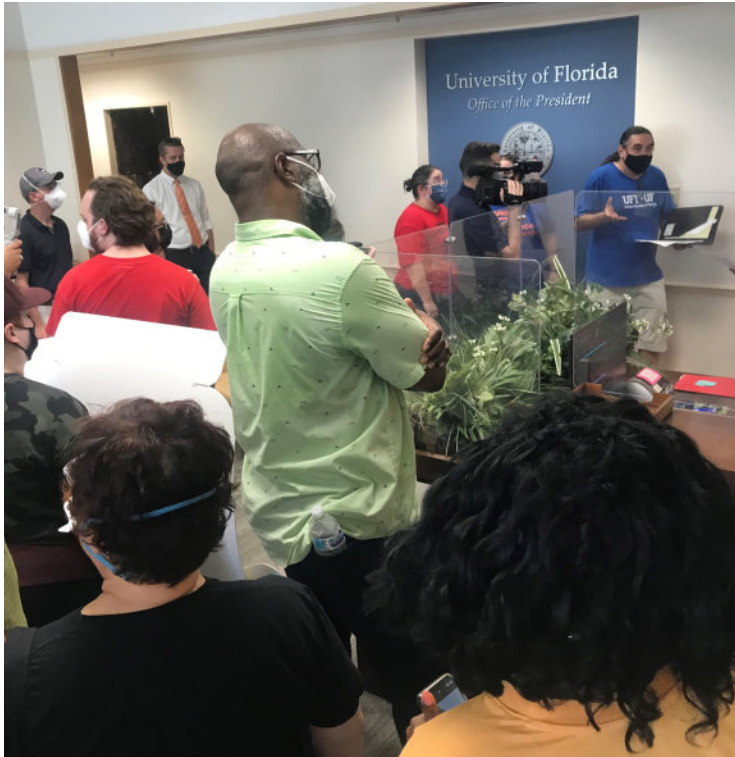


FEBRUARY 9 2022



Pictured: UFF-UF members and leaders marching on the University President's office, August 2021

WHAT'S INSIDE

UF Judicial Ruling

Gubernatorial Townhall

Press Coverage

Legislative Update

HB 233 Lawsuit

State Committees

UFF Senate

Federal Judge Issues Preliminary Ruling in Favor of UF Faculty and Academic Freedom

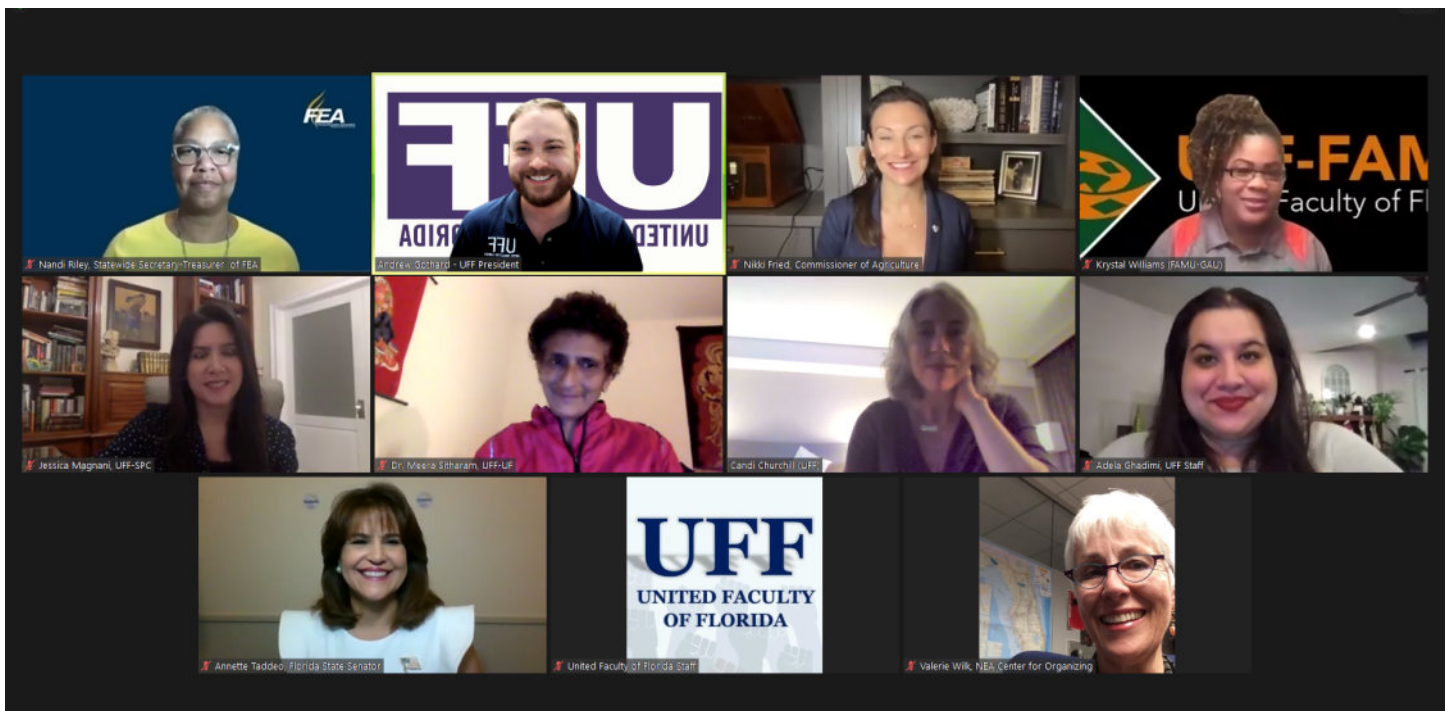
In late October, the University of Florida infringed upon the academic freedom and First Amendment rights of three political science professors and UFF members—Drs. Sharon Austin, Dan Smith, and Michael McDonald—by denying their requests to participate as expert witnesses in a voting rights lawsuit against the state of Florida. Your union sprang into action immediately by coordinating protests, contacting local and national press, and securing state and national affiliate support in the struggle. After the university allowed them to participate in the suit, these faculty went on to pursue a federal suit against the university, in hopes of stopping them from infringing upon the academic freedom of other faculty in the future.

In mid-January, Judge Walker issued a scathing rebuke of University of Florida administration, comparing their actions to those of a university in Hong Kong engaging in anticipatory obedience, lest they anger the ruling Chinese government. He also placed a temporary injunction upon the university's conflict of interest policy until the suit has reached a conclusion in court. This ruling is a huge victory for UF faculty and UFF's members across the state. You can learn more about the ruling by checking [**the news coverage page on the UFF website.**](#)

UFF Hosts Gubernatorial Townhall

In mid-December, UFF hosted a townhall event for Florida's gubernatorial candidates. While all candidates were invited, U.S. Representative Charlie Crist, Commissioner of Agriculture Nikki Fried, and Florida state Senator Annette Taddeo chose to participate. Questions for the event were sourced from UFF members across the state. UFF President Andrew Gothard served as moderator, with multiple UFF and FEA leaders bringing questions that urged candidates to clarify their support for higher education issues, including academic freedom, free speech, and state funding.

The townhall was a resounding success, with the recorded event receiving thousands of views online and wide press coverage from multiple outlets. The candidates' answers and perspectives will be a critical part of UFF's eventual endorsement in the governor's race later this year. Members who were unable to attend the event live can still view and share the recording on [UFF's Facebook page](#).



Pictured: Participants in the UFF Gubernatorial Candidate Townhall event, including Commissioner Nikki Fried and Senator Annette Taddeo

Press Coverage

During December and January, UFF's leaders and members were featured in dozens of state and national publications, including *The Tampa Bay Times*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Florida Politics*, the *Florida Phoenix*, the *Tallahassee Democrat* and more! In addition, UFF President Andrew Gothard and FSU GAU leader Vincenza Berardo published op-eds on SB 520, the secrecy in college and university presidential searches bill, which can be read [here](#) and [here](#).

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@floridaaea.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](#).

Legislative Updates

Though it's only the second week of February, over four weeks of the legislative session have already gone by, and they've been anything but calm. Of most importance to higher education, **SB 520—the 'Secrecy in University and College Presidential Searches' bill**—has already passed through three committees and is on its way to a vote on the Senate floor.

Stop SB 520!

All UFF members should take action to stop SB 520 by following the instructions in the UFF Week 4 Legislative Update! Don't delay, or we could lose transparency in presidential searches forever!

In addition, we ask all UFF members to sign up for and attend the weekly UFF/FEA Power Hours, where leaders from across the state gather virtually to take action on important legislation affecting public education. UFF reserves our own breakout room to focus on issues specific to higher ed, and all members are invited to participate. **Sign up here!**

Support Pro-Higher Education Bills

SB 666 and **SB 810** have both been assigned to the **Senate Education Committee**, while **HB 6077** and **HB 769** have both been assigned to the **Postsecondary Education & Lifelong Learning Subcommittee**. This is a great start, but it is only the beginning.

Contact the committee members today and ask to have SB 666, SB 810, HB 6077, and HB 769 placed on the agenda for their next committee meetings. UFF makes it easy to find and contact your legislators about these and other bills. Just enter your street address and ZIP code on the **UFF Legislative Action Page!**



Bills We Support

SB 666 (Cruz) / HB 769 (Goff Marcil) - State University Student Fee Waivers

HB 6077 (Hinson) / SB 810 (Polisky) - Postsecondary Intellectual Freedom and Viewpoint Diversity

SJR 192 (Cruz/Polisky) / HJR 77 (Driskell) - Election of the Commissioner of Education



Bills We Oppose

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

SB 520 (Brandes) / HB 703 (Garrison) - Public Records and Public Meetings

SB 148 (Diaz) / HB 7 (Avila) - Individual Freedom

SB 1458 (Baxley) / HB 1197 (Plakon) - Employee Organizations

HB 7051 / SPB 7044 - Postsecondary Education

UFF Takes Action in Tallahassee!



Pictured: UFF President Andrew Gothard speaking to the Senate Rules Committee about SB 520.

During this legislative session, UFF leaders from all over the state have taken action by meeting with legislators and testifying before Senate and House committees. If you'd like to support UFF by testifying before committee or meeting with legislators in Tallahassee, please send an email to uff@floridaea.org.



Pictured: UFF-FAU President Deandre Poole speaking to the House Government Operations Subcommittee about SB 520.



Pictured: UFF-HCC President Elizabeth Key-Raimer and UFF Executive Director Candi Churchill in Tallahassee speaking against anti-higher ed bills



Pictured: UFF-FGCU Co-President Patrick Niner speaking to the Senate Rules Committee about SB 520.



Pictured: UFF-FSU President Matthew Lata speaking to the Senate Rules Committee about SB 520.

"Viewpoint Discrimination" Lawsuit Update

UFF's lawsuit against the State of Florida regarding HB 233, the "Viewpoint Discrimination" law, is continuing through the "discovery" phase, though we have yet to receive a ruling on the state's motion to dismiss.

Recently, Judge Walker asked legal representation on both sides to file briefs addressing the recent Supreme Court decision in *Whole Woman's Health v. Jackson* and its implication for the state's pending motion to dismiss. We believe that our argument show the strength of our case and the weakness of the state's defense, and we look forward to receiving the judge's ruling.

Members can read these new supplemental briefs, as well as the original filing of our suit and our rebuttal to the motion to dismiss, [here](#).

State Committee Updates

State Membership Committee

The UFF Statewide Membership Committee will host a training on Wednesday, Feb 15, 5 -7:30pm. Attendees will learn how to submit a public records request to obtain a bargaining unit list from your university or college administration. Although this training is targeted for membership chairs, all UFF members are welcome to attend. We hope to see you there!

If you would like to attend this training, please send an email request to uff@floridaea.org.

UFF Senate

The Spring 2022 UFF Senate will be held virtually the weekend of Feb. 18th - 20th. If you are an elected UFF senator and have not yet registered for the event, please register using [this link](#) by Friday, Feb. 11th.

The full Senate schedule, including committee meetings and statewide trainings, can be found [here](#).

UFF Senate is the governing body of our union. Elected Senators, apportioned to each chapter according to the number of local members, approve the annual budget, write and pass resolutions, and set policy for the entire union. The UFF Senate is chaired by the UFF President. If you are interested in serving as a Senator for your local chapter, please contact your local UFF officers and let them know that you would like to run for chapter Senator in the next election.



Andrew Gothard,
UFF President (UFF-FAU)
andrew.gothard@floridaea.org

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.



Caitlin Gille, UFF First Vice
President (UFF-PHSC)
caitlin.gille@floridaea.org