

# WHAT WE FACE NOW

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## *The Governor and the Legislature*

When the Legislature convenes in January, Governor Rick Scott and the leadership in the House and Senate will again push for a dramatic reduction in the jobs and benefits of public employees. This is how they plan to cover an even larger potential revenue shortfall than we faced in spring 2011 and still give new tax breaks to corporations.

Because collective bargaining agreements (CBA) that protect public employees stand in the way of implementing plans for layoffs and cutting benefits, legislators are also looking for ways to eliminate union contracts and keep unions from functioning. The legislative leadership made it clear that in 2012 they will introduce and pass a bill requiring unions to have 50% membership or face decertification and the loss of the CBA.

How will a funding crisis without a CBA affect faculty?

### **The threats to faculty:**

- University and college budget cuts will lead to layoffs of faculty and reductions in benefits (sabbaticals, parental leave, etc.).
- Without a CBA faculty become "at will employees," giving supervisors the power to fire anyone without justification or due process. Supervisors can then "cherry-pick" through faculty in any department and lay off anyone whose salary they want to use for other purposes.
- This means the end of legal guarantees for tenure, continuing contracts, and multiyear contracts. It also means the end of due process, academic freedom, and a grievance procedure with binding arbitration.
- Legislators are again threatening to require faculty contributions in 2012 for retirement benefits and health and life insurance (5-15% salary loss).
- The Governor has a plan to run higher education like a business in every respect. He will reduce all academic evaluations and decisions to a narrow set of calculations about productivity and customer satisfaction. He wants to eliminate tenure, continuing contracts and multi-year contracts

### **Only a legally binding collective bargaining agreement protects:**

- Academic freedom, due process, tenure, continuing contracts, fair evaluations, the right to grievances with binding arbitration, and assignment dispute resolution.
- Substantial salary increases for promotions.
- Paid parental leave, sabbaticals, and other benefits.
- Intellectual property rights

### **What can faculty do?**

- Join UFF. We must have a majority of members this spring to withstand attacks on collective bargaining.
- Get involved in the UFF campaign to build a strong union.

**In the past two years, UFF saved dozens of tenured and non-tenured faculty jobs by challenging "arbitrary and capricious" layoffs and non-renewals through arbitration.**

**Cary Nelson, the national president of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), summed up the significance of these victories:**

**"[The arbitration wins are] confirmation of the power a union contract has to preserve faculty job security .... Even in those states that regard tenure itself as the equivalent of a contractual agreement, a legally enforceable union contract is still much more secure." (Inside Higher Ed, 11/08/10)**

# UFF

United Faculty  
of Florida

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