

**From:** Ben Serber

**Date:** Thursday, November 12, 2020 at 11:52 AM

**To:** Jeffrey.senese@saintleo.edu <Jeffrey.senese@saintleo.edu>

**Subject:** UFF-SLU Support

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear President Senese,

As you know, the Board of Trustees of Saint Leo University recently voted to no longer recognize the United Faculty of Saint Leo University as the collective bargaining agent for faculty at the institution. Following that decision, the administration of Saint Leo has also ceased to collect dues on UFF-SLU's behalf. At a stroke, Saint Leo University attempted to erase decades of successful cooperation with UFF-SLU and decades of faculty-chosen, faculty-supported protection of their rights as workers. I write to you today, personally and on behalf of my chapter, to express our astonishment and dismay at these unilateral and unjustified actions.

Saint Leo University claims that this decision was taken in order to move to a shared governance model that can better support the institution's need for changes. But doing so unilaterally, in a single vote, without consulting or even informing either UFF-SLU or the Saint Leo faculty senate is inconsistent with any reasonable understanding of what "shared governance" means. Taking this momentous decision without faculty consultation and in the middle of a pandemic makes it clear that faculty voices are not important to the administration or to the Board of Trustees. Further, the university has provided no evidence that the presence of UFF-SLU presented any sort of obstacle to the administration's exercise of its rights under Florida law and the collective bargaining agreement.

Further, the Board of Trustees' decision is inconsistent with Catholic teaching. As recently as 2009, the encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* clearly stated that "The repeated calls issued within the Church's social doctrine, beginning with *Rerum Novarum*, for the promotion of workers' associations that can defend their rights must therefore be honoured today even more than in the past (25)." Unilaterally refusing to recognize or consult with the workers' association explicitly formed and chosen by Saint Leo's faculty can hardly be said to further this papal directive.

In short, this unjust, unjustified, and disrespectful abandonment of any pretense to true shared governance should be reversed. I call on you and the Saint Leo University Board of Trustees to immediately recognize UFF-SLU as the collective bargaining agent for full-time faculty and restore all rights granted to them as outlined in the existing Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Sincerely,

Ben Serber

President, UFF-FSU-GAU

Graduate Assistants United