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The Presidential Search

USF President Rhea Law announced that she intends to retire. We wish her well on her future adventures, but like many others in the USF community, we are interested in what will follow.

- **The Search.** Thanks to a recent Florida law, much of the search will be conducted in secret. For more, see below.

Meanwhile, the United Faculty of Florida (representing YOU) and the USF Administration (representing the USF Board of Trustees) continue to bargain a successor contract. One major item is salary.

- **Our Salaries.** The elephant in the room is the loss of buying power because of the Covid inflation spike. For more, see below.

And for the union, it's election season!

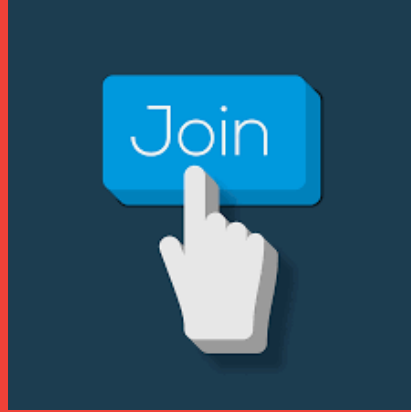
- **The Elections.** The union is a participatory democracy, which means that in order for it to function, members have to participate. For a call to arms, see below.

But only UFF members can participate, so [join today!](#)

Chapter Meeting Tomorrow

Chapter Meeting Tomorrow Friday at 12 noon on USF Tampa in EDU 254 and on Zoom. (EDU 254 can be reached via the working elevator in the northern wing of the Education building next to the Stavros center.) On [the agenda](#): the chapter election, legal updates, the spring membership campaign, the upcoming legislative session, and more.

Meetings and events are posted on [the Events Calendar](#) of the [UFF USF website](#). Come and check us out.



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](#).

The Presidential Search

USF Board of Trustees Chair Will Weatherford announced the formation of a [search committee](#) charged with finding a new president of USF. This committee consists of seven current or former trustees (including one member of the Board of Governors), a "designee" of the Board of Governors, five senior officers of USF affiliates, two administrators (one recently a faculty member in Education), and one student. All members of the community are business executives from large businesses; none from the local education community. It is not clear how this committee was formed.

And of course, USF hired a "highly regarded" search firm, [SP&A Executive Search](#), which may be an accomplishment in itself as some search firms are [leery of Florida](#) (it's hard to stay highly regarded if the governor keeps shoe-horning in his own candidates).

While the [USF announcements](#) suggests that there will be many public sessions where members of the community can express their views, in 2022 the Legislature passed [the umpteenth exemption to Florida Sunshine](#) (and [enabling legislation](#)) with a bill closing all but the final stage of any presidential search. The [argument for closing searches](#) was that "people aren't applying unless they are guaranteed a finalist spot" and that it would protect candidates from marginalized communities. But there was a warning that the secrecy would lead to unqualified insider candidates - and that it would [deny participation](#) by faculty and

the community.

Perhaps predictably, just after Governor DeSantis signed the bill, [the University of Florida hired Ben Sasse](#) after a search that the bill's sponsor said was too closed. Sasse subsequently proved to be [a problematic choice](#).

Sasse was [a politician](#), which brings us to [Florida's recent habit of hiring politicians](#) as college and university presidents. (In fact, subsequent hires were largely politicians - and not from marginalized communities - and have been less than exemplary.) This is not new, but [the traditional argument](#) for hiring politicians is that presidents are supposed to generate support and funding for their institutions. But events surrounding recently hired presidents of [New College](#) and [Florida International](#) suggest that it's not necessarily the board that is doing the hiring.

At any rate, Florida's colleges and universities seem to be hiring a disproportionate number of former politicians as presidents lately. According to the [2023 survey by the American Council on Education and the TIAA Institute](#), as of 2022, 97.5% of responding presidents of (Carnegie classification) Doctoral Institutes had doctoral degrees. As for background, nearly 70% were from faculty, over 80% were faculty or career administrative, and of the remainder, more were from for-profit or non-profit business than from "public sector / government".

What is particularly alarming is that these political hires occur amidst a lot of rhetoric about restricting academic freedom - and a lot of political and ideological micromanagement.

The University of South Florida has come a long way since it opened its doors 65 years ago. We have been awarded a Phi Beta Kappa chapter and membership in the American Association of Universities. USF is a valuable part of the Tampa Bay Area and of Florida in general. It is important for the Board of Trustees to remember that regardless of who appointed them, their duty is to the mission of the university and to the community that the university serves.

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](#).



On Salaries

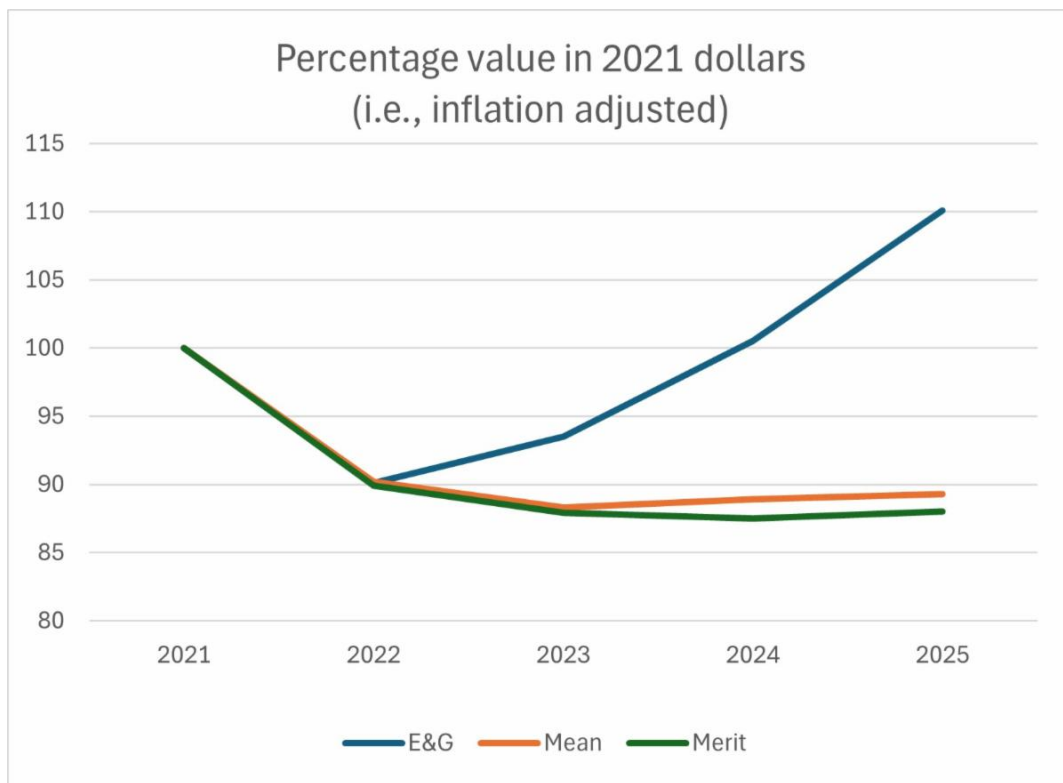
Last Friday the Board of Trustees team made [the generous offer](#) of a 2% merit raise each year for the next three years. Meanwhile, the UFF team [proposed 5%](#) for each of the three years.

There are two aspects of these proposals to consider.

First of all, over three years, the dollar does not stand still. The Federal Reserve estimates [consumer expectations of inflation](#) over the next three years to be about 3% annually, which is about what their [Survey of Professional Forecasters](#) anticipates - although some economists are worried that new federal policies, or [inattention by central banks](#), will [create an inflationary spike](#).

Accepting the Federal Reserve's comforting assumption that inflation will stay near 3%, the Board of Trustees offer would mean a reduction in buying power of nearly 1% per year, with a net pay cut of 2.9% over those three years.

Second, as noted in the [29 August 2024 Biweekly](#), while USF's Education & General (E&G) funding had recovered after the Covid inflationary spike, salaries have not. If we project that picture forward a year - adding the January 17 salaries (which increased following the noncontractual (ahem!) raises last fall), the E&G funding projection announced at the [4 June 2024 Board of Trustees meeting](#), and the local inflation rate listed by the [US Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), we get the picture below. The additional E&G funding is going to something other than salaries for employees in the Bargaining Unit....



The blue curve is E&G funding, whose buying power fell between 2021 and 2022, but subsequently recovered and is now 110% of what it was in 2021. The orange curve is the mean salary, while the green curve is what a longstanding employee who did not receive promotional or discretionary raises would receive - in 2021 dollars.

Salaries Employment Health Grievance Protection Law Regulate Contract Participate Limits Work-ire Salary Representative Issues are Representative Process Negotiation Agreement Productive Working Hours Terms Rules Employer Union Wages Group Overtime Safety Establish Cost

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

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 we have a (brief) [bargaining survey](#) we ask people to fill out.



About the Elections

The union is not only a participatory democracy, it is a volunteer organization. While union dues pay for some staff (and some lawyers), most of the work is done by volunteers,

This is election season for both the USF Chapter and the statewide union.

For the Chapter election, the four elective offices are open for election: the president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. In addition we will elect senators representing the USF Chapter

at the biannual meetings of the UFF Senate, And we will elect delegates representing UFF itself at the annual meeting of the Florida Education Association. Nominations for offices and representative seats in the chapter election are now open: See the [Call for Nominations; *nominations are due by March 10.*](#) Only union members may participate in this election, so [join today](#).

For the statewide election, union members should have already received the call for nominations and soon should receive ballots.

We strongly urge all union members to participate in these elections.

In addition, much of the work is done by members of standing committees. The standing committees are:

The Bargaining Committee is now bargaining a successor to the current contract. This committee seeks a contract that is fair to the employees and can be ratified by both the employees and the Board of Trustees.

The Government Relations Committee educates politicians about the needs of Florida higher education and about the consequences of problematic legislation. The legislature will be meeting shortly, so this committee will have a lot to do.

The Grievance Committee enforces the contract by grieving contract violations. Most grievances concern violations of the contractual rights and privileges of employees (although the union will only represent union members in grievances), but sometimes the chapter will file a grievance. *Because of the large number of contractual violations lately (ahem!), we need new grievance officers.*

The Membership Committee recruits new members - especially new employees of USF - and recruits volunteers from among the membership. The more members we have and the more active volunteers we have the more we are able to do for employees.

The Publicity Committee reaches out to employees via old fashioned media (like this newsletter) and through social media to keep everyone up to date on what is going on.

All these committees need helping hands, so if you are interested, come to the chapter meeting tomorrow and talk about opportunities.

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](#).



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](#).

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. 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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