

# FAMUUFF Newsletter

The Florida A&M University Chapter of the United Faculty of Florida  
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## AREA UNIVERSITIES TO RALLY ON CAPITAL

The United Faculty of Florida – FAMU, FSU, Tallahassee Community College and other chapters-- are anticipating a large number of people in Tallahassee to march to the Capital from the campuses of the two universities and college. The march will take place on March 3, 2009 at noon to arrange a “teach in” to argue for more resources to higher education in Florida for the upcoming budget year. Time carved out time to help educate Florida legislators about the destruction of higher education through budget cuts is time well spent.

### What has happened since 2007?

Florida’s tax revenues have declined since early 2007. Instead of finding responsible ways to make up for this decline, Florida’s governor and legislators have reduced funding for state services. Over the last two years, state support for higher education has dropped by 8%. Universities expect an additional 10% reduction beginning in July 2009.

How will this huge additional cut in funding affect faculty, students, and the greater Tallahassee community?

#### 1. Accreditation will suffer.

Many programs and colleges within the University are accredited by professional agencies that oversee standards. If faculty members depart from the institution and programs are cut, this weakens the ability of the university to maintain standards for accreditation-at some point making a FAMU degree less valuable and funding decreases.

#### 2. You may not be able to contact your department via the telephone.

Since 2007, academic departments have been rationing paper and office supplies and eliminating all but essential operating expenses. There are no more unessential expenses. By removing telephones, departments can lower costs even further.

#### 3. Faculty recruitment and retention will decrease.

The State of Florida hires fewer faculty for each college student than any other state in the United States.

**4. Classes will be larger.**

As faculty leave for other universities or lose their jobs to layoffs, the remaining faculty will have to increase class sizes and teach more classes, which leaves less time for advising, office hours, giving feedback on papers, conferencing, writing letters of recommendation, and other activities. In spite of the budget cuts, the University is planning to increase enrollment levels during the next few years. Class sizes will increase and student/teacher interaction will decrease.

**5. Senior faculty will leave.**

No one willingly does more work for less pay. Only faculty whose personal circumstances will prevent them from leaving Florida will accept a salary cut. Faculty with outstanding national reputations will find better jobs elsewhere. This means those professors who have the most influence to help students get into graduate schools or land jobs will leave Florida.

**6. The classes students need to graduate might not be available.**

With fewer professors, the classes students need to complete their degree might not be offered when they need them. Summer course offerings will be reduced or eliminated. With enrollments growing here at FAMU, students will be placed on long waiting lists to get into classes; whole departments or programs may be shut down.

The fastest way out of a recession, leaving Florida with a stronger workforce than when the recession began, is to increase funding for higher education. In this instance, HBCU's suffer the hardest blows during recessions. When people are unemployed, access to higher education is essential so people can upgrade their credentials and skills to emerge ready for a better job. Without education, workers emerge from a recession less able to contribute to the workforce, pay taxes, and support themselves without reliance on social programs. **Supporting higher education during a recession makes a state's economy stronger; cutting funds makes it weaker. The fastest and strongest way to leave a recession is to fund higher education.**

**Make Our Schools A Priority  
WRITE YOUR LEGISLATORS**

Area universities and colleges are asking you to write letters to legislators asking for no more cuts for higher education. The reasons are obvious. For two decades funding for higher education has been shrinking as a portion of the state's budget. The result is that programs are stretched to the limits. Since September 2007, Florida's universities have suffered cuts of 11.4% (\$425 Million), and public colleges have been cut 12.8% (\$153 million) in program and lottery funds. Further cuts will force layoffs of faculty and a collapse of many programs. In other words, students who are enrolled at a Florida university and have made financial sacrifices for an education will have to defer their dreams.

The student-faculty ratio is now the worst in the nation for universities -- worse than Louisiana after Katrina, which ranks 49th. Public colleges have 50,000 new students this year with no additional full-time faculty to teach them. More cuts mean faculty layoffs, fewer classes, and fewer qualified faculty to teach essential subjects. If students seeking to enroll are denied access in a recession, they join the ranks of the unemployed -- swelling joblessness. If students who are already enrolled cannot get the classes they need for graduation, they waste time and money as they seek their degrees.

The quality of higher education is already in jeopardy. The staffing necessary to run programs is on the brink of collapse after a brain drain lasting several years. (The annual turnover rate in the universities is 14 %.) This means the range of courses students need to complete a degree, with faculty qualified and ready to teach specialized courses, is in peril.

We can fund higher education (with no more cuts) by closing tax loopholes and eliminating tax giveaways. New revenue comes from everyone paying a fair share of taxes which are then invested in Florida's economy and in the future of students. If the 2009 Legislature cannot agree on how to pass this legislation, then it should pass a temporary sales tax increase until legislators can agree on tax reform. (This is the proposal of the Florida Education Association.)

Supporting higher education can be achieved through immediate tax reform or through a temporary sales tax increase followed by comprehensive tax reform.

**Contact your legislators now.** Leave a brief voice message at the district offices of legislators or send email messages with one or two sentences. It's the volume, not the length, of messages received by each legislator that counts. If you know about an example of damage from cuts on your campus, you can refer to it, but details are not necessary. State employees should be careful to use an off-campus computer and email address.

[www.unitedfacultyofflorida.org/legislativenews](http://www.unitedfacultyofflorida.org/legislativenews)

### **FAMU-FAMU UFF Collective Bargaining Begins**

State funding is creating additional problems for FAMU and the University is beginning to feel the fury of a faltering economy. FAMU's enrollment has fallen- down from a peak of 13,070 in 2004 and the lowest since 1997, when *Time* magazine named us college of the year. Recently, the administration announced that due to budget cuts, the university will undergo significant change, including staffing reductions and/or furloughs. There is also the possibility that very few courses will be offered during the summer term, not as many courses and sections from which to choose, and larger class sizes. Faculty and staff numbers could also possibly decline.

**These anticipated actions are changes in terms and conditions of employment and subject to the collective bargaining process. Therefore, we need your assistance.** Please contact Liz Davenport (599-8163 or ldavenport7@embarqmail.com) if you are willing to volunteer in support of the UFF-FAMU collective bargaining effort. If you have issues about which you are strongly concerned, help yourself and your colleagues by volunteering to develop those issues. We can use help in researching the views of the faculty on issues we should bring to the bargaining table, researching what is being done at other universities, and in developing supporting data to convince the FAMU administration to take action.

Other actions you can take:

- Keep yourself informed about the progress of collective bargaining and about bargaining issues.
- Express your views to the President and Board of Trustees, and to the public at large, regarding current bargaining issues. The hardest issues will be the problem of low faculty salaries at FAMU, including problems with the cost-of-living, compression, inversion, and market inequities.
- Join the FAMU UFF. We know that the faculty supports the UFF, but the administration interprets low number of dues-paying members as a sign of faculty apathy. By joining, you express the strongest form of support for the collective bargaining process.

**United Faculty of Florida FAMU Chapter**

At its September 2008 Senate meeting, the statewide United Faculty of Florida (UFF) revised its grievance representation policy in response to liability and legal concerns. **Effective immediately, UFF will not provide grievance representation to faculty who were not dues-paying UFF members at the time when the grievable incident occurred.**

All faculty have the right to file an individual grievance, but those who were not UFF members when the incident occurred must represent themselves or retain an attorney. UFF retains the sole and exclusive right to invoke arbitration; non-members will not automatically have the right to pursue a remedy beyond the grievance process. If UFF agrees to allow a non-member to proceed to arbitration, the non-member will be responsible for the cost of the arbitration – \$2000 to \$4000 – and must provide his or her own attorney, the cost of which can exceed \$20,000. If a non-member informs the chapter of an incident, UFF may file a grievance on behalf of the chapter if it is believed to have chapter-wide impact on the enforcement of the collective bargaining agreement; however, that is at the discretion of the chapter.

Please be aware that you are NOT automatically a member of UFF. You must complete and sign a membership form and submit it to UFF in order to become a member. In addition to guaranteeing yourself free representation in any grievance and arbitration proceedings that you may need to initiate in the future, by becoming a UFF member you will:

- Strengthen the voice of faculty in negotiations;
- Support our lobbying efforts for better higher education funding and academic excellence;
- Receive professional protection by way of a free \$1 million professional liability policy;
- Obtain the right to vote in UFF elections and thereby influence UFF bargaining priorities;
- Gain access to a variety of “members only” workshops, events and services, including free life insurance policies and legal representation;
- Receive free professional publications and literature about national higher education issues.

We want to ensure that you make an informed decision at this time. Please complete and sign the Membership Form and return it to UFF-FAMU.

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**UFF Membership Form**

UFF dues are 1% of bi-weekly salary.

*Please Print Complete Information*

**United Faculty of Florida FAMU Chapter**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Last Name First Name MI

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department or Unit

\_\_\_\_\_  
Home Street Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Campus Address & Mail Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Office Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail address -- Personal/Home

\_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail address -- Office

**Please enroll me immediately as a member of the United Faculty of Florida (FEA, NEA-AFT, AFL-CIO). I hereby authorize my employer to begin bi-weekly payroll deduction of United Faculty of Florida dues (1% of bi-weekly salary).** This deduction authorization shall continue until revoked by me at any time upon 30 days written notice to FAMU's payroll office and to the United Faculty of Florida.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature (for payroll deduction authorization)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Today's Date