

**UNITED FACULTY OF FLORIDA  
SAINT LEO UNIVERSITY**

*Volume 1, Issue 2, November-December 2015 Newsletter*

**CHRISTMAS AND COMMUNITY  
THE HUMAN IS THE DIVINE / SACRED**

Message from Michael Cooper S.J.

Christmas is a time for family and community. More to the point, *community* comes from the Latin *munio* meaning to fortify or strengthen and to support. *Com* emphasizes the *with* and *together*. As members of our Faculty Union we are truly called to support and strengthen each other, and our collective efforts to have and protect our voice and make a positive impact on the life of Saint Leo University, as well as on our professional and teaching environment. I do not believe we are an artificial community. We are Saint Leo; this place and these times call and bind us together. We are the faculty of Saint Leo and together we can make a difference.

Negotiations for our next faculty contract also loom on the horizon this spring. Individually we are powerless and invisible. Together as our Faculty Union Community, we strengthen and fortify the challenges we face not to let either arbitrary or non-negotiable demands be placed upon us. Truly there is strength in numbers.

With all the end of semester responsibilities, Christmas can almost seem as if it comes too quickly. As our paths cross these days, ending the semester and leading up to Christmas, let's take time to get to know and appreciate each other and strengthen our bonds. **Please join us January 7, 2016 at Feeney Hall 12PM-4:30PM** to welcome in the New Year so that we may come together, reflect and prepare for the upcoming negotiations and plan the path we wish to tread together. Refreshments will be served.

The Christmas spirit and the lead up to the feast is not just a wait for another holiday party. The four weeks of Advent preceding Christmas become a time to celebrate and deepen the meaning of the Incarnation, whereby God chose to become a full human being like us. Thus our humanity and humanness and that of our friends and colleagues here at Saint Leo are divinely important. A friend of mine made his own Christmas cards several years ago and the greeting on the inside said, "If God did not consider a waste of time to become human, neither should we." Pope Saint Gregory the Great in his Christmas homily over a thousand years ago proclaimed, "O Christian, be aware of your nobility. It is God's own nature that you share." In our teaching and care of one another and our students, we continue the Incarnation today making those we teach and each other more human, more wise, more loving, more just. In continuing the Mystery of the Incarnation today in making us and our world more human, our seeming very human profession of teaching, scholarship, and service are ultimately very sacred, very divine, very holy. Merry Christmas.

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## President's Corner

### Message from UFSLU President Doris VanKampen

President Kirk once commented that the University is stronger when we work *together*. While this may seem like an obvious fact, it is one to which I completely agree. He also stated that we need all of our collective strength to fight our competitors, *not* each other. However, contrary to this, the current administration seems to implement changes that affect each of us, without consulting us, as specified in the Collective Bargaining Agreement. This has been demonstrated by the implementation of the CPO process, the changes to the end of term student evaluations, mandated scheduling changes, and the retirement plan. This does not *appear* to be an administration that is transparent, collegial, or interested in working together. It sounds as if they "*know better*", without seeking faculty dialogue and input.

Each of these events could have been worked through without resorting to a grievance process, if the union and its members had been asked to join the conversation and to be a part of the solution.

Here is the current status of each of these items:

☐ CPO Process – we met with the administration and their legal representatives on August 27, 2015. Administration agreed to set up times to meet and to resolve this issue with the union. The Administration has provided the union with some additional information; however we have not met with the administration since that time. Consequently, I have asked that the administration meet with the union in January to resolve this as soon as possible.

☐ Student evaluations – the union will be requesting data from the administration in the spring, once evaluations are completed.

☐ Mandated scheduling changes by Chairs – please see email response, sent earlier. If you feel your schedule is unfair or inequitable compared to other faculty; please speak to a grievance officer.

☐ Retirement plan changes – Members of the union board met with the President and with Dr. Nastanski, VPAA, regarding this issue. While we cannot undo the changes to the retirement plan, we could and did use the opportunity to voice our concerns that communication and dialog have been a large issue in the last 18 months-2 years, resulting in grievances, some of which may end up in arbitration. We had a good meeting with Dr. Lennox, and another meeting with Dr. Nastanski; they recognize that we want and need to open dialog, and have better communication. The administration recognizes that the communication regarding the transition to VALIC as a single Provider could have been more inclusive and effective and is committed to working on improving communication as we go forward.

We have the right to be in dialog with the administration about the future of this institution, about our students, about our working conditions, and about benefits. We are a teaching University, focused on our students; we the faculty need a place at the table, one in which we believe we are partners aligned with making the university a stronger, better, more productive place that values and supports the mission and ideals of this institution. This University is a community, one build by many hands over the course of many years; decisions made by previous leaders affect us today; decisions made by today's

leaders will affect us tomorrow and into the future. Many members of this community have given much to this university, with a belief that our core values are more than words on a paper. The union can and should be a partner in this endeavor; we are willing to be at the table and to work as part of this community.

Lastly, Dr. Kirk is currently fighting his own battle with health and we all wish him a speedy recovery. If anyone has the determination and strength needed to overcome this, it is surely him.

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## NEA MEMBER BENEFITS

Message from UFFSLU Secretary Patricia Tobin Senger

This is the time of year when household expenses can skyrocket. Did you know that there are many money saving programs and benefits available to you through the Florida Education Association as a union member? These savings include significant travel discounts and negotiated discounts for other goods and services you would routinely use. This is now available to all union members.

TO LOOK AT EACH OF THE BENEFITS AND DISCOUNT PROGRAMS AVAILABLE TO YOU SIMPLY GO TO [www.aft.org/benefits](http://www.aft.org/benefits) or download the APP for your iPhone or your android phone.

If you are enjoying this newsletter, have comments about newsletter suggestions, or would like to see additional information in this newsletter, please e-mail me at [ptobinsenger@gmail.com](mailto:ptobinsenger@gmail.com)

### MEMBER SURVEY: JANUARY 7, 2016-JANUARY 15, 2016

SEE OUR *JANUARY* NEWSLETTER FOR A LINK TO A MEMBER SURVEY  
YOUR UNION BOARD WANTS YOUR INPUT ON WHAT MATTERS MOST TO YOU  
SURVEY RESULTS WILL BE POSTED IN THE FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER.

### SAVE THE DATE: Union Retreat

JANUARY 7  
FEENEY HALL

12:00 NOON TO 4:30 PM  
GET TOGETHER, OPEN DIALOGUE, REFRESHMENTS  
WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE

Best wishes to you and your loved ones for a joyous season!  
From your UFFSLU Union Board Members

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