

UNITED FACULTY OF FLORIDA SAINT LEO UNIVERSITY

Volume 1, Issue 3, February 2015 Newsletter

Written by Patricia Tobin Senger UFFSLU Secretary

Negotiations

Union contract negotiations will begin again this spring on your behalf, and so this is a very good time to familiarize yourself with our new UFFSLU website. I have attached a link to our UNION WEBSITE for your review and information. <http://ufslu.org/>. Need a copy of the Contract? You can find it on the Intranet, on the university website.

This month, your union negotiating team wants to solicit your feedback on your contract preferences, so that we can be sure to represent your needs and concerns. Please click on this link which will take you to Survey Monkey to access a brief survey. Once we tabulate the survey results, we will aggregate the information so that we may represent you at the negotiating table in the best possible way.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3JTPRS2>. As we get further into negotiations, additional surveys may be sent out.

40th ANNIVERSARY OF SAINT LEO FACULTY VOTE TO UNIONIZE

Written by Jack McTague, Senator At Large

This coming spring will be the 40th anniversary of the vote on the part of the Saint Leo College faculty to join the United Faculty of Florida (UFF). Saint Leo was then and still remains the only private college in the entire state of Florida to have its faculty unionized. How this came about is a long, complicated story, and none of the people who were involved are still on campus. But here is the tale as pieced together from personal recollection and several interviews.

In the early 1970s Saint Leo faculty were affiliated with AAUP, which does not have the right to bargain for wages, hours and working conditions; (they can censure an institution). At that same time, faculty members at several state universities, primarily the Univ. of Florida and Florida State, were creating UFF to represent them. The Saint Leo AAUP president contacted UFF in 1975 and asked them to send a representative to campus to speak to the faculty. There was a great deal of discontent on campus at the time because salaries were extremely low, workloads were heavy, and the college president was dictatorial, giving faculty members no voice in decisions or college policies. Faculty taught an extra course (in addition to their 4-4 load) in the summer for no additional pay. There was a lot of interest in unionizing and UFF sent people to campus to help the faculty organize. First, a card drive was held and enough people signed up to authorize a vote among the faculty regarding unionization. The issue was hotly debated and it appeared that the faculty was very evenly split. The vote was held in the spring of 1976; UFF won. Deciding votes were cast by the Business faculty. And thus the United Faculty of Saint Leo University was born.

WHY JOIN AND SUPPORT THE FACULTY UNION?

Written by Aaron Fehir Vice President UFFSLU

Why join and support the faculty union?

Aaron Fehir, Vice-President of UFFSLU

1. The faculty union has your best interest at heart.

“In a perfect world faculty unions would be unnecessary--the academic enterprise would be richly rewarded given its inestimable extrinsic and intrinsic value to both citizens and society.”

However, we live and work in an imperfect world, and your membership in the union provides you with unique legal and financial benefits, as well as a place to join together and to promote ideals that we believe make Saint Leo University a better place for everyone. “We read in the pages of holy Writ: ‘It is better that two should be together than one; for they have the advantage of their society. If one fall he shall be supported by the other. Woe to him that is alone, for when he falleth he hath none to lift him up.’ And further: “A brother that is helped by his brother is like a strong city.” It is this natural impulse which binds men together in civil society; and it is likewise this which leads them to join together in associations.”

2. The faculty union is an instrument of social justice.

In accordance with Catholic social teaching and our Saint Leo core values of community and responsible stewardship, the union has the right and obligation to a firm commitment to the right to free association and the proven historical power of workers unions to effect positive change.

- The union worked to increase matching contributions for the retirement plan (403b) and obtained them in 2012
- The union advocated for auto-enrollment, and auto-contributions during the previous round of negotiations in 2012; something which recently benefitted all employees when the administration implemented it in December 2015
- The union has worked in partnership with administration on many issues. We have always striven to be at the table, for the benefit of the faculty and the university. We are not adversaries; we are concerned colleagues.

3. We need your help.

The faculty union seeks to benefit and support the interests of all faculty members, the input and contributions of all faculty members is needed. The union gives members an incredible opportunity to be a positive influence, from which the entire faculty body and other employees have benefitted.

Please consider giving back by joining the union and lending your time and support to our common cause of making Saint Leo University great.

Membership Includes:

- Activates a \$1,00,000 professional liability [insurance] policy
- Entitles you to representation in any grievance alleging violation of your contractual rights – you have the right to a union representative to be present when meeting with any administrator if you suspect that you may be in trouble for any work-related reason
- Qualifies you for discounted NEA [National Education Association] insurance policies
- Retiring? Continuing one's membership upon retirement (at a very minimal yearly cost) one is eligible to purchase NEA Medicare Health Insurances (for Parts B, C, and D) as well as retiree dental insurance
- A voice in our university, to make a positive difference in the academic lives of our students and our faculty.
- A different perspective not driven by any one person or agenda

How can you help? Get involved

“Catholic social teaching supports the right of workers to choose whether to organize, join a union, and bargain collectively, and to exercise these rights without reprisal. ... Workers, owners, employers, and unions should work together to ... advance the common good.”

“The very existence of teachers unions does a great deal more than protect and aid those who are members of it...there are many teachers outside of it who rely and depend upon the protection and support which the existence and the activities of the union give them, that they are willing to shelter behind the organization without coming forward and taking an active part in it.” Please support us with your commitment to Saint Leo University’s union; you don’t have to wait until you have tenure buy that house, raise your children, or whatever other reason has held you back. We need you to join us in solidarity; without you, without your participation, we are not as strong as we can be. Help make us stronger today. All full time teaching faculty located at the University Campus are eligible.

1 Bruce W. Hauptli, “Why I belong to an academic union,” FIU Faculty Webpage, 2015. Web.

2. Pope Leo XIII On the Condition of Labor (Rerum Novarum), 1891, no. 50-51.

3 U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, 2007, no. 76.

4. John Dewey, "Why I Am A Member of the Teachers Union," The Later Works v. 3 (1927-1928), Ed. JoAnn Boydston, Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1984, 271-272