



UNITED FACULTY OF FLORIDA

OCTOBER RECAP NEWSLETTER

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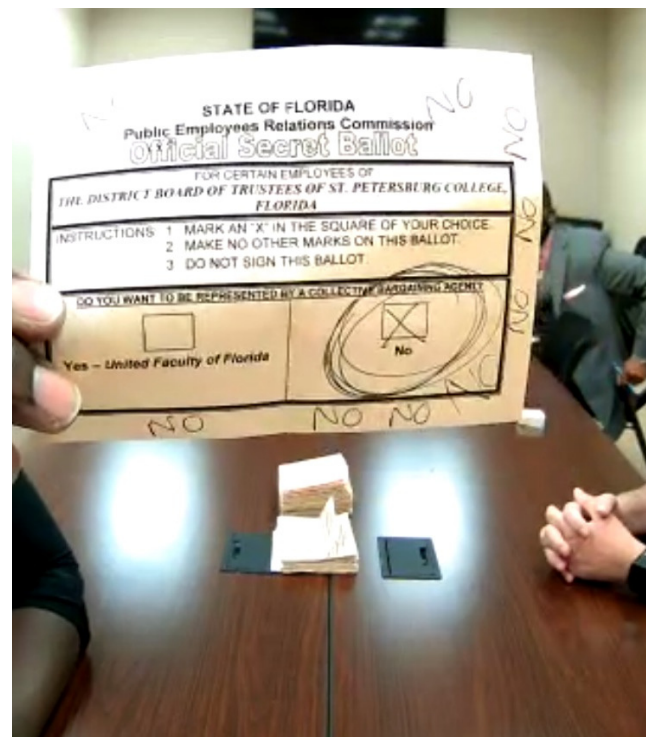
Pictured: Manoli Gerakios, member of the SPC organizing committee

Welcome, St. Petersburg College!

At the end of September, St. Petersburg College became the 34th chapter to join UFF! The organizing effort was led by an incredible team of faculty who have been working for years on their second vote to organize a union.

The final count was an astounding 78% vote in favor of unionization! This was a huge victory for the faculty of SPC, and we couldn't be happier to welcome them into the UFF family.

If you would like to send a note of welcome and congratulations, please contact uff@floridaaea.org, and your message will be passed along to the new UFF SPC leaders and members.



Pictured: One vote was adamantly against unionization, but that didn't stop our team. Don't let the nay-sayers stop you either!



Pictured: UFF officers, staff, and local leaders from over a dozen chapters across the state.

FEA Delegate Assembly

In mid-October, UFF sent over 30 attendees to the FEA Delegate Assembly, held in Orlando. This year's assembly featured speeches from national union leaders, including NEA President Becky Pringle, AFT President Randi Weingarten, AFT Secretary Treasurer Fed Ingram, and more!

In support of UFF's ongoing fight for academic freedom and tenure, the Delegate Assembly adopted the following resolution with near unanimous support:

"The FEA shall support local and statewide initiatives, dedicate legislative resources, and engage in a public messaging campaign to defend academic freedom and tenure at higher education institutions across Florida. Furthermore, the FEA shall continue to dedicate all necessary resources to defending academic freedom and tenure in the Florida Legislature if and when future bills are proposed that seek to undermine these deeply held values of the higher education community."

Each year, every UFF chapter elects local members to attend the FEA Delegate Assembly. If you are interested in serving as a delegate, be sure to contact your local chapter leadership to get your name on the ballot for next year. We'd love to have you!

Read more about this year's Delegate Assembly [here](#).
See more pictures of the Delegate Assembly [here](#).



Pictured: UFF President Andrew Gothard and leaders from the UFF Caucus.



Pictured: UFF FAU President Deandre Poole, NEA President Becky Pringle, and FEA Vice President Carole Gauronskas.



NEA Board of Directors

During this year's FEA Delegate Assembly, UFF First Vice President Caitlin Gille was elected to the NEA Board of Directors Seat 1 by acclamation. NEA Directors serve a 3-year term and are involved in directing policy and promoting the interests of NEA. They meet at the NEA headquarters in Washington, D.C., and help implement decisions of the NEA Representative Assembly. Florida is allotted a total of four directors' seats.

To watch Caitlin's candidate speech, click [here](#).

For more information about the NEA Board of Directors, click [here](#).

Legislative Updates

The Florida Legislature is currently working through committee weeks in preparation for the full legislative session, which will begin in January. For a full list of Florida Senate committees, see [here](#). Florida House committees can be found [here](#).

UFF is tracking the bills that we support and those we are against, both of which are listed to the right. We will also have two of our own bills in the Florida Legislature this year! Our "Post-Secondary Fee Waiver" bill seeks to exempt GTAs from oppressive pay-to-work fees on our State University System campuses. Our "Intellectual Freedom" bill seeks to repeal the student recording, anti-shielding, and viewpoint diversity survey measures from Florida's "Viewpoint Diversity" law, passed last year as HB 233. Our bills have sponsors in the Florida Senate and House, and we will share the associated bill numbers in next month's newsletter

The FEA makes it easy to find and contact your legislators about these and other bills. Just enter your street address and ZIP code [here](#).

Good Bills

SJR 192 (Cruz/Polksy)/HJR 77 (Driskell) – Election of the Commissioner of Education

Bad Bills

SB 242 (Gruters/Perry)/ HB 57 (Fine/Fisher) – Racial and Sexual Discrimination

HB 6007 (Sabatini) – Licenses to Carry Concealed Weapons or Firearms

SB 520 (Brandes) - Public Records and Public Meetings

HB 6055 (Sabatini) – Postsecondary Out-of-State Fee Waivers

Local Campus Actions

This month, the University of South Florida Graduate Assistants United (USF-GAU) and faculty chapter (UFF USF) co-hosted a public "die-in" protest, where a member dressed up as the COVID virus and "infected" participants in the crowd. This protest was designed to raise awareness about the lack of health and safety protocols on the USF campus.

For the past two months, members of the Florida Atlantic University chapter (UFF FAU) have been handing out masks to students, faculty, and staff to promote public health. Because of this action, they have gained new members, and there is renewed positive energy on campus about the union.

Actions like these make our union stronger by showing members and non-members alike that we care about more than just our contracts--we care about the people those contracts serve!



Pictured: USF-GAU leaders and members promoting better health and safety conditions on campus.



Pictured: USF-GAU leaders and members, Caitlin Gille, and the "COVID Virus"



"Viewpoint Discrimination" Lawsuit Update

United Faculty of Florida is seeking further witnesses in our lawsuit to defeat HB 233, Florida's "Viewpoint Diversity" law, in federal court. To participate as a witness, you simply need to show that the bill has negatively influenced your teaching and working conditions in a concrete manner. To learn more about whether you would be eligible to serve as a witness in the suit, read [here](#).

Interested witnesses should contact **UFF President Andrew Gothard** and share your story about how HB 233 has impacted you.

You can read the original filing of our suit, as well as our rebuttal to the motion to dismiss, [here](#).

Press Coverage

During October, UFF's leaders were featured in a number of outlets and publications, including *The Florida Phoenix*, the *NEA Higher Ed Newsletter*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Inside Higher Ed*, *The Tallahassee Democrat*, and more! Some of topics covered include President Biden's Build Back Better agenda, the unionization win at St. Petersburg College, UFF's HB 233 lawsuit, and the wave of anti-China sentiment sweeping legislatures around the country, including in Florida.

Be sure to visit UFF's website to keep up with all of our [news coverage](#) and [press releases](#). If we missed a story in our collection, please send a link to uff@floridaea.org, and we'll be sure to upload it.

You can also follow UFF's press coverage using our social media pages on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

State Committee Updates

Government Relations

The Government Relations Committee is still seeking new volunteers for its HERO (Higher Education Regional Outreach) Teams. In the HERO program, UFF leaders in the same geographical region join together to support one another in legislative work across campuses. With this program, we're putting the "collective" back in collective action!

It is no coincidence that both of UFF's bills have sponsors and are waiting for committee hearings. Currently we have over 40 HERO Team volunteers who have already held over two-dozen lobbying meetings with Florida's legislators.

If you'd like to join a UFF HERO Team, please sign up today! We're always looking for new participants. You don't need any previous experience to get involved. We will meet you where you are and find an action that matches your available time commitment. Sign up [here](#), and join your colleagues today as we advocate for higher education in the Florida Legislature.

Membership

The State Membership Committee will be hosting a training on Wednesday, November 3, from 2:00 - 3:00 pm. Whether you're a Membership Chair looking for some pointers or a local member who would simply like to get more involved with recruiting and organizing efforts on your campus, this training is for you!

If you'd like to participate, please contact uff@floridaea.org, and you will be provided with a Zoom link to attend.



Leadership, Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity

As part of NEA's National Higher Education Month, on October 14th NEA and AAPF sponsored a Diversity & Inclusion workshop with the following key takeaways:

- Diversity & Inclusion Initiatives should be through a CRT lens.
 - Initiatives that exist now are aged and largely ineffective.
- Diversity & Inclusion Initiatives must also be incorporated into shared governance.
 - Leaders must challenge the status quo on faculty retaliation and support to ensure that diversity is not only inclusive but equitable.

On October 20th, NEA also hosted a higher education workshop on how leaders can best practice self-care. We hope all of UFF's members can benefit from these main points:

- Self-care is essential in leadership
 - When you're on a plane, do you put your oxygen mask on before helping your neighbor?
 - Leaders are more likely to prioritize the needs of others above their own needs. Leaders must prioritize self.
- Accountability partners are game changers
 - What is the last thing that you did for yourself?
 - Choose a friend or colleague to hold you accountable to caring for yourself.



Please submit inquiries to LEID Committee at LEIDCommittee.UFF@gmail.com



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As your UFF statewide officers, we thank you for being a member of UFF. Every day, because of members and leaders like you, our union is able to advocate for faculty rights across the state, from campus offices all the way to the Florida Legislature. What we achieve, we achieve together through the power of collective action and the unshakable conviction of member solidarity.

Please feel free to contact us at any time. We are here to serve and support you.



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