



UFF Biweekly

United Faculty of Florida -- USF System Chapter

United Faculty of Florida - USF Chapter

26 March 2026

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The Contract: What is at Stake

Last week, the Florida Senate passed a bill aimed at ridding Florida of public employee unions like UFF. No union quickly and inevitably means no contract - **quickly** as no union means no enforcer, and **inevitably** as no union means no bargaining.

- **What the contract is good for.** The Administration can't simply cut your salary or move you from one campus to another. There are restrictions on non-renewals, layoffs, and other terminations.

Tomorrow, Friday, March 27, at 10 am, on USF Tampa, in SVC 2070, we will have a **TOWNHALL MEETING** on how to withstand the storm arising from this legislation - and in this storm, **THE CONTRACT ITSELF IS AT STAKE. EVERYONE IS INVITED.** It will also be [streamed on Zoom](#).

After the Townhall meeting, the Bargaining Session will start at 12 noon, also in SVC 2070 or [streamed on Zoom](#). **EVERYONE IS INVITED.**

Keeping the Contract. Until the courts finally condescend to address all this lawlessness and disorder, we have to meet the new legal requirements. That means SOI cards and getting out the vote. **For more details, come to the Townhall Meeting on Friday, March 27, at 10 am, on USF Tampa, in SVC 2070 or [streamed on Zoom](#)** (see also the [previous Biweekly](#)).

Bargaining Session Tomorrow at 12 noon on USF Tampa in SVC 2070 or [streamed on Zoom](#), after the Townhall. Everyone is encouraged to support the home team. We will be discussing salary and grievances; see the video on the March 13 Bargaining Session for more.



Here is the Bargaining Update. For more information on where we are in bargaining, see [The Bargaining Page](#).

How Many Elections Are There???

It may seem like every time you turn around, there's another union-related election. So here they are:

- **The USF Chapter of the United Faculty of Florida is conducting its annual election for its four elected officers and its senators (to the statewide UFF) and delegates (to the Florida Education Association, our state affiliate). All union members, and only union members, can vote; if any union members have not received a ballot, they should contact [the chapter secretary](#). All ballots are due (in our hands) by Tuesday, April 7. For more information, see [the Election Page](#).**
- Once the UFF Bargaining Team and the Administration bargaining team (representing the Board of Trustees) agree on a contract, **the UFF will conduct a ratification election to determine if the USF faculty accept the contract.** In this ratification election, all UFF USF employees - UFF members and nonmembers alike - may vote. This election will be held once we have a proposed contract (hopefully soon). **NOTE: the statewide union's lawyers have strongly recommended that in view of a new law coming into force on July 1, new contracts should be ratified by June 30.**
- **The certification election, which will be conducted by a state agency called the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC), and in which all UFF USF employees - members and nonmembers alike - are to vote on whether they want UFF to be their union. A majority of UFF USF employees must vote (and a majority of the voters must vote in favor of UFF) in order for UFF to continue as your union. PERC's scheduling is capricious and an election can happen at any time.**

Speaking of certification...

UNITED FACULTY OF FLORIDA,
AN AFFILIATE OF THE UNITED FACULTY OF FLORIDA, FLORIDA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION,
NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, AND THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (AFL-CIO)

Showing of Interest Card	
I, _____, a non-managerial employee of	
(PRINT YOUR NAME)	
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA BOARD OF TRUSTEES UNITED FACULTY OF FLORIDA desires to be represented for purposes of Collective Bargaining and Representation by the UNITED FACULTY OF FLORIDA an employee organization pursuant to Section 447.307(2).	
_____	_____
(YOUR SIGNATURE)	(DATE SIGNED)

CERT #1395/USF Unit

They're BAAACK!

Thanks to Senate Bill 1296, we have to collect Showing of Interest (SOI) cards *every year*.

The new law says that in order to be certified (which is necessary in order to represent YOU in bargaining and enforcing a contract), the union has to file a petition *every year*. These cards are that petition.

All employees in the UFF USF Bargaining Unit - UFF members and non-members alike - will soon receive in the mail a 9 x 12 envelope containing the above Showing of Interest card. If you want to have a union, fill in the card (remember to PRINT YOUR NAME as it appears in university records).

Unfortunately, that's not the end of it. The petition is for the certification election mentioned above in which all employees vote on whether to continue to be represented by then union (and a majority of the employees will have to vote in order for the union to be recertified). And thanks to this new law, we have to do this *every year*. Something to remember this coming Election Day.

It's Days Late

A new contract to succeed the current one should have been "tentatively agreed to" and ratified by the employees and the Board by **7 August 2024**. We are now down to a handful of articles. Don't just cross your fingers - come support the home

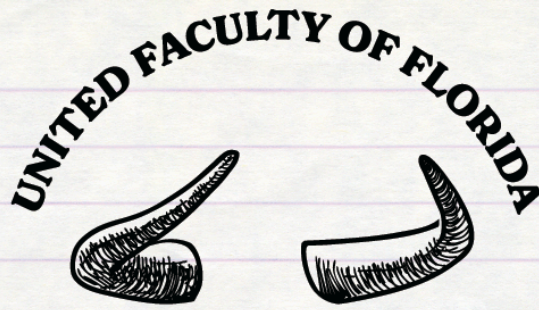
team to tomorrow's bargaining session, Friday, March 27, at 12 noon on USF Tampa in SVC 2070.

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.* For assistance, [contact us](#).

Townhall Instead of a Chapter Meeting

Chapter Meeting Tomorrow is subsumed by a TOWNHALL MEETING tomorrow at 10 am on USF Tampa in SVC 2070, and on Zoom. The Townhall will streamed; here is [the link](#). The Townhall will be followed by the bargaining session at 12 noon.



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

What if Our Contract Disappeared?

Friday, March 27

SVC 2070

UFF-USF Townhall

@ 10am

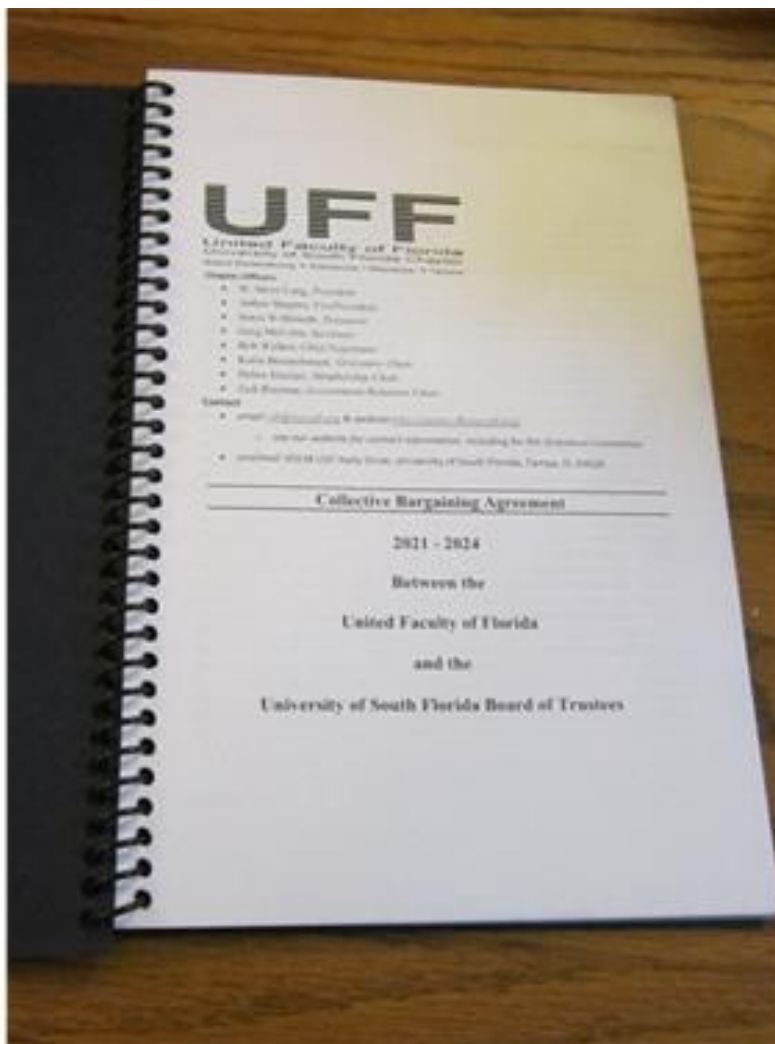
1. UFF-USF chapter certification (SOI cards & ballot election)
2. Where we are with contract bargaining?
3. Possible loss of UFF-USF course releases
4. What does this mean for you?

followed by the

CBA Bargaining Session

@ noon

**SAVE OUR CONTRACT!
SAVE OUR CHAPTER!**



What the Contract is Good For

Union contracts are like good public health and competent building management: you tend not to notice them when they are there. **So we take them for granted.** Unless they are compromised or they disappear - and then you really notice.

The [current contract](#) goes back half a century, and the USF chapter of UFF has been bargaining a contract for USF faculty for two decades. **According to the lawyers who work for the statewide office, we have one of the strongest contracts in the state - i.e. the contract allows USF faculty to take a lot of things for granted.** Let's take a look at some things we might take for granted - and as you are doing so, try imagining some of the shenanigans that inspired these protections. **And imagine life without a contract.**

In the current political and cultural climate, it's important that [Article 5 on Academic Freedom](#) says that ***Academic Freedom is the freedom of an employee to discuss all relevant matters in the classroom, to explore all avenues of scholarship, research, and creative expression, to speak freely on all matters of university governance, and to speak, write, or act as an individual, all without institutional discipline or restraint.*** Notice in

particular **the contract refers to the academic freedom right of employees**; since some courts have ruled that the default is for *the institution* to have academic freedom, the explicit statement that it is *the employees* that have academic freedom is an important protection.

In the current political and cultural climate, it's important that [Article 6 on Nondiscrimination](#) says that ***Neither the University nor the UFF shall discriminate against any employee based upon race, color, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, age, military status, veteran status, disability, political affiliation, or marital status.*** (In bargaining, we have proposed adding pregnancy to that list; we'll see what their response is tomorrow in the bargaining session.)

In the current economic climate, it's important that [Article 8 on Appointment](#) enumerates **a list of twelve items (see 8.3) that cannot be changed without the employee's written consent** (see 8.4); these include **what unit you are in** (department, college, etc.), **what campus you are on, whether you have tenure**, and **if you are full time**; and **your salary cannot be lowered** (e.g. for a furlough) without your written permission.

In addition, [Article 8 on Appointment](#) (see 8.4C) **fixes promotional raises** (and we persuaded them to have higher promotional raises - effective upon ratification...which means that getting higher promotional raises this year would depend on getting the new contract ratified before the promotions go through).

And [Article 9 on Assignment](#) says that *No employee's assignment shall be imposed arbitrarily or unreasonably*, and that an employee has the right to talk to the person making that employee's assignment. It also provides a method for contesting an assignment.

[Article 10 on Employee Performance Evaluations](#) and [Article 11 on Evaluation Files](#) govern how evaluations are composed and what goes into them. **In particular, evaluation procedures are determined at the department level**, employees have access to their own files (but access is otherwise limited to evaluators, arbitrators, and those armed with court orders).

[Article 12 on Non-Reappointment](#) and [Article 13 on Layoffs and Recall](#) determine how terminations, non-reappointments, and layoffs occur. In particular, by requiring notice for employees with some seniority and requiring that the Administration seek alternate positions for employees terminated for financial reasons, **the contract makes termination a less attractive option** for administrators facing a problem.

[Article 14 on Promotion Procedure](#) and [Article 15 on Tenure](#) fixes the procedure for getting promoted or getting tenure and **requires that the criteria for promotion and for tenure be available to employees.** It describes how the promotion or tenure file is handled, what can go into it, and requires that the employee be kept informed about what is in the file.

[Article 16 on Disciplinary Action and Job Abandonment](#) states that disciplinary action may be taken for Just Cause, which it defines as *incompetence or misconduct*, adding that *An employee's activities which fall outside the scope of employment shall constitute misconduct only if such activities adversely affect the legitimate interests of the University.* **NOTE: the only ways of separating an employee from USF given in the contract are non-reappointment, layoff, termination for just cause, resignation (including for job abandonment), and retirement. NO OTHER FORM OF SEPARATION APPEARS IN THE CONTRACT.** (The union is currently in court litigating against the out-of-contract novelty called Post Tenure Faculty Review.)

[Article 17 on Leaves](#) addresses leaves with or without pay, Family and Medical Leave, parental leave, leaves due to illness or injury (including sick leave and job-related illness and injury), compulsory leave, annual leave, jury duty and court appearance, military leave, and administrative leave (pending an investigation). **All things we don't think about ... until we have to.**

[Article 18 on Inventions and Works](#) says that *A work made in the course of independent efforts is the property of the employee, who has the right to determine the disposition of such work and the revenue derived from such work.* (although a work made with USF support is property of the USF, which shall share the proceeds) (but research publications and instructional materials for USF courses are not USF property).

[Article 19 on Conflict of Interest and Outside Activity](#) says that *Nothing in this Article is intended to discourage an employee from engaging in outside activity in order to increase the employee's professional reputation, service to the community, or income, subject to the conditions stated herein.*

[Article 20 on the Grievance Procedure and Arbitration](#) is one of the two contentious articles. **If the USF Administration violates the contract, infringing on an employee's rights and privileges, that employee may file a grievance,** and this article defines the process. The appeal process (arbitration) will be a subject of Friday's bargaining.

[Article 21 on Other Employee Rights](#) concerns professional meetings, office space, safety, travel, and other issues we take for granted. Similarly, [Article 22 on Professional Development Program and Sabbaticals](#) provide for professional leave. And [Article 24 on Benefits](#) addresses health insurance, retirement benefits (including phased retirement and early retirement)), free university courses for employees, dependents, spouses, and domestic partners, employee assistance programs, domestic partner benefits, and more.

[Article 23 on Salary](#) is the other contentious article.

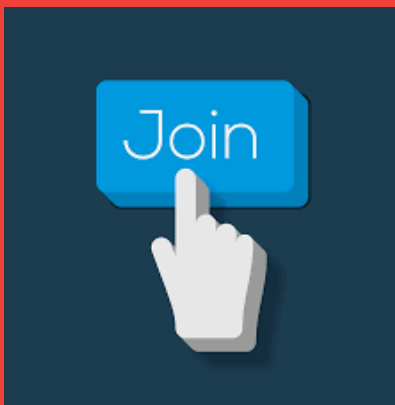
Management can't simply give money to employees that it likes and deny money to those it doesn't like. There is a system, and the union focuses on increasing the size of the pie while insisting that it be divided equitably. This article will also be a major part of tomorrow's bargaining.

The point of having a contract is that the Board of Trustees and the Administration cannot change it unilaterally.

Upcoming Events

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

- **March 27 at 10 am on USF Tampa in SVC 2070 or [streamed on Zoom](#), Townhall meeting on preserving the contract (and the union that bargains and enforces it).**
- **March 27 at 12 noon on USF Tampa in SVC 2070 or [streamed on Zoom](#), Bargaining Session.**
- March 27 at 5 pm, Social at New World Tampa brewery.
- **April 7, ballots for chapter election due *in our hands*.**
- April 8 at 11 am on USF Tampa in EDU 254, ballots for chapter election counted. All union members are invited.



Union Membership

If you are not a union member, please [join today](#) (the form connects automatically to the eDues form, so you will want

Follow us on Social Media

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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 USF-News and USF-Talk from mccolm@usf.edu.

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