



29 August 2024

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## We Live in Interesting Times

**We are bargaining a new contract.** The terms and conditions of the old contract remain in force until a new contract is ratified. The next bargaining session is next week on Friday, Sept. 6. **Please come to the Bargaining Session on September 6, 1:30 pm, on USF Tampa, in the Patel Center, in CGS 140, and show your support for the union team as it bargains a successor contract!** And salary is one of the big issues.

- **Salary.** For a brief look at how inflation impacted salaries, see below.

**The Bargaining Committee has posted [a \(very short!\) survey](#), and we ask for faculty feedback.**

Readers may recall Senate Bill 266 mandating post tenure review, imposing some restrictions on what faculty can teach, and enabling university presidents to dismiss faculty with no appeal. The bill passed in 2023 and was described in the [10 August 2023 Biweekly](#). **The union would like to know how Senate Bill 266 affected you or your courses (and be specific): Here is [the brief survey](#).**

Faculty who took a summer vacation from the news may have missed recent examples of how power corrupts...

- **Amok time.** Florida higher education is beginning to show the consequences of hostile takeover. For some summer highlights, see below.

One purpose of a board of trustees is to protect its university from the politicians.

**The USF Board of Trustees will meet on Tuesday, September 10, at 9:30 am, on USF St. Petersburg, in the University Student Center. We understand that there will be some ... interesting ... items on the agenda (which [should be posted by September 3](#)) and we encourage all faculty to attend in person and show the Board that we are watching.**

The meeting is open to the public, and here is [the procedure](#) for making a

comment to the Board. (UFF USF Chapter President Steve Lang always makes comments before the Board). After the meeting, President Lang will take faculty attendees to lunch.

**Chapter Meeting Tomorrow Friday at 12 noon on Zoom.** On the [agenda](#): update on legalities, bargaining, the upcoming Board of Trustees meeting, and more. And here are the [July 26 minutes](#). **All UFF USF employees - members and non-members alike - are invited to attend the chapter meeting.** But to Zoom in to the chapter meeting you must have an invitation: contact [the Chapter Secretary](#) to get one. Meetings and events are [posted on the Events Calendar](#) of the [UFF USF Website](#). Come and check us out.

## What is a Contract Good For?

**A contract can help when you get in trouble - *if you use it*.** If your contractual rights are violated, you have the right to file a grievance seeking redress, and we can help. But remember, **you have thirty days from the time you knew or should have known about the contract violation to file the grievance, so if something happens, contact us asap.** For more information, see the [Grievance Page](#).

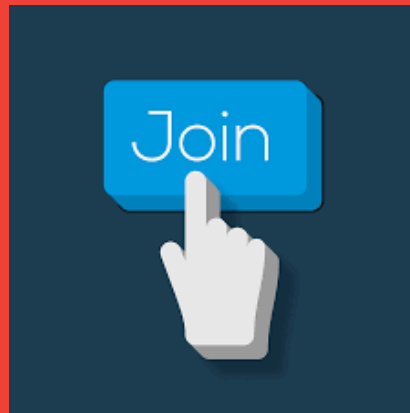


## A Civics Reminder

If you have [missed two federal elections](#), you may have been purged from the voter rolls. And if voting by mail, you must [renew your vote by mail](#) request for each federal election.

**Yes, it's an Election Year!** The general election is on **November 5**, and the **deadline to register is October 7**. This

election will not only be for the president, but also for many representatives and officials who make decisions affecting you and your university. **If you are eligible to vote, we strongly encourage you to do so.** Check the [Florida Division of Elections](#) today!



## Union Membership

If you are not a union member, please [join today](#) (the form connects automatically to the eDues form, so you will want to have your banking information or checkbook information handy). We are stronger standing together in solidarity.

If you have difficulties with the eDues form, see the [instructions](#).

## Membership Status

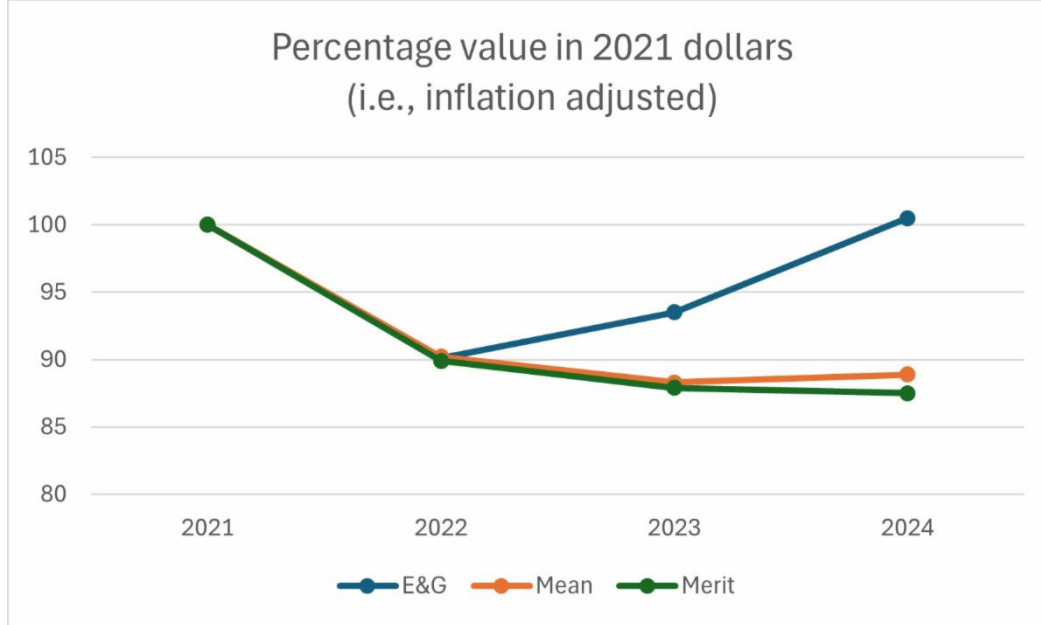
If you are going on a reduced-pay leave or sabbatical, or if you are retiring or resigning, please contact us so we can adjust your eDues accordingly: visit the [UFF Membership Policy webpage](#). In particular, if you are retiring, we encourage you to consider joining the UFF Retired chapter: here is [their webpage](#).



### Bargaining the Next Contract

Your UFF-USF Bargaining Committee met with USF-BOT bargaining representatives to begin negotiations for the successor agreement to the current Collective Bargaining Agreement 2021-2024.

The Bargaining Committee wants your ideas, comments, suggestions, and desiderata from the employees that the union represents. Please send thoughts on bargaining to [the Bargaining Committee](#).



(Above: [USF E & G Funding](#), [Mean Faculty Salary](#), and [Faculty Salary with Merit Raises](#))

## Salary

Salary is an unusually pressing issue during this round of bargaining because of **the (worldwide!) inflationary spurt** that started with Covid and is still bubbling around. During the life of the 2021 - 2024 contract, the mean merit raise mandated by the contract was 5.57%. But according to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), in the Tampa-Clearwater area, the cost of living rose 20.6% from midsummer 2021 to midsummer 2024. **The raises compounded with inflation translates into a 12.5% cut in buying power.**

**Looking at the Bargaining Unit as whole doesn't change the picture much.** That would factor in promotional raises, discretionary raises, higher salaries of newly hired faculty, etc., but even then, the average salary of an employee in the bargaining unit rose only 7.2%, which translates into a 11% cut in buying power.

**Of course, the university itself took a hit.** The university's primary source of instructional dollars is the [Education & General funds](#), consisting of tuition, fees, state allocations, etc. From 2021 to 2022, E & G funding rose 0.17% and thus lost 9.9% of its buying power during that year alone. But since then, E & G funding has recovered, and now stands at 100.5% of its 2021 buying power.

The story is displayed in the above graph. Dark green "merit" is the buying power of a longstanding faculty member who received the contractually mandated raises. Orange is the buying power of the average faculty member, including the new and newly promoted and such. Dark blue is E & G funding. **The university's E & G funding has returned to status quo ante,**

but faculty salaries have not. (And the university has gotten additional recurring funding.)

**It would take a 14.3% raise to bring a longstanding faculty member with two merit raises back to 2021 buying power.** Readers may recall that the Administration team [initially proposed](#) a 3% raise, which would have left such longstanding faculty with an 8.8% cut in buying power since 2021. The Administration team made that offer again at the last bargaining session, but the UFF team declined the offer as insufficient and unrealistic.

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*Left: some of the woke discards.  
Right: students and faculty managed to save some books.*

## Amok Time

USF must be doing something right, for the really embarrassing news about Florida's colleges and universities this summer - the sort that [the international news media follows](#) - is typically about someplace else.

The University of Florida was apparently late and rushed [doing its post tenure review](#), and of the 258 (or 226?) who were reviewed, 34 (or 33?) didn't meet expectations and five were unsatisfactory. UF Provost Scott Angle subsequently wrote [a guest column](#) in the Tampa Bay Times claiming that, "We didn't fire anyone because they tried and failed to do great things, or because they had controversial ideas," but it never was clear why anyone was fired - although he did devote a lot of space to the optics of holding faculty "accountable", so perhaps it was all about optics.

But the optics darkened when the Alligator exposed [UF President Ben Sasse's spending spree](#), tripling the expenditures of the UF President's office by distributing boodle - er - consulting contracts and lucrative jobs to friendly political operatives. Tallahassee immediately assumed a position of ostentatious rectitude, and [Sasse was soon out of a job](#) - and his predecessor was summoned to Gainesville to clean up the mess. Whether this clean up includes reconsidering the tenured faculty in trouble remains to be seen.

On August 2, State University System Ray Rodrigues [sent a memo to SUS presidents](#) telling them that they needed to appoint faculty committees to review "relevant course resources such as textbooks and test banks for either antisemitic material and/or anti-Israeli bias before the beginning of fall semester." The memo mentioned courses on "terrorism, Middle Eastern Studies, religion, and government." The review would consist of keyword searches on course descriptions and syllabi, even though [this entire effort was apparently inspired](#) by some odd questions generated by a test bank - and it will clearly miss the contents of the "relevant course materials." Optics, again?

Then [a dumpster appeared in front of the New College library](#) with books destined for the dump. In addition, books, paintings, and even knitting supplies from the Gender & Diversity Center were tossed, [replaced by gaming tables](#). Board member and anti-Woke activist [Chris Rufo crowed](#), "We abolished the gender studies program. Now we're throwing out the trash" (see the above photo of some of the discarded "trash"). But as the optics turned sour, the New College administration gave several contradictory explanations as to why the books were discarded, why they were not available for sale or donation (particularly to students), and is now moving to [dismiss the dean of the library](#). That dean was one of the appointees of the current administration, and whether that dismissal will improve the optics remains to be seen.

This is not the way to run institutions of higher education, and while this sort of thing may feel good for a short time, it eventually leads to bad optics.



## Follow us on Social Media &&& *Join us on Social Media*

We have a Facebook group: see [United Faculty of Florida at USF](#). This page is a place where UFF members can exchange thoughts and ideas. **The page is "public", but only dues-paying UFF members are eligible to post items on the page. If you are a UFF member, ask to join on the page, and the moderator will invite every UFF member that asks to join.** Non-members are welcome to look (but you need a Facebook account to do that). So check us out ... join the conversation.

- We have a blog: see [The USF Faculty Blog](#). This has news items as they come up.
- We are on Twitter (aka X), so follow us on Twitter / X via [@UffUsf](#).
- We are on Instagram, so check us out at Instagram [@usf\\_uff](#).
- We even have a You-Tube channel: [check out our videos](#).

**We are revamping our publicity machine, and if you are interested in social media, in membership, or in conversations with you colleagues across campus, *come join the campaign*. Contact [the Communications Committee chair](#).**

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### **USF United Support Fund for Food Pantries**

Many of our students are struggling during with food insecurity, and the USF Foundation is supporting the [USF Food Pantries](#) to help out. They are accepting non-perishable donations, but one can also make monetary donations for the pantries at all three campuses.

### **Details, Details**

he USF-UFF Chapter website is <http://www.uff.ourusf.org>, and our e-mail

address is [uff@ourusf.org](mailto:uff@ourusf.org). About this broadcast: This Newsletter was broadcast from Constant Contact, and is intended for all members of the UFF USF Bargaining unit (USF faculty and professionals at most departments). A (usually identical) version will be broadcast to USF-News and USF-Talk from [mccolm@usf.edu](mailto:mccolm@usf.edu).

If you do not want to receive the UFF Biweekly, you can unsubscribe below or contacting [the Chapter Secretary](#). If you do not receive the Biweekly, but want to, contact [the Chapter Secretary](#).

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