 8th president of Brown University, who argued for the free coinage of silver to stop deflation. Brown's Board of Trustees, which included Francis Wayland, Dean of the Yale Law School, instructed Andrews to curtail his public support of the issue, arguing that his position threatened to diminish donations and that "money was the life blood" of the university. In response, Josiah Royce, Professor of Philosophy at Harvard, asserted that "freedom, not money" was the life blood of the university.

Following much public debate, the presidents of Harvard, Columbia, and the University of Chicago argued that donors could not dictate faculty employment decisions, and in 1915, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) issued its Declaration of Principles, which outlined the importance of tenure to academic freedom. In 1940, the AAUP further codified its position, establishing a "seven-year probationary period" for tenure-track positions. It argued that tenure was fundamental to the "freedom of teaching and research" and necessary to create "a sufficient degree of economic security to make the profession attractive."

The most significant adoption of academic tenure occurred in 1945, when the GI Bill led to a quickly expanding student body. To attract faculty to serve the new students, formal tenure was established as a benefit of employment and the rate of tenure increased to 52%.

Since 1972, however, there has been a steady decline in the percentage of college and university teaching positions that are either tenured or tenure-track. U.S. Department of Education statistics put the combined tenured/tenure-track rate at 56% for 1975, 46.8% for 1989, and 31.9% for 2005. Even though college enrollment has grown by 90% in the last 40 years (from 11.1 million in 1977 to 22.3 million in 2017), colleges and universities have not hired tenure-track faculty in sufficient numbers to meet student demand. Instead, more than half the people teaching in colleges and

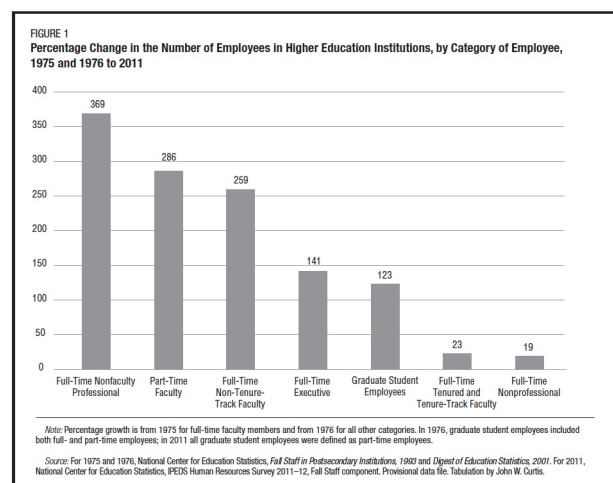
universities are non-tenured adjuncts, instructors, or lecturers. This may keep costs down, but it eliminates the full enfranchisement of faculty.

As Marc Bousquet argued in *How the University Works: Higher Education and the Low-Wage Nation*: "We are not overproducing PhDs; we are underproducing jobs. There is plenty of work in higher education for everyone who wants to do it. The problem is that this enormous quantity of work no longer comes in the bundle of tenure, dignity, scholarship and a living wage."

Worse still, the assault on tenure comes at a time when increased numbers of women and people of color are earning PhDs and looking for secure jobs in the academy. A culturally diverse, tenured professorate is necessary to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population. Still, minority faculty are underrepresented among tenured faculty. A 2009 study showed that of tenured faculty, 71.5% were white, 6.5% Asian, 4.5% African-American, and 3.1% Hispanic.

Successful communities grant their members certain rights. Tenure provides the professorate the protection they need to participate fully in the life of their departments without the risk of dismissal for holding unpopular views.

When faculty do controversial research, they deserve to be protected. That's why peer-review and tenure are important. To reach high educational standards, we need full-time, experienced, well-compensated, and diverse faculty. We need tenure.



# Protecting Academic Freedom



**Melanie Sberna Hinojosa**  
**Ramon Hinojosa**

Academic freedom is the widely-held belief that to achieve the mission of higher education, faculty must be free to engage in inquiry, research, and teaching that may be politically unpopular. Recent developments across the country suggest that academic freedom might be under assault.

In January of 2017, a 6-week workshop on men and masculinities held at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, aimed in part at reducing sexual violence, was deemed by Wisconsin state senator Steve Nass (R) to be “a war on men.” The Republican-led Wisconsin legislature threatened to withhold funds from UW-Madison because of a university course on “whiteness,” a course that explores the dynamics of power and racial inequalities in society, because it was deemed “racially divisive.”

In the Arizona state house, a bill was introduced to prevent public colleges and universities from teaching courses or conducting activities that “promote[s] division, resentment or social justice toward a race, gender, religion, political affiliation, social class or other class[es] of people.”

And recently President Trump threatened to restrict funds to the University of California system

because of student-led demonstrations that prevented Milo Yiannopoulos from speaking at UC-Berkeley. Yiannopoulos gained fame as an internet troll who engaged in and incited racially insensitive cyberbullying of comedian Leslie Jones, a black woman whom he compared to Harambe, the gorilla fatally shot at the Cincinnati Zoo.

Make no mistake; these bills are directly aimed at limiting academic freedom, especially where academic activities appear to directly and indirectly challenge the dominant power structure.

To be sure, certain types of professional speech can be regulated, however the United States Supreme Court does not hold that “professional speech,” such as that found in classroom teaching, to be a category of speech that warrants a lower level of first amendment protections.

Faculty must have the ability to teach courses critical of power, or students lose out on the valuable opportunity to learn from academic experts how to ameliorate disparities in matters of social justice. We call on state legislators across the country to protect academic freedom in the classroom, and on college and university campuses more broadly. Legislative action aimed at limiting the content or topics of social justice represents a pernicious way of limiting the free speech of academics and violates First Amendment rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

**Melanie Sberna Hinojosa is Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology. She teaches courses on quantitative methodology and aging.**

**Ramon Hinojosa is Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology. He teaches courses on medical sociology, social change, aging and men, masculinities and health.**

# Keeping Guns Off College Campuses



(UFF Treasurer Barry Mauer at a recent forum on guns with Representative Scott Plakon)

For the third time in three years, Republican state legislators, backed by the NRA and ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council) are pushing a bill that would allow guns on campus. The argument supporting the bill is a mixture of myth and misinformation. On the myth side: the claim that the Second Amendment gives people the right to carry guns anywhere. On the misinformation side: the claim that campuses are dangerous places and that allowing people to carry guns will make them safer.

Historically, the Second Amendment addressed the need for the government to suppress armed insurrections and repel foreign invasions despite a sparse population, the lack of a standing federal army, and the federal government's lack of weapons. The Second Amendment called for militias, regulated by states, to collect weapons, which at the time were mostly single-shot craftsman-made muskets and rifles.

Did the Founding Fathers believe guns should be in the classroom? Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, and James Madison, author of the Constitution, banned weapons at the University of Virginia. They wrote, "No student shall, within the precincts of the University, introduce, keep or use weapons or arms of any kind."

Are campuses dangerous places threatened by terrorists and mass shooters? You are more likely to die from an appliance falling on you, slipping in the bathtub, or getting struck by lightning than being killed by a terrorist. Terrorists have killed fewer than 4,000 Americans in the U.S. over 30 years (that includes 9/11). Mass shootings have increased over the past few years, but they make up a tiny fraction of shootings. Mass shootings in the U.S. (not just on campuses) kill roughly 40 people per year on average, whereas "ordinary" gun violence killed 33,636 people in 2013 alone, and injured over 100,000.

How risky is it to allow students to bring guns to campus? Consider that some students get involved in dangerous political groups on campus and adding guns will make these students much more dangerous. For example, in the early 2000s, there was a group of UCF students who formed a Facebook group called "REBEL" (Republican Establishment for the Brutal Eradication of Liberals). More recently, in fall 2014, a Facebook group called "White Student Union" was formed and anti-Semitic stickers and fliers were placed around the UCF campus in fall 2016. Hate groups and their racist rhetoric may be "just talk" - but it is notable that some members of these groups posed with guns on their Facebook pages.

Gun advocates argue that bad guys with guns can only be stopped by good guys with guns. But humans are more complex than that. Omar Mateen, the shooter in the Pulse Nightclub massacre, was a U.S. citizen and trained security officer. Should he have been allowed to bring guns to class? NBC News reported, "Following the Virginia Tech shooting in April 2007, Mateen suggested in a corrections officer training class that he would bring a gun to class. P.H. Skipper, who was the warden at the institution, wrote that 'in light of the tragic events at

Virginia Tech officer Mateen's inquiry about bringing a weapon to class is at best extremely disturbing."

Recently, a UCF student put a gun to the blindfolded head of a pledge during a hazing incident at Alpha Epsilon Pi. Campuses and guns don't mix. The potential for shootings, whether caused by confusion, accidental discharge of a weapon, or collateral damage in crossfire, is undeniable.

Educators know that creating and fostering a safe learning environment is the first duty of any school. Studies show that students who do not feel safe at school have trouble completing work and learning. When fear increases, learning outcomes decline.

Senate Bill 622 put forth by Senator Greg Steube will decrease, not increase, school safety. Students, parents, and teachers don't want guns in the classroom. Unions, university police, and university presidents don't want guns on campus. A majority of Floridians don't want guns on campuses. If this legislation passes, we will have "open carry" in schools and an expanded Stand Your Ground law, with no restrictions for any campus areas, including labs with dangerous materials, kindergartens, and counseling centers. This bill will put students in danger, not protect them.

The guns in the classroom bill is part of a pattern of attacks on higher education that includes:

- Challenging academic freedom

- Restricting foreign students
- Refusal to confront intolerance, harassment, and hate crimes on campuses
- Unequal access to education
- Attempts to decertify unions and end collective bargaining
- Abolition of the tenure system
- Creation of faculty watch lists
- Increases in corporate control of university research
- Federal budget proposals that eliminate funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), among other education-granting agencies

Whereas some Republican state legislators, such as Senate President Pro Tempore Anitere Flores (R-Miami) and Senator Rene Garcia (R-Miami) have voiced opposition to the guns in the classroom bill, most Republicans seem more interested in asking gun companies for their wish lists than they are in asking educators for theirs. The implications of these extreme right policies on education are undeniable. They represent a war against it, just as their other policies represent a war against the environment, civic discourse and the public sphere, the constitutional system of checks and balances, and any and all opposition.

We have two choices - one makes it easier to put ideas into people's skulls. The other makes it easier to put bullets in them. Which do you choose?



# Resilience: Remembering Pulse



The term “resilience” has gained use in recent years, reflecting an interest in the sustainability of societies and ecosystems. Yet the term also is relevant to our recovery from violence and hate, such as the shooting that occurred last year at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando.

On June 12, 2016, the Pulse Nightclub was the scene of the deadliest mass shooting by a single gunman in U.S. history, and the deadliest terrorist attack on U.S. soil since September 11, 2001. UCF student Juan Ramon Guerrero and alumnus Christopher Andrew Leinonen were among those who lost their lives, and in the wake of the violence, UCF students, faculty, and staff came together to show the resilience of our community. From increased counseling services to blood drives to candlelight vigils, UCF showed its courage, strength, and resilience in a time of crisis.

Biologist C.S. Holling defines resilience as a system’s ability to withstand stress without transforming into another system. For example, a forest that can restore itself after a fire without turning into grassland or desert is resilient. In recovering from acts of violence and hatred, people and communities need to be able to withstand the stresses caused by the incident, as well as the stresses of daily life, without transforming into another state.

In any system there are a few key elements that keep things in equilibrium. In a forest there are species that, if they went away, would mean the end of the forest. Other species, however, are not as crucial. As resilient

people, we must identify the crucial elements in our lives. What parts of our lives do we need to keep us going? Maintaining equilibrium requires physical health, emotional health, and spiritual health. And we need a resilient community to provide the support and resources each person needs.

The most resilient communities have backup. If we lose some type of our support, there are one or more other types of support waiting in the wings. As we recover from violence and hate, it is helpful to identify backup as well. We can cultivate more friends. We can add healthy activities to occupy our time.

The key to a healthy backup is diversity. In a diverse system, things with different forms can have similar functions. In a forest, harmful insect populations can be kept down by various predators, such as birds, other insects, fish, and so on. Similarly in our recovery from violence and hate, we can look for diversity of form, but similarity of function. Emotional support can come from diverse sources: friends, family, and therapists. Healthy activity can include exercise, hobbies, intellectual pursuits, meditation, and communion with others. The greater the diversity, of people and of activities, the greater the resilience.

Loss and change are constants. Sustainability does not mean that things stay exactly as they are. It means, however, that we are able to withstand stress when it does occur, to learn from it, and to move on without losing ourselves and our community.

Join UCF in commemorating the anniversary of the Pulse Nightclub shooting on Thursday, June 8. The UCF Art Gallery will host an opening reception for *Resilience: Remembering Pulse*, a juried exhibition that includes artwork by UCF faculty and staff, the QLatinx community, the Orlando Quilt Guild, the Orlando LGBTQ Board, and the Orlando Museum of Art from 4:00pm – 6:00pm, and President Hitt will host a panel discussion on Memory Mall from 6:30 – 8:00pm, followed by a Celebration of Life from 8:00 – 10:00pm.

# Membership Matters:

## State Legislature Seeks to Decertify Union

Membership in our chapter continues to grow, with our numbers reaching 470 this spring semester. While we are encouraged by our continued membership growth, and will work to keep growing even faster, this does mean that only about 30% of the faculty in our Bargaining Unit (BU) are dues-paying members. This might motivate the question: if having a union is so great, why is the density only 30%?

Some context would be useful. Florida is one of the states that enshrine our right to collectively bargain in the State Constitution; Section 6 of Article I says that “the right of employees, by and through a labor organization, to bargain collectively shall not be denied or abridged.” Note that it is quite explicitly our right to do this, not a privilege granted to us.

However that is not the entire text in Section 6; the section also says that “the right of persons to work shall not be denied or abridged on account of membership or non-membership in any labor union or labor organization.” This makes Florida essentially a so-called “right-to-work” state. In practice this means that every faculty member in our BU receives the benefits and protections of our contract (the “Collective Bargaining Agreement,” or CBA) - even faculty who are not paying dues. The bargaining team, and all of our chapter leadership for that matter, fights for the working conditions of all faculty, including those of non-members, but from a purely transactional point of view, it is possible for a faculty member to be protected by the contract without having to financially buy in to it.

Regardless of whether one likes this situation, it is certainly the case that no faculty member at UCF is forced to pay union dues. We have an “opt-in” system, where a faculty member pays no dues until they sign the membership form. Given (1) this

system, (2) the sheer number of faculty at UCF, (3) how busy we all are, and (4) the finite and limited time that the membership committee has to work on boosting chapter membership, it is perhaps no surprise that there is a great deal of work still to be done in talking one-on-one with faculty members and in elevating UCF’s union-member density.

This is the context for a pair of bills currently under discussion in the State Legislature, HB 11 and SB 1292. These bills would decertify a union and scrap the CBA if that union has less than 50% dues-paying membership. In a “right-to-work” state, where the system is set up to make it more difficult for a union to have dues-paying members, and where no faculty member is obligated to pay dues, it makes little sense to then also require such a threshold of membership, as if union membership were equivalent to a vote by the BU on the usefulness of the union itself.

Nonetheless, for the time being, we are operating in an environment where our rights, as outlined in the State Constitution, may not be as permanent as we would like to think they are. More concretely, all the protections and benefits that we have worked hard to achieve in the CBA could disappear if our chapter is decertified. For a sampling of these rights, as bargained by the union, check out the “Did You Know” archive: [www.uffucf.org/contract/didyouknow](http://www.uffucf.org/contract/didyouknow).

It is more urgent than ever that we demonstrate our power as faculty, and how strongly we believe in the shared governance of UCF. If you are not yet a dues-paying member, please consider joining. You can contact Yan Fernandez at [yrf@me.com](mailto:yrf@me.com), or fill out the membership form on the back of this newsletter. If you are already a member, thank you! And please talk with your colleagues about the benefits of membership and about how urgent the situation is.

# Become a Member Today

## APPENDIX B

### 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



THANK YOU FOR JOINING YOUR FACULTY UNION!

To help us process your membership form efficiently, please complete **both** the top **and** bottom portions of this form.

Please note that we need non-UCF, personal e-mail and postal addresses since federal election law forbids UFF from sending information about union elections and about legislative matters to you through your employer.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address (number, street)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Personal e-mail address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address (apartment or suite)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Personal phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address (city, state, ZIP)

\_\_\_\_\_  
UCF address (Campus, building & room)

Send by campus mail to Prof. Patricia Angley, CNH 405A, Dept. of English, Zip +1346; or contact Membership Committee Chair Prof. Yan Fernandez (yrf@me.com, x36939) for a pickup.

### Please distribute to all faculty