



UFF Biweekly

United Faculty of Florida -- USF System Chapter

United Faculty of Florida - USF Chapter

8 October 2026

Email not displaying properly? [View it in your browser](#)

The Culture at USF

Scholarship is a social enterprise, which means that a university's culture is important to its mission. For years, the Faculty Senate and the UFF have warned that USF faculty are disengaged - which is not helpful for USF's mission, much less its aspirations. And now, the Administration has appointed a Committee.

- **"We Are the University".** The first step in dealing with a problem is determining what the problem is, and that is where the Committee is now. For more, see below.

On a related note; the United Faculty of Florida has filed a lawsuit in federal court contesting the legality of Post Tenure Faculty Review. It took this long to get started because in order to file the lawsuit, we needed to represent someone who had been harmed (e.g., fired).

Post tenure faculty review was imposed on us by Tallahassee politicians, a reminder that elections have consequences.

- **Midterm Resources.** Below are some resources that you may find useful in preparing to vote. UFF strongly encourages all eligible voters to vote in the November 3 midterm.

Tomorrow Friday, we are meeting on USF St. Petersburg, in the University Student Center, in the Palm Room. 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](#): post tenure faculty review, November 3, preparing for the certification election, updating governance documents, salaries, and more. And here are the [September 25 minutes](#). For more information, contact [the chapter secretary](#).

Upcoming Events

Meetings and events are posted in [the Events Calendar](#) on the [UFF USF website](#). Here are events for the next few weeks:

- **October 9 at 12 noon: Chapter Meeting on USF St. Petersburg, in USC Palm Room and on Zoom.**
- October 21 at 2:30 pm: Faculty Senate meeting in MSC 4200 and BAY 220 and on Teams.
- *October 22: Deadline to request that a ballot (for the midterm election) be mailed.*
- **October 23 at 12 noon: Chapter Meeting on USF Tampa, in MSC 3700 and on Zoom.**
- *October 23 at 5 pm: Social at New World Tampa at 810 E Skagway in Tampa.*
- October 24: Florida Education Association Delegate Assembly. (The FEA is our state affiliate.)
- *October 24 - 31: Early voting for the midterm election in all counties; some counties may have additional days.*
- **November 3: Midterm election day.**
- November 4 at 2:30 pm: Faculty Senate Executive Committee meeting in MSC 3700.
- **November 6 at 12 noon: Chapter Meeting on USF Tampa, in MSC 3700 and on Zoom.**
- *November 6 at 5 pm: Social at New World Tampa at 810 E Skagway in Tampa.*



UNITED FACULTY OF FLORIDA
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

Chapter Meetings

noon

USF St. Pete Student Center, Palm Room
10/9

USF Tampa, MSC Sabal Room
10/23, 11/6, 11/20, 12/4

Chapter Socials

5-7pm

New World, 810 E. Skagway, Tampa
10/23, 11/6, 11/20, 12/4

According to legend, at the beginning of his (brief) tenure as president of Columbia University, Dwight Eisenhower was introduced to physics professor (and Nobel laureate) Isidor Rabi. Eisenhower said, "I am always happy to see one of the employees of the university." To that, Rabi replied, "Mr. President, the faculty are not the employees of the university. They are the university."



Above, Eisenhower dedicates Columbia's new cyclotron; Rabi is just behind him. When he became president of the USA, Eisenhower picked Rabi as his science advisor.

"We Are the University"

USF has had a cultural problem for a long time. Faculty are largely not active in the Faculty Senate or the UFF, and there seems to be a longstanding tendency of USF employees to retreat into their own bailiwicks. And recently, union organizers report to the USF Chapter that USF seems unusually "dead" compared to other Florida campuses. Meanwhile, the Faculty Senate is concerned that USF is unusually weak in retaining graduate students.

When President Limayem arrived at USF, he repeatedly said that USF had a culture problem - and that he intended to address it. He appointed a Committee to encourage the USF community to ***Shape USF Culture Together***: *"This ongoing, collaborative effort will invite voices from across our campuses to help shape our culture together. We aim to create an environment where people and ideas can thrive, and where USF continues to rise as a leading model metropolitan research university."* The Committee is now making plans for an effort that is presumed to span next year.

We can get an idea of the Committee's focus from the Town Hall that it held on September 29, *Building on the Best of USF*. It was actually a large workshop, with over a hundred members of the USF community - some faculty, some staff, some administrators - working in pairs and then in teams to identify things that USF is doing well and propose ways that USF could do better. Items that the teams presented include:

- Standardized training from Human Resources so we get on the same page.
- Communicate clear expectations.
- Events and forums for building connections and culture, including cross-cultural communication (faculty in different fields have different subcultures - and, in turn, staff and administrators have subcultures of their own).
- Distributed decision-making (similar but not identical to shared governance): it should not all come from the top.
- More transparency in decision-making.
- Invest in people (this involves making resources available for people's jobs and, ahem, **salary**).

And old-timers could not help observing the physical transformation of the campus under President Genshaft.

The Committee organizers repeatedly stressed building on the positive and did not want "negativity". On the one hand, pushing positivity seemed sensible for an event like this one: complaining is easy and can easily degenerate into a blame game. On the other hand, the first step towards addressing a problem is to identify it. And USF clearly has problems - the existence of the Committee is an admission of that. If the Committee is to make a positive contribution, it should probably look at things that they would prefer not to look at.

For example, employee-management relations, which are *integral* to workplace culture.

Faculty-administration relations seem to be at a *new low nationwide*, and a lot of the problem comes from outside. Higher education faculty in Florida *feel besieged*, in part because of legislation and regulations pouring out of Tallahassee - and the complicity of the boards. Especially the SUS Board of Governors, which has created regulations implementing constitutionally dubious legislation. Then faculty see their administration executing those laws and regulations. The administration may be doing so to protect university funding from vengeful politicians (and Florida institutions - including USF - have felt the *Governor's vengeance*), and may not be saying so for fear of retaliation, but result is distrust.

UFF's latest lawsuit provides an example. Two laws mandated "post tenure faculty review" to determine whether faculty members at least "meet expectations" that had not been communicated in advance (!), and either dismiss them or place them on performance improvement plans (PIPs). This reflects the Legislature's desire to make universities more like some of the more unpleasant corporations. "It's the age of the PIP," *reported the Wall Street Journal*, which reported that "The Most Hated Way of Firing Someone is More Popular Than Ever." And indeed, tenured faculty were fired (at USF as well as elsewhere). Outside of the legality of firing tenured faculty without just cause, the Administration is very visibly doing Tallahassee's dirty work - with predictable effects on faculty morale and trust.

Employee-management relations is only one aspect of the cultural problem at USF, but because of its composition, it may be one that the Committee has difficulty addressing: it consists of six administrators and one faculty member. Cultural issues would seem to be within the purview of anthropology, educational leadership, and sociology as well as business management, but only the latter field is represented. The lack of faculty can lead to at least two problems:

- The Committee may miss some things that experts would observe, and may be misled on issues that would be more

successfully addressed with expert assistance.

- The audience might not find the report credible or worth acting on, especially if the audience felt that the selection of the Committee showed a dismissive attitude towards faculty expertise.

One recommendation that the Committee might consider making is a reconciliation effort - possibly involving campus groups such as the Faculty Senate and governance bodies, the faculty union, professional chapters on campus, etc. And the Administration might want to reconsider exactly how it is going to deal with Tallahassee.

"Changing a university," *claimed a former Vice-Principal of the University of Edinburg*, "is like moving a graveyard." It will require a sustained effort by the entire university community - and certainly take over a year of "continuous improvement". And (a reminder of the importance of midterm elections) it could be complicated by a continued adversarial stance of Tallahassee and the board members that Tallahassee appoints.

Recalling Isidor Rabi's comment that the faculty (and the staff) *is* the university, changing the university culture will only work if the USF community buys in.



*Late Nineteenth century ballot box,
on display at the Smithsonian*

Midterm Resources

Mail ballots are arriving, early voting times are coming up, and the November 3 midterm is 26 days away. Time to start deciding who and what to vote for - and against. Here are some resources that voters might find useful.

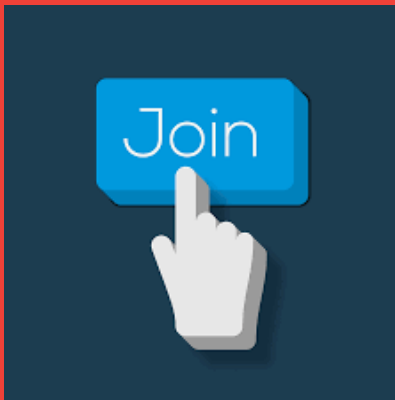
- The Tampa Bay Times has posted a [Midterm voter guide](#) for Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas Counties. Other voters' guides are available from [Ballotpedia](#), the [League of Women Voters](#), and [VoteSmart](#).
- Serious candidates and causes have their own websites, but here are the sites for the [Florida Democratic Party](#) and the [Florida GOP](#).
- Political junkies may be interested in [Nate Silver's](#) sports & politics statistics site or in [Open Secrets'](#) reports on where the money is coming from.

And, of course, we have [our recommendations](#).

Most important, to check on your voting status, to get the timeline and deadlines, and to get the link to your local county supervisor of elections so you can find voting methods, times, locations and to get a sample ballot, here is the [Florida Division of Elections](#).

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](#).



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 [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](#).

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

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!