

United Faculty of Florida - USF Chapter
24 September 2026
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The UFF Senate Meeting

The United Faculty of Florida is a democracy, and members elect representatives to attend the primary policy-making body, which is the UFF Senate.

This fall, the Senate met online in order to save money - in fact, the primary item on the agenda was adjusting the budget to prepare for hostile action by the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC) - the agency that oversees public employee unions in Florida.

- **The Senate Prepares for Battle.** It is out in the open: the intent of the law is to get rid of the union. But we will fight for our rights. For more, see below.

As for USF, the latest from PERC is that ***our petition for certification*** (those SOI cards people filled out) has been accepted. (This was the next step after our registration with PERC.) The next step is for PERC to set up a certification election. (Hopefully not in the middle of Winter Break again, but you never know.) **A majority of the employees must vote in order for UFF to remain certified and the contract to be enforceable, so stay tuned.**

On another note, the Chapter meetings are moving. **Starting tomorrow Friday, most chapter meetings are on USF Tampa in the Marshall Center's Sabal Room, MSC 3700.** All employees in the bargaining unit - members and non-members alike - are invited to come. **The meeting will also be on Zoom: here is *the link*.** On ***the agenda***: dealing with PERC, legal update, elections (plural), and more. And here are the ***September 11 minutes***. For more information, contact ***the chapter secretary***.

Two important notes:

- **The October 9 Chapter Meeting will be on USF St. Petersburg campus, location TBD.** We will announce the location asap.

- **Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas counties will put midterm ballots in the mail shortly, so watch your mail.** But if you did not request a mail ballot after the 2024 general election, you must apply for a mail ballot: see the ***Division of Elections*** for details.

Upcoming Events

Meetings and events are posted in ***the Events Calendar*** on the ***UFF USF website***. Here are events for the next few weeks:

- **September 25 at 12 noon: Chapter Meeting in MSC 3700 and on Zoom.**
- *September 25 at 5 pm: Social at New World Tampa at 810 E Skagway in Tampa.*
- September 28 at 9 am on USF Tampa in the MSC Ballroom: ***Open Forum on Workplace Culture***.
- September 29 at 1 pm on USF St. Petersburg in the USC Ballroom: ***Open Forum on Workplace Culture***.
- September 30 at time TBA: Florida State University System Board of Governors ***Committee Workship*** on the University of Florida at place ***TBA***. What mischief they will be up to is TBA.
- October 6 on USF Tampa in the MSC Oval Theatre: Town Hall on the USF Strategic Plan ***Mapping USF's Future***.
- October 7 on USF St. Petersburg in the USC Ballroom: Town Hall on the USF Strategic Plan ***Mapping USF's Future***.
- **October 9 at 12 noon: Chapter Meeting on USF St. Petersburg, location TBD, and on Zoom.**
- *October 9 at 5 pm: Social at New World Tampa at 810 E Skagway in Tampa.*



According to legend, when Captain Richard Pearson of the HMS Serapis demanded of Captain John Paul Jones of the USS Bonhomme Richard, "Has your ship struck [its flag in surrender]?" Jones replied, "I have not yet begun to fight!" In the end, it was Pearson who surrendered.

The Senate Prepares for Battle

This year, on May 1, Governor DeSantis ***signed the bill*** increasing ***the burden of recertification*** on public employee unions. His target was our state affiliate, the Florida Education Association, and ***he said*** that the bill will, "provide once and for all for the decertification of partisan teacher unions."

The Senate addressed the practical problem of dealing with the consequences of this legislation. The law requires that every year, each chapter either have 60% membership density (i.e., at least 60% of the employees it represents be dues-paying members) or ***annually undergo recertification***. That means submitting SOI cards signed by at least 30% of the employees and then winning an election in which a majority of the employees vote. And the election will be conducted by a hostile state agency.

Failure to be recertified would mean that UFF could no longer represent USF employees and that the contract would no longer be in force. We could sue - the law that DeSantis signed has problems with the Florida constitution - but state courts are increasingly unfriendly to unions (guess who appoints the judges) and litigation is protracted and expensive.

All the UFF chapters face this ordeal, but three in particular - the University of Central Florida, the University of Florida, and **the University of South Florida** - have low "membership density" (each has about a third of the faculty in their bargaining unit as members).

The Senate focused on this new normal. UFF statewide President Robert Cassanello, a history professor from UCF, started the meeting by describing how we got here: in the aftermath of the ***1968 Florida teachers' strike***, a ***constitutional right to union organizing*** was added to the Florida constitution. For half a century, unions grew in Florida, but during the last decade, anti-union groups - many from outside Florida - have been pushing back. And Tallahassee grew so hostile to unions that now a governor feels comfortable saying that they should not exist.

After some reports, the Senate turned to the two primary business items. One was adjusting the budget to prepare for certification fights, and the other was adjusting the UFF constitution and bylaws to deal with chapters that got decertified. Since the law is dubious, and since overwhelming victories in certification elections show strong support and little opposition) to union representation, UFF will support chapters that win certification elections but are decertified anyway.

Hoping for the best while preparing for the worst.

All this is the result of politicians in Tallahassee who were voted into office or onto representative seats. Elections have consequences. Something to remember as the November election approaches.

EDues issues

If you are not paying dues, you are not a UFF member - and unless you are paying dues by check, you would be getting biweekly notices from FEA's computer about dues deductions. ***If you are not receiving FEA's receipts, you are not paying eDues.*** The union put together these ***instructions***. Here is ***the page*** about eDues, and here is the link to the ***FEA form*** for joining the union and setting up eDues. **For assistance, contact us.**



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***.

The Contract Can Help

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***.



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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 *chapter secretary*.

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 the USF-Talk group 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***.

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