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UFF FAMU

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NEWSLETTER

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THE TEXAS PLAN —A LOOK AT WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW

Last year, the legislature passed a new teacher evaluation system in Senate Bill (S.B.) 736. S.B. 736 mandated that in K-12 school districts across the state of Florida at least 50% of teacher evaluations must be based on student learning growth assessed annually and measured by statewide assessment or, for subjects not measured by statewide assessment tests by district assessments (as described Section 1008.22 8 F.S.)

Therefore, beginning this Fall (2011-2012), school districts must use the formula approved by the Commissioner and by 2014-2015 districts will measure student growth using equally appropriate formulas. The Florida Department of Education will provide the models.

This Fall, with nearly 900,000 Floridians still out of work, Governor Scott has set his eyes again on teachers—this time those in higher



education.

Forget the fact that Florida higher education is currently underfunded and the share of the state's general revenues going to the state universities has fallen from a high of 13% several years ago to 7.5%; similarly, the share to community colleges has gone from 5% to 3.6%. Governor Scott has begun a march toward Florida acceptance of the Texas Plan, from a State that funds higher education at a much high level and is undergoing economic prosperity.

Governor Scott wants to change the evaluation system of college and university professors. Thus, attempting to destroy the protections currently provided to you in your Collective Bargaining

Agreement. Remember, if you change the evaluation system, you change tenure and promotion.

Adopting Texas' "Seven Breakthrough Solutions", authored by the Free market-based Texas Policy Foundation, without the investment in higher education currently taking place in Texas is useless. The goals of the Texas Plan are to quantify university performance focusing on how faculty are paid, awarding teaching and their teaching load. The Plan places a greater emphasis on tracking performance by rating professors based on the number of students taught, grades awarded and student reviews.

The Texas model has ignited controversy in Texas with opponents calling it a one-size-fits-all template which undermines research and damages the value of a degree. In fact, a majority of top research universities has warned the legislature and Governor Scott about adopting Texas reforms.

(Con't p.2)



What is the Texas Plan?

The elements of the Texas Plan are:

- Measure teaching efficiency and effectiveness. *Goal:* Improve the quality of teaching by making use of a public measurement tool to evaluate faculty teaching performance that makes it possible to recognize excellent teachers.
- Publicly recognize and reward extraordinary teachers. *Goal:* Create a financial incentive to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching at Texas' colleges and universities that will help attract the best teachers from across the nation.
- Split research and teaching budgets to encourage excellence in both. *Goal:* Increase transparency and accountability by emphasizing teaching and research as separate efforts in higher education, and making it easier to recognize excellence in each area.
- Require evidence of teaching skill for tenure. *Goal:* Highlight the importance of great teachers by evaluating teaching skill in nominating and awarding faculty tenure.
- Use "results-based" contracts with students to measure quality. *Goal:* Increase transparency and accountability to students with learning contracts between Deans, department heads, and teachers that clearly state the promises of each degree program to each student.
- Put state funding directly in the hands of students. *Goal:* Increase college access and make students the actual customers for higher education with student-directed scholarships for undergraduate and graduate education with funding from the state's current appropriation that goes directly to colleges and universities.
- Create results-based accrediting alternatives. *Goal:* Encourage greater competition in higher education and more choices for students by creating an alternative accrediting body that would focus on results and the college's or university's ability to uphold any obligation or promise made to the student. (<http://texashighered.com/7-solutions>)

The Nuts and Bolts

The Texas Plan is designed to improve the quality of teaching by providing legislators and governing boards with a simple tool to measure faculty teaching performance and to publicly recognize excellent teachers.

Therefore, the first step is to gather the data **and measure teaching efficiency and effectiveness** by compiling the following information for each teacher:

- 1) Salary and benefit costs
- 2) Number of students taught in the last twelve months
- 3) Average student satisfaction rating
- 4) Average percentage of A's and B's awarded
- 5) Divide the total employment cost for each teacher by the number of students taught, and force rank from highest cost per student taught to lowest cost per student taught
- 6) Compare student satisfaction ratings and graded distributions
- 7) For high-cost faculty, collect and read all research articles published in the last twelve months

After the information is compiled, the next step is to **publicly post the student satisfaction ratings and number of students taught for each teacher in several prominent locations at their respective colleges**. According to the Plan, this will help students identify the best teachers and encourage all teachers to improve their effectiveness and efficiency.

Texas Plan Breakthrough Solution #2 will offer voluntary cash bonuses to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching on college and university campuses and the goal is to attract the best teachers. The model states that bonuses will be widespread, significant, and based on how well a course delivers on its learning objectives. The Plan states that since up to 25% of the faculty each semester will receive a teaching bonus, every faculty member will have an incentive to improve his or her teaching skills. The top awards will be up to \$10,000 a class, so once a teacher receives a lower-level bonus, there will be a strong incentive to continue to improve. (con't p.3)

Texas Plan (con't from p.2)



10.3(b) 1. The proposed procedures, or revisions thereof, shall be reviewed by the President or representative to ensure that they are consistent with the mission and goals of the university and that they comply with this agreement.

2. If the president or representative determines that the recommended procedures do not meet the conditions in Section 10.3(b) above, the proposal shall be referred to the department/unit for revision with a written statement of reasons for non-approval. No merit salary increase funds shall be provided to a department/unit until its procedures have been approved by the President or rep 14.2 Criteria.

(a) Promotion decisions shall be a result of meritorious performance of assigned duties pursuant to Article 10.3 and other established criteria specified in writing by the Board or the University. The Board and the University may modify these criteria so long as the local UFF Chapter has been notified of the proposed changes and offered an opportunity to discuss such changes in consultation with the President or representative. Changes in criteria shall not become effective until one (1) year

Reform three would establish separate budgets and reward systems for teaching and research faculty, while preserving the option for faculty who are excellent teachers and productive researchers to continue to do both. Teachers will be paid based on the number of students taught with a significant bonus based on customer (student) satisfaction. Limits on the number of A's and B's will discourage grade inflation. Researchers will be paid based on the sponsored research dollars they attract from government, business, and private donors.

Reform three will allow faculty with tenure the option of shifting to the new, more lucrative reward system but would not be required to do so. Departmental and college budgets will be based on the number of students taught and sponsored research funding attracted, with a significant bonus based on student satisfaction. Administrative funds will be set as a certain percentage of the total budget. Total university-wide budgets will be expected to remain at or near current levels, at least until efficiency gains appear. Parking and offices will be assigned based on performance. Only faculty electing to participate under the new system would be eligible to serve in institutional leadership positions.

Reform four requires that a majority of those nominated for tenure must have proven that they are good teachers. The majority of new tenure appointments (say 75%) will be granted to professors who have proven that they can teach well by having taught on average three classes per semester and thirty students per class for seven or more years.

Customer (student) satisfaction ratings would be used to determine teaching effectiveness. Average teaching ratings must be a minimum of 4.5 on a

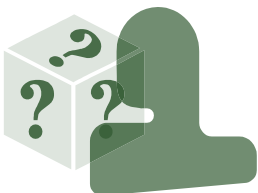
the efficacy of customer (student) satisfaction ratings are questioned.

Reform five requires signed contracts between the university, dean, department head, teachers, and each student. **Universities will provide each applicant with a "learning contract" that discloses, at a minimum:**

- the graduation rate, placement rate and average starting salaries for a student with the equivalent entering admissions test scores (SAT) and major
- the average class size
- teaching evaluations for the faculty who will be teaching their classes
- grade distributions
- the skills, tools and lessons that the curriculum is designed to transmit
- how educational value-added will be measured. All enrolling students will need to sign and return the learning contract to the school before admittance.

Reform six requires that universities provide each in-state student with a scholarship for undergraduate and graduate education. Students would be able to use their scholarship at any Texas university or college. **Scholarships would be funded with current direct appropriations and increase college access by marketing the scholarships starting in middle school.**

Finally, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved new rules that will allow all accrediting bodies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, not just the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), to be allowed to accredit colleges in Texas. The rules also established an alternative path to receive state certification to operate a college or university in Texas. These reforms open the door for new entrants into the higher education marketplace, which, according to the Plan, will both expand access and opportunities for Texas students as well as provide more competition among higher education institutions. <http://texashighered.com/7-solutions> (con't p.4)



Texas Plan (con't from p.3)

Why It Can't Work in Florida!

The Texas Plan cannot work in Florida for one simple reason—**we are broke and our faculty are underpaid.** The Florida legislature is taking money out of the State University System (SUS) and not putting any in. In fact, rising college costs endanger Florida's low-cost status. Students and their families are currently worrying that rising costs will push some of them out of the market for a college education, According to the *New York Times* last Spring, student loans now make up a larger percentage of debt than credit cards nationally, and may soon hit the trillion dollar mark. Florida is still a low-cost haven for diplomas. Students from nonprofit universities graduated with an average debt of \$20,766 in 2009, compared to \$24,000 nationally, However, less than half of all Florida students graduate with some debt, topping all but nine states. While Florida universities are the third cheapest in the nation to attend, state policymakers say they plan to move tuitions toward the national average (at up to 15 percent a year) to maintain programs and compete in the bidding war for top professors. In recent years, Florida has experienced:

- A sharp drop in higher education funding,
- The loss of key supporters of higher funding,
- Weak support by the business community,
- Increase calls for accountability, and
- Increase calls for attrition and retention data.



Therefore, who will fund these reforms and how will they effect you as a faculty member? It will change the evaluation system contained in your Collective Bargaining Agreement and thus change tenure and promotion requirements. It would also diminish the quality of our degrees. Finally, it would put us under an evaluation system that even the University of Texas has failed to adopt for its faculty and students. The Texas Plan views a university as a business and its students as consumers. However, we are not a business and do not operate as one.

Florida's students “are not the primary purchasers of a product, and neither is education a product. In fact, the primary stakeholder in a public education system is the taxpayer.” As John Boyles states, “The overall prosperity of the state of Florida depends neither on whether students are satisfied with a class in which the were enrolled, nor on whether they enjoyed that class. In reality, the prosperity of our state depends on whether they learned skills and abilities that they will retain.” (Source: http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2011-09-04/news/fl-education-oped0904-20110904_1_higher-education-quality-education-texas-plan)

The economic growth of this state does not depend on whether students are satisfied with or enjoyed a class, but rather on the skills and abilities that a student takes from each class. The major fallacy of the Texas Plan is that it depends on student evaluations. The most common criticism of student evaluation forms are that they are biased because students tend to give higher ratings to their professors when they expect higher grades in the particular course. This correlation is well-established. Therefore, student evaluations can be seen as much a measure of an instructor's leniency in grading as of teaching effectiveness. Many believe that this causes rampant grade inflation.

Gov. Rick Scott recently sent out letters to all the Presidents in the state university system requesting data, similar to that requested by the Texas Plan. However, except for the requested reliance on student evaluations, we are already doing what the Texas Plan is trying to implement. We have created a system for continual assessment of our work, FAMOUS; we maintain continual accreditation for our programs; and we have begun to direct our attention to student retention. Therefore, if Gov. Scott is serious about attracting new industry and improving Florida's workforce, he would find new ways to bring more resources to the state's colleges and universities, not limit our progress with unfunded programs.

DRS NEAR CONTRACT

Questions from the field



If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, don't hesitate to contact your UFF representatives through face-to-face, telephone, and/or e-mail conversation. We strive to have a transparent and effective Union. We are, after all, representing you. Please remember, there is strength in numbers. If you are not a member, JOIN TODAY! If you are a member, please encourage your colleagues to JOIN TODAY!



For eight years, DRS faculty has been regulated by the old Blue Book. They are the only faculty in the State University System (SUS) that have never negotiated a successor contract. After our last negotiation session, they still maintain this record.

At the beginning of our last negotiation session, Article 10 (Evaluation), Article 15 (Permanent Status), and Article 23 (Compensation) were still being negotiated. When we finished our last negotiations, Evaluation (Article 10) was still open.

DRS Race to the Top grant and the requirement of Senate Bill 736 require that DRS have an evaluation system that is based on student learning growth assessed annually and measured by statewide assessment or, for subjects not measured by statewide assessment, tests by district assessments (as described in Section 1008.228 F.S.).

Let's hope we can finish contract negotiations on October 31st.



Brace for More Cuts

Higher education in Florida is in trouble. University and colleges have been asked to take a 10 percent cut in their operating budgets because it is predicted that Florida revenues will fall between \$857 million and \$1.2 billion next year depending on general revenue figures in preparation for the 2012 Legislation session. The legislature anticipates drops in sales tax revenue and documentary stamp collects are the primary factors leading to the expected lower forecast.

The revenue estimating conference is expected to conclude soon. Legislators anticipate a drop of up to \$1.5 billion in the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

According to a [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities report](#), Florida's education budget cuts were the sixth-largest in the nation. The report argues that the budget cuts have hindered the state's ability to implement education reforms and extended the economic recovery.

Budget cuts mean cuts in faculty, services, and classes. Many are predicting that there will be NO summer classes at FAMU in 2012.

UFF FAMU OFFICE HOURS

To make ourselves more available to our members, UFF FAMU has initiated daily office hours at 204 Jackson Davis Hall. If you cannot contact us via phone, stop by our office. *We are here to serve you!*

The office hours are:

- Tuesday: 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
- Wednesday: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
- Thursday: 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
- Friday: 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.



Contact Your Representatives

Consider joining our team of School/College Representatives. A current listing of school/college representatives is found below. If you are interested in becoming a member of this dynamic team, please contact Perry Brown at [per-ry.brown@famuedu](mailto:perry.brown@famuedu)

College of Arts and Sciences
Nandi Riley [Nandi_Riley@hotmail.com]

**College of Engineering Sciences,
Technology and Agriculture**
James Muchovej [purchio@gmail.com]

School of Business and Industry
Rosemary Bailey [baileyr49@comcast.net]

School of Allied Health
Lon' Tejuana Cooper
[iseemore@embarqmail.com]

College of Education
Alice Scruggs [am_scruggs@yahoo.com]

**College of Pharmacy and
Pharmaceutical Sciences**
Angela Thornton [angela.thornton@famuedu]

School of Nursing
Doris Ballard Ferguson
[doris.ballardferguso@famuedu]

**School of Journalism and
Graphic Communication**
Dhyana Ziegler [dhyz@aol.com]

College of Engineering
Simone Hruda [simone.hruda@famuedu]

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/Cell 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

Membership is in your best interest!