



5 December 2024

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The Managers

All unions for employees in Florida's public agencies - schools, police, universities, fire, clerical, roads, etc. - deal with the [Public Employees Relations Commission](#). PERC handles certification (a union's authority to represent employees), litigation (arbitrations and "unfair labor practice" complaints), and impasse (when two sides can't come to an agreement in bargaining).

PERC is nearly stalled. For example, one of UFF USF's Unfair Labor Practice complaints is currently on [PERC's calendar](#), and that one was originally scheduled to be heard last year in October, but was rescheduled twice, and now is scheduled to be heard at the end of April next year. (And as for UFF's other Unfair Labor Practice complaints ... they are piling up.)

And that brings us to...

- **The Certification Mess.** Every year, each union for public employees is supposed to be "recertified" to represent the employees in its bargaining unit. This was a relatively straightforward process until last year, and now PERC and most public employee unions are snarled in red tape. For more on how those SOI card fit in all this, see below.

But some officials have more gumption. Or maybe chutzpah...

- **But the Endowment Was Just Sitting There.** Amidst all the high-minded talk about Western Civilization, the New College administration may have more mercenary interests. For more, see below.

Returning to USF, regarding bargaining, we are working with the USF Board of Trustees team to set up the next session. Stay tuned..

And it's December, when people around the world celebrate the holidays clustered around the Winter Solstice. Underlying the vast and diverse array of stories and traditions is the belief that

the Sun would return. And the Sun always does. Something to remember. We wish everyone a Happy Winter Break.

Chapter Meeting Tomorrow

Chapter Meeting Tomorrow Friday at 12 noon in EDU 161 and on Zoom. On [the agenda](#): constitution and bylaws, certification, legal updates, and more. And here are the [November 22 Minutes](#). All UFF USF employees - members and non-members alike - are invited to attend the chapter meeting (we will have lunch). 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.

UFF United
Faculty
of Florida



Social



Mr. Dunderbak's Biergarten and Brewery
14929 Bruce B Downs Blvd Tampa, FL 33613



Scan for Map

Join us at Dunderbak's!
Thursday, Dec. 12 from 5-7
the last week of fall classes

And mark your calendars: we will have another social to launch the next semester. We will meet at [New World Tampa Brewery](#) on January 17 from 5 - 7 pm. All USF faculty and graduate assistants are invited.

The Certification Mess

Last year, the Legislature passed [Senate Bill 256](#) which, among many other things, requires that every public employee union (except those that the Legislature likes, like firefighters, police, etc.) jump through some hoops for annual certification.

- **First, the union must provide a petition - consisting of Showing of Interest (SOI) cards - to the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC).** PERC staff check each card against a list of employees provided by the employer, and the name on the card *must* match the name on that list - **cards that do not have precisely the same name are rejected.**
- **If at least 30% of the employees have turned in accepted cards,** the Commission puts that bargaining unit on the list of units to have an election. This does *not* mean that the Commission scheduled the election: UFF USF got on the list last spring, and [the election has not been scheduled yet](#). (We are not alone: six other UFF units are listed but have no election scheduled.)
- **If not enough cards are turned in, the union is immediately decertified and can no longer represent employees in bargaining and grievances.** What happens to the contracts that these unions bargained is an interesting question. The contracts were between the employees and the employer, with the union as a mere bargaining agent, so an employer that ignores the contract might face litigation down the road.
- **Eventually, eventually, in the fulness of time, the Commission schedules an election, typically (but not always) by sending mail ballots to home addresses.** This requires that the addresses provided to the Commission by the employer be correct and legal.

And this must be done every year. In particular, since USF's election has not been held yet, USF may have this year's election next year - possibly along with next year's election.

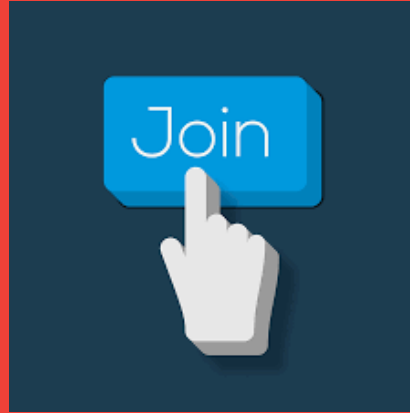
And of course, this entire process is repeated next year, and the year after that, and the year after that, until some court throws it out. **All this rigmorale thanks to the Legislature that passed the bill, and the governor who signed it.**

This year, [several unions have failed certification](#), either because they failed to provide the requisite number of SOI cards, or because they lost the subsequent election. But so far, the Florida Education Association (the FEA, the umbrella that represents K-20 education statewide, including UFF) has won every election so far this year, typically by large supermajorities; of the four elections conducted in UFF units this year so far, UFF won by 74%, 90%, 96%, and 100%.

Someone in Tallahassee is not pleased by FEA's electoral

success, and there is a proposal to add another hoop to the certification process: a certification election would be invalid if turnout was less than 50%.

This red tape [is being sold](#) as protection for public employees against predatory unions, but it clearly interferes with [the right of employees to form unions](#). But unfortunately, the courts also move slowly, so meantime we are collecting SOI cards.



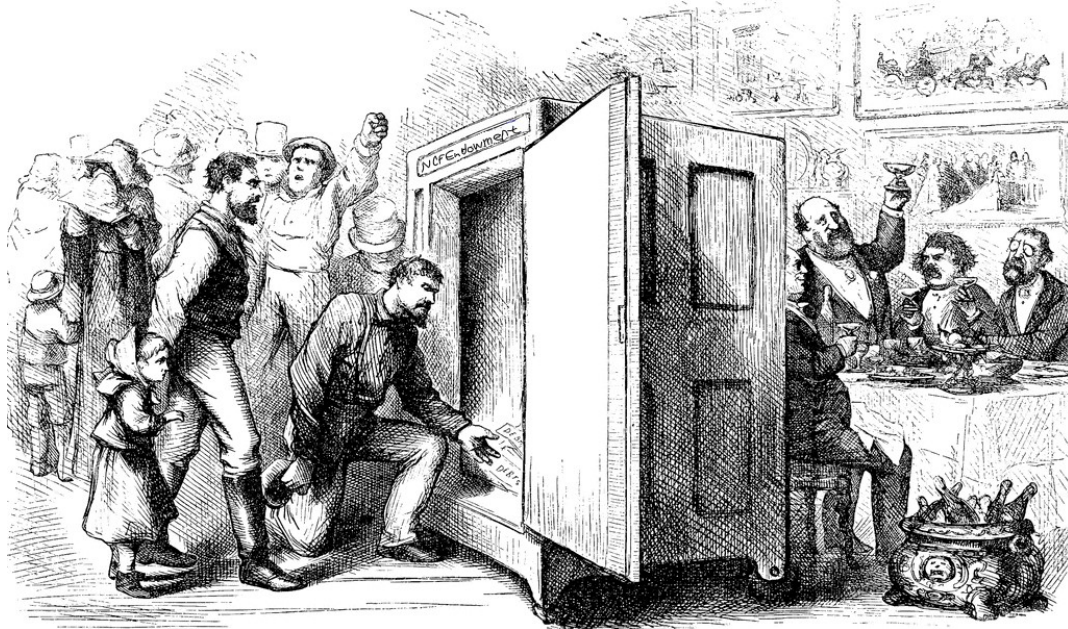
Union Membership

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](#).



Who took the Endowment? With thanks to Thomas Nast...

But the Endowment was Just Sitting There

New College Florida's administration continues to provide object lessons for Lord Acton's dictum that power corrupts. Once again, it's an object lesson involving money.

At a contentious meeting in which the NCF Board of Trustees [resolved to change](#) the college's mission statement - it appears that NCF is no longer Florida's honors college (a change that might surprise some parents) - the Board also gave NCF President Richard Corcoran the authority to dismiss members of the NCF Foundation board.

The Foundation handles NCF's endowment.

The very next day, [Corcoran removed two Foundation board members](#) who had expressed concerns about Corcoran's spending (including Corcoran's \$1.1 million salary).

Unnamed administrators claimed that the two board members had mismanaged funds (by returning half a million dollars in donations shortly after Corcoran's appointment as president) and possibly violated Sunshine laws. But the president of the Alumni Association warned that, "Alumni confidence in the Foundation as a vehicle for giving is at a dangerously low level."

The State University System Board of Governors [has worried](#) about NCF's spending spree, but Corcoran is president because of his strong support from Tallahassee. And the Board of Governors has repeatedly proven unwilling or unable to stand up for the university system they oversee. But both NCF's board of trustees and the Board of Governors have fiduciary responsibilities, and that includes making sure NCF is not driven

over a cliff.

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](#).



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](#). And if you haven't already, please fill in this [short survey](#) from the Bargaining Committee.



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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](#).

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

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

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](#).

United Faculty of Florida | 30238 USF Holly Dr University of South Florida | Tampa, FL 33620 US

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