

## STATEMENT

April 4, 2022

### Media Coordinator:

Candi Churchill, UFF executive director, [UFF@floridaea.org](mailto:UFF@floridaea.org)

## United Faculty of Florida Calls for Ignoring State-mandated “Ideological Viewpoint” Survey

UFF advises their members ignore the unconstitutional survey in its statement to their more than 8500 members. Quotes from UFF leaders follow the statement.

April 1, 2022

Dear UFF Members,

As you may have heard, your institutions will be distributing an ideological viewpoint survey on Monday April 4th, which requests that all faculty, staff, and students respond and share not only their own political viewpoints but what they perceive to be the viewpoints of their friends, colleagues, and classmates.

The United Faculty of Florida encourages all higher education faculty, staff, and students to ignore the voluntary “Viewpoint Discrimination” survey for the following reasons:

1. Florida’s government has no right to know the thoughts, feelings, or political or religious beliefs of anyone, including the higher education community. Privacy is the bedrock of democracy and a safeguard against autocratic control.
2. Ignoring this survey is an act that protects individuals of all political persuasions, now and into the future. This survey would not pass ‘validity tests’ in any institutional review process, as there is no way to ensure that responses will reflect the demographics of the institution. It is not worthy of time away from our teaching and research.
3. The specificity of the survey’s demographic questions allows for targeting of faculty, particularly minority faculty, and can be used to attack tenure.
4. Many of the survey’s questions are leading in nature and imply that there is a problem of viewpoint fairness on our campuses already–this is a conclusion searching for evidence, rather than the other way around.
5. Many of the survey’s questions ask respondents to report on what they believe their colleagues and students think and how they are behaving on campus. Surveillance has no place in Florida’s higher education system.

6. The survey will cause a chilling effect on freedom of speech and freedom of association on campus because faculty, staff, and students will be wondering whether their words and deeds will be reported to those in power.
7. Governor DeSantis and other legislators have threatened to defund or otherwise punish campuses whose responses do not match the appropriate ideology. This is not a standard of leadership or behavior that any member of Florida's higher education community should support.

For these reasons and more, UFF discourages participation in the survey, and we encourage you and all members of the Florida higher education system to join our fight to protect the freedoms of the faculty, staff, and students who make our campuses such wonderful places to live, learn, and grow.

UFF, your faculty union, has been fighting this law since it was first proposed. Now our fight is in federal court, and one of our main concerns has been that by its very nature this survey is an infringement upon the basic rights of all Floridians to freedom of speech, freedom of association, and the basic right to privacy, regardless of a person's background or political persuasion and without intimidation from the political party currently in power.

Join us in this fight, and encourage your colleagues to join us as well! We are stronger together.

In Solidarity,

Andrew Gothard, Ph.D.  
President  
United Faculty of Florida  
FEA/NEA/AFT/AFL-CIO  
<https://myuff.org/>

## **QUOTES FROM UFF LEADERS**

*At UFF, we fight for the rights of all Floridians, not merely those who agree with the political party in power. We believe that every American has the right to think, feel, and believe as they see fit. Living in Florida, under the influence of Governor DeSantis, does not abridge that right. This survey is an attack on the fundamental rights of all Floridians, and it has no place in a state or society that claims to be free. The protections of the US Constitution are too important to cast aside for political expediency. We urge all Floridians to join us in our fight against authoritarianism in all its forms: Boycott this survey. It has no place in our democracy.*

**UFF President Andrew Gothard**

*This viewpoint survey endangers our students' freedom to critically think and express themselves; it also endangers the University's long-term sustainability and makes it virtually impossible to be a college professor today.*

**UFF-FAMU Chapter President Roscoe Hightower**

*The state will frame any data collected from this survey, regardless of what it shows, as evidence that our profession indoctrinates students. I see no reason, then, for our faculty to willingly provide information for that purpose when the entire instrument was designed to hurt higher education in the first place.*

**UFF-FGCU President Patrick Niner**

*This survey was designed by legislators keen to politicize and demagog for personal political gain.*

**UFF-UCF President Robert Cassanello**

*As a third-generation US military veteran, I am disturbed at this latest example of creeping authoritarianism.*

**UFF-UF President Paul Ortiz**

*We don't need or want a return to the dark days of McCarthyism and the Johns Committee in Florida. Academic freedom, freedom of speech, and exposure to diverse perspectives in the classroom are core values for our campus community. Faculty do not welcome the interference of an explicitly partisan survey that infringes on our privacy and civil liberties.*

**UFF-UNF President Nicholas de Villiers**

#####

UFF serves as the collective voice of more than 25,000 faculty, academic professionals, K-12 lab schoolteachers and graduate employees at colleges and universities throughout Florida. Our members advocate for the public good and for Florida's 1 million students in college towns, rural communities and urban centers from the Keys to the Panhandle.