

The Roar

UFF/Saint Leo University Chapter

"We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We will put words on them ourselves. The book is called Opportunity and its first chapter is New Year's Day." Edith Lovejoy Pierce

President's Message

by Valerie Wright

Happy New Year! I hope you had a restful break. I think we all needed that time to sit back and relax with our families. During that time, however, it really hit me just what the administration and Board of Trustees did to us when they voted to no longer recognize the Faculty Union, our contract and the University Senate – although they have backtracked on that a bit. Think about it. Without any discussion or notice, they unilaterally decided that we no longer needed the security that a contract afforded us – in the middle of a pandemic! When our own personal worlds were already turned upside down, they thought it best to remove the structures we have depended on for the past 44 years with a Faculty Union, and 20 years with a University Senate. How can this possibly be a reflection of our core values and Catholic traditions?

Buyer Beware!

A casual read of the Faculty "Handbook" may give you a false sense of security. Yes, it does address important elements like tenure, outside employment, workloads, retirement and health insurance, to name a few. But, it is the language used that tells the true story. For example, the word "shall" or "will" is very different from "may" or "intend to." In addition, "consulting" is drastically different from "negotiating."

Before you buy into this interim handbook, please conduct your own close read of it. Below are some examples we found that may be of interest to you. It may also help to know that the interim handbook is basically a mixture of the old contract and the one that was being negotiated prior to October 23rd, when the board voted to no longer recognize the Faculty Union and the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). We invite you to make your own comparisons. The CBA can be found at www.ufslu.org.



Upcoming Events

Stay tuned for a **Zoom Faculty Update** at the end of January

2020-2021 Officers

President: Valerie Wright

Vice President: Thomas Humphries

Secretary: Carol McLeish

Treasurer: Peter Marian

Senator: Kelly Atkins

Senator: Angel Jimenez

At Large: Burgsbee (Lee) Hobbs

At Large: Fr. Michael Cooper

At Large: Patricia Senger

Grievance Chair: Patrick Crerand



Below are excerpts from the new handbook. The verbiage in parentheses is an analysis.

- “Administration will *consult* with Faculty Senate *annually* to discuss salaries and other compensation.” (*Consult* does not indicate an opportunity to negotiate or vote on terms. Do we really want to address compensation annually? Not much security there)
- “The University *may* offer other coverage, **including health insurance for employees and their dependents**, which will be paid by the Faculty member as a payroll deduction if such coverage is elected by the member.” (What is in **red** was added by administration; *may* means it is not guaranteed)
- “The University ~~shall~~ *intends* to offer the following fringe benefits to all employees, which includes faculty: group life insurance, short and long term disability, and tuition remission, ~~adoption assistance~~, and other benefits commonly available to University employees . . .” (*Intends* replaces *shall*, which means there is no longer a guarantee. Why did they cut our adoption assistance?)
- “Administration will *consult* with Faculty Senate for any adjustments to retirement plans.” (*Consult* does not indicate an opportunity to negotiate or to vote on this item.)

The following is a summary of policies that have changed:

- Pay for teaching doctoral courses will be **decreased** by \$500.
- Full-time faculty are no longer given preference for online/graduate education classes.
- The probationary period to tenure no longer includes extensions for childbearing/child rearing, newborn or newly adopted children, or the serious health condition of a relative under FMLA.
- Academic Affairs will count the ballots for Promotion and Tenure Committee members. (In the past, this was done in collaboration with the Union President)
- Faculty are no longer able to dispute promotion and tenure decisions.
- The \$1,000 stipend for teaching at a location more than 50 miles from campus has been eliminated.
- Non-teaching engagements are limited to 10 hours per week, a decrease from the 20 hours previously permitted.
- PDF amount of \$1,500 is actually a **decrease**:
 - 2012-2016 contract states all faculty are guaranteed \$1,250
 - 2014 allotment was increased to \$1,700
 - 2015 allotment was increased to \$1,900
 - 2016 began the three levels of \$2,500 for international, \$2,000 for presentations, and \$1,250 for attending (Past Administrators approved these increases: Durst, Nastanski, and Lennox)
- *Insubordination* has been added, but not defined, to the list of just causes for discipline or dismissal. Insubordination was never mentioned in the old contract.
- The following grievance options are no longer permitted: 1) *The receipt of an advisory letter or inquiry, even when related to a Faculty member's performance*; and 2) *Abandonment* by administration (There is no recourse in lack of administrative response to a faculty grievance. Additionally, the guarantee of no reprisal for filing a grievance has been eliminated.)
- Tenured faculty will no longer be granted preference over non-tenured faculty in reduction in force (RIF) decisions.

This is just a sampling of what we have found. Please reach out to a union officer if you would like to discuss!

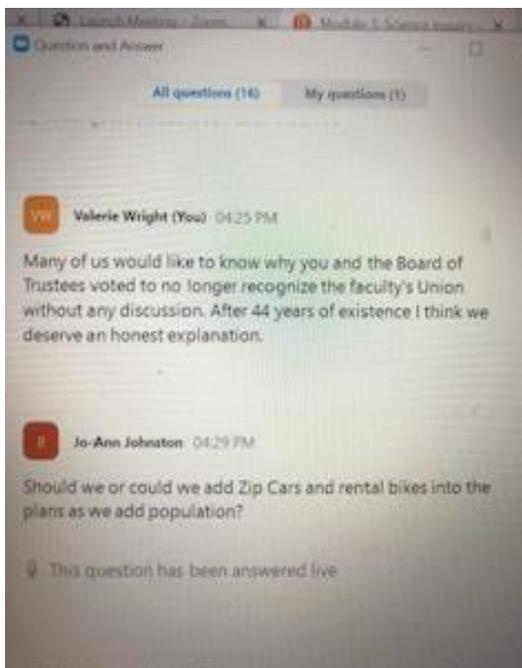
Shared Governance at Johns Hopkins

by Dr. Ben E. Volus, Special UFF Correspondent

While administrations have long employed shared governance structures at many institutions, its frequency does not make it any fairer to faculty, nor does its presence offer more agile solutions to an institution's problems. One such university, Johns Hopkins, exemplifies this pseudo-shared governance strategy. Here (<https://www.jhunewsletter.com/article/2020/06/faculty-demand-shared-governance-in-petition-to-daniels>) university administration gives tacit but ultimately non-binding responsibilities and powers to faculty in various committees. On the surface, it allows administrators to claim the veneer of an equitable decision-making process, while they ignore faculty voices in the major decisions that disproportionately affect them and students alike.

But below the surface, the rot waits. Without the true oversight of a union and the security of a collectively bargained agreement, administrations easily corrupt shared governance structures, especially during a crisis. What seems like shared governance quickly warps into its actual form, hierarchical management with limited, inconsequential faculty participation. In short, for every Rhodes College, there is a Johns Hopkins (<https://www.chronicle.com/article/will-covid-19-revive-faculty-power>).

The Isolation Continues



In the screenshot to the left, you can see that a question was posed to our university President on Community Day. A response was never provided, and attendees were not able to see the question. Have there been other questions posed from faculty members that have been ignored?

This restraint of active communication and debate will continue for as long as meetings are being held (as they have been since the fall) with the chat box disabled, no visible attendee list, or the ability to see one another. The most egregious of all may be the control over the Q & A box.

"The team exists to accomplish a result. The community exists to support its members while they fulfill their purpose... When partnerships, management teams, and organizations build communities, they tap into a greater and deeper reservoir of courage, wisdom, and productivity." – Peter Gibb

Quotes from Our Petition:

Samuel Harshner

“This is an assault not only on workers, but on Catholic teachings about unionization. Unconscionable in a moment as dire as this one.”

Shaina McSweeney

“As an alumnus, it was the professors and faculty that made my time there an unforgettable experience. The fact that they are taking away the union during a pandemic is embarrassing and counteractive to everything Saint Leo claims to stand for.”

Matthew Thomas

“Quality faculty are key to quality education. And quality faculty are attracted to good working conditions. Dissolving this relationship in this manner does not produce a good relationship between faculty and administration.”

What Can You Do?

- Sign the petition in support of recognizing the faculty union at Saint Leo.
<https://www.change.org/p/saint-leo-university-president-recognize-the-faculty-union-at-saint-leo-university-now>
- Encourage others (family, friends, colleagues, alumni) to sign the petition.
- Join as an at-large member. Contact Tommy Humphries at: thelesserthomas@gmail.com.
- Encourage others to join the union (i.e., Center faculty)
- Volunteer to work with the UF/SLU Organizing Committee. Contact wrightvalerie12@yahoo.com
- Stay updated with union news via the website: www.ufslu.org



“When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it.” -Henry Ford