



UFF Biweekly

United Faculty of Florida -- USF System Chapter

United Faculty of Florida - USF Chapter

22 October 2026

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Building Connections

When Senate Bill 1296 - one of the bills that is causing us so much grief - was being debated, the sponsor said that he hoped that this legislation would encourage faculty to become more engaged with their union. We intend to make this hope a reality.

- **Building Connections.** We are instituting a team of faculty volunteers - union liaisons - who will reach out to faculty and be available to faculty. For more, see below.

Meanwhile, we should not forget that some of the out-of-state interests who pushed Senate Bill 1296 (and similar bills) actually hoped that it would make unions go away.

- **Life Without a Union.** So what would things be like without a union? We look at some non-union institutions and see. For stories, see below.

A reminder that Senate Bill 1296 was the product of *elected* representatives and officials.

- **Last Call.** Midterm Election Day is twelve days away. 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 Tampa, in the Marshall Student Center, in the Sabal Room (MSC3700). 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](#): preparing for certification, campaigning for volunteers, the upcoming FEA Delegate Assembly, and more. And here are the [October 9 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:

- **TODAY, 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.*
- *November 17 at 1 pm, Virtual USF Board of Trustees Committee meetings (ACE & Audit & Compliance).*
- *November 18 at 2:30 pm, USF Faculty Senate in MSC 4200 and BAY 220.*
- *November 19 at 1:30 pm, Virtual USF Board of Trustees Committee meetings (Governance, Budget & Finance, Research. Innovation and Health Affairs).*
- **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

Building Connections

Your fellow faculty are building the USF Chapter of the UFF into a stronger organization to serve faculty more effectively. One initiative aims at making union representatives available to all employees in the unit.

Department Liaison Committee. The Department Liaison Program consists of faculty who volunteer as Department Liaisons. Liaisons are conduits for the two-way flow of information between their department and the union.

Liaisons share information with faculty in their departments and are a source of information for their colleagues - in particular, where to get help and what is going on.

Our union currently has 28 Department Liaisons in 24 departments across our campuses. This number is growing and we are looking for **your** help to find Department Liaisons in each department at USF.

Volunteering as a Department Liaison is an easy way to get involved with your union! Interested? Fill out this form:

There are currently Department Liaisons in these departments: English; Humanities, Arts, & Film; Philosophy; Religious Studies; World Languages; Anthropology; Information; Interdisciplinary Global Studies; Sociology & Interdisciplinary Social Sciences; Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies; Integrative Biology; Mathematics & Statistics; Psychology; Honors College; Child & Family Studies; Communication Sciences & Disorders; Criminology; Art & Art History; Music; Theater & Dance; EPS; Chemical, Biological & Materials Engineering; and Marine Science.

We have two other committees reaching out to everyone in the Bargaining Unit and keeping everyone informed.

Membership Committee. Our Chapter Socials are going well. At almost every social event we meet new faculty who have never been to a UFF USF event.

The next Chapter Social is tomorrow Friday, October 23, from 5-7pm, at [New World Tampa](#). Meet your colleagues, talk with UFF leadership, and get some food and a drink on the union!

Publicity Committee. A new UFF USF has a new website coming soon! But we need volunteers to help us reach out to faculty; interested media junkies can contact [the chapter secretary](#).

Finally, we really need volunteers to educate legislators - many of whom vote on education legislation in ignorance. Anyone interested in joining the **Government Relations Committee** should contact [the chapter secretary](#).

Adda Farcus is the UFF USF Chapter vice president and leader of the UFF USF liaisons.



*Early fourteenth century illustration of a reeve overseeing serfs, from an **early Fourteenth century book** by an unknown artist. Some scholars compare the behavior of modern middle management with that of medieval reeves - and senior management with manorial lords.*

Life Without a Union

The threat of decertification of the faculty union raises the question of what life at a university is like without a union.

Unions must be attractive, for the last decade or so has seen a major increase in faculty and especially graduate students organizing and joining unions. In fact, **as of 2024**, while only a ninth of all US workers belonged to unions, over a fourth of all US faculty were. And the total number of faculty unions rose from 218 in 1976 to 775 in 2024.

Unions bargain and enforce contracts, and contracts determine job conditions like salary, assignments and evaluations, and job security, as well as academia-specific conditions like academic freedom and sabbaticals (or professional leave). If a university administration does not have to deal with a union, it has greater freedom to act according to its own priorities and caprices - and, ahem, the priorities and caprices of its donors and politicians.

For example, earlier this year, Virginia State University **fired six professors** - five with tenure - without explanation. (They had brought in \$10 million in grants during the previous year, so it probably wasn't failure to, ahem, meet expectations.) There was a faculty advocacy chapter at VSU, but no contract bargained with and enforced by a union. The six faculty have managed to **mount a legal challenge**, but it must cost someone a lot of money.

Meanwhile, in California, when a tenured professor at San Jose State University was fired, their union, the California Faculty Association, took the case to arbitration and the professor **got her job back** - with back pay. And the CFA paid for the lawyers.

In both cases, (most of) the faculty had tenure. Without a union, tenure is of limited help: with a union, tenure rights are defined in the contract. And a contract can provide untenured faculty with job security conditions, e.g., requiring six months to a year's advance notice and lining up hurdles for administrators to clear.

Like VSU, New School, in New Jersey, also has a faculty advocacy chapter, but not a union that actually bargains and enforces a contract. Enrollment problems over the last few years has led to a financial crunch, which administration is **addressing with layoffs**. Without a union, there are no restrictions on who to be laid off or how, and having discovered that an advocacy chapter is not an adequate substitute for a contract, the faculty are **organizing a union**.

But the time to organize a union is before there is trouble, so that when trouble arrives, there is a contract that regulates what is done. And we live in an era with **a lot of trouble**.

There are many other issues and examples. For a weird example, University of Alabama faculty have **just been instructed** to refer to the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America. Alabama appears to have academic freedom issues.

One might presume that administrators would support the community and the mission of the university, but as **Rufus Miles observed**, where you stand depends on where you sit. The view from an administrative office is different from that of a faculty office, and that view influences priorities and goals. Turning to our founding fathers, **The Federalist** says, "Ambition must be made to counteract ambition". To paraphrase the Federalist, if administrators and board members were angels, no union would be necessary. But they're only human, which is why we need unions.



*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 twelve days away. Time to start deciding who and what to vote for - and against. Here are some resources that voters might find useful.

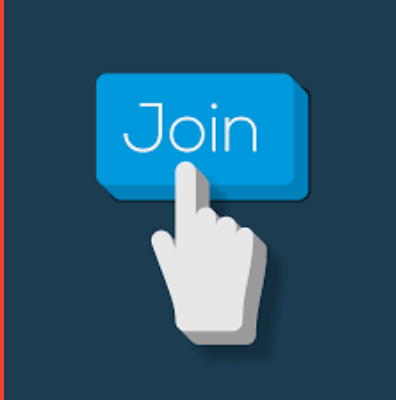
- The Tampa Bay Times has posted a [Midterm voter guide](#) for Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas Counties. Other voters' guides are available from [Ballotpedia](#), the [League of Women Voters](#), and [VoteSmart](#).
- Serious candidates and causes have their own websites, but here are the sites for 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.

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