

**UF WORKS  
BECAUSE  
WE DO**

# UFF-UF 101

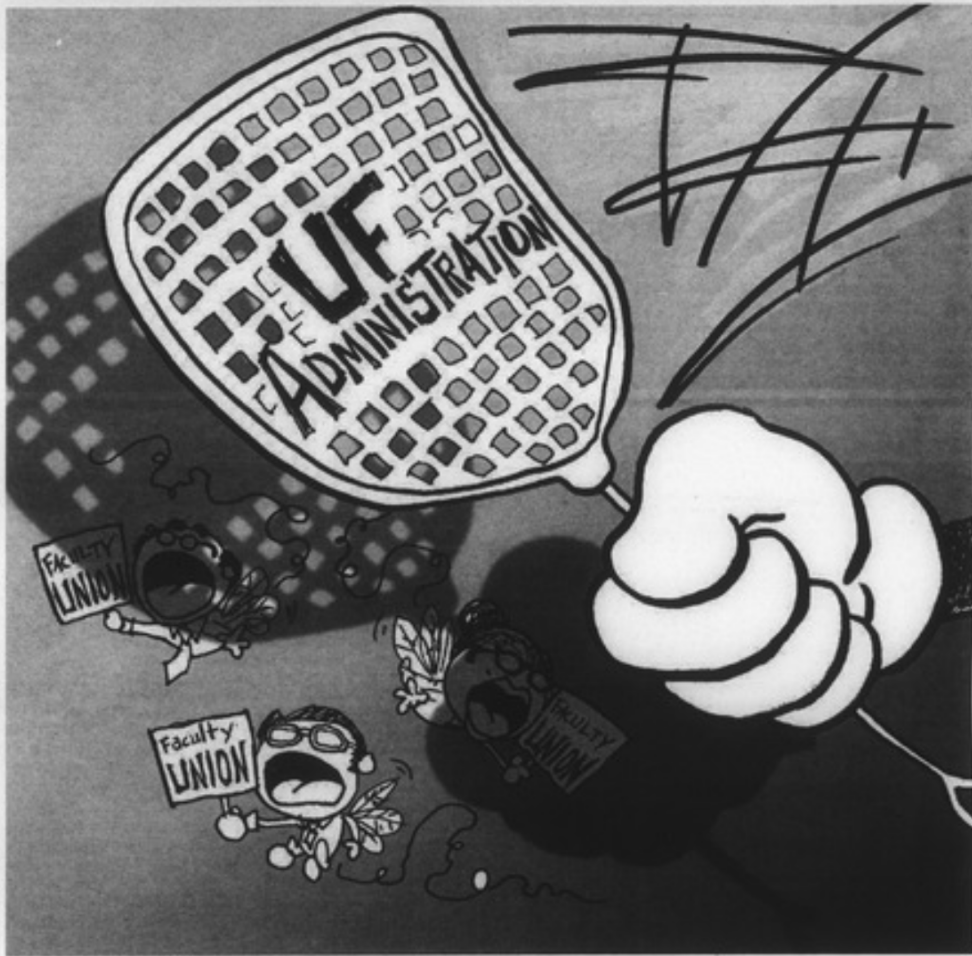
**A CRASH COURSE IN ALL THINGS UNION**



**United Faculty of Florida—University of Florida**

# Viewpoints

ALLIGATOR  
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## Collective bargaining gives UF needed security

Academic excellence requires more than just a superior faculty.

Truly excellent universities are led by their faculty in matters regarding strategy, resource priorities and academic policies.

In order for faculty to play those roles, academic freedom and traditional faculty rights must be inviolable.

The United Faculty of Florida is dedicated to sustaining those foundations of academic excellence.

**Sam Trickey**  
Speaking Out

Through the collective bargaining process, we, as members of the faculty, have succeeded for roughly 30 years in compelling first-tier academic practice to become the norm for UF, irrespective of political pressures, industrial-management models and other intrusive obstacles to our university's genuine excellence.

This is our role for both individuals and for the community of scholars.

Achieving and maintaining a fundamental role for the faculty regarding all substantive university policies and practices has never been easy in American public universities.

Hiring excellent faculty is simpler than establishing and sustaining the required institutional environment.

Even the best public universities elsewhere have not been immune to political intrusion into academic life, but so far it has

SEE TRICKEY, PAGE 8

## Welcome & Solidarity

Unions are complicated! We've got our own rules, our own way of doing things, and our own terminology – from the relatively intuitive “collective bargaining” to the positively alien “step three grievance.”

If you've ever struggled to understand these rules, processes, and terms, welcome to the club! To help you out, the UFF-UF Membership Team has developed this crash course on all things UFF-UF, from our history, structure, and lingo to the inner workings of the bargaining and grievance process.

### If you're a UFF-UF member:

this pamphlet will give you the resources you need to get active, get involved, and more effectively advocate for yourself and your colleagues.

### If you're not yet a member of UFF-UF:

this pamphlet will help you understand how the decisions we make affect your life at UF. And, hopefully, it will convince you to join!

While learning to navigate the union landscape can be challenging, we firmly believe that doing so is well worth your time. The United Faculty of Florida at the University of Florida is a pillar of shared governance and central to university operations. It is also, in our humble view, the single greatest advocate for **educational quality, professional excellence, and faculty welfare** at the University of Florida.

In solidarity,  
The UFF-UF Membership Team

# Brief History of UFF-UF



## 1968

The **United Faculty of Florida** was founded at the **University of Florida** in 1968, after several UF faculty were fired or denied tenure for their involvement in contemporary political struggles, including the civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movements. UFF's founders understood that union solidarity and a legally-binding contract would help protect against further violations of academic freedom and due process.

## 1976

In 1976, UFF expanded its reach, winning an election to become a statewide union representing more than 5,000 State University System (SUS) faculty across Florida. Later that year, we **won our first state-wide collective bargaining agreement (CBA)**, ensuring strong protections for academic freedom and just working conditions.



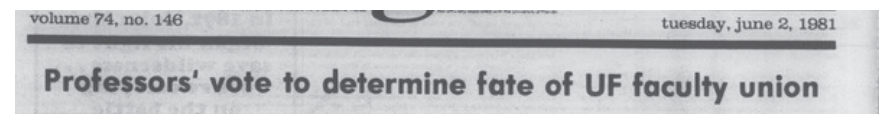
## 2005

In 2005, the **University of Florida chapter of UFF** was born.



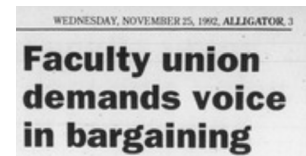
## 2008-2012

After the 2008 financial crisis, UF tried to cut jobs and academic programs, including the CISE Department in the College of Engineering. UFF-UF fought back, halting austerity measures and helping to save CISE.



## 1980's & 90's

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, **our union faced a number of challenges**, including attempts to dissolve UFF altogether. But we successfully weathered each challenge and waged persistent, **effective fights for better pay, funding, and working conditions**.



## 2000's

In the early 2000s, our union went through one of its most challenging periods. Because of changes in the structure of the SUS, **UFF was effectively disbanded and faculty across the state lost their CBA**. In response, faculty scrambled to form union chapters at their respective universities and win back CBA protections.

4 ALLIGATOR MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2021



MONDAY, JUNE 14, 2021



## 2020-2021

UFF-UF **won UF's first paid parental and medical leave policy** as well as stronger protections for non-tenure track faculty in the 2021-2024 CBA. The union also fought for faculty protections during the COVID-19 pandemic.

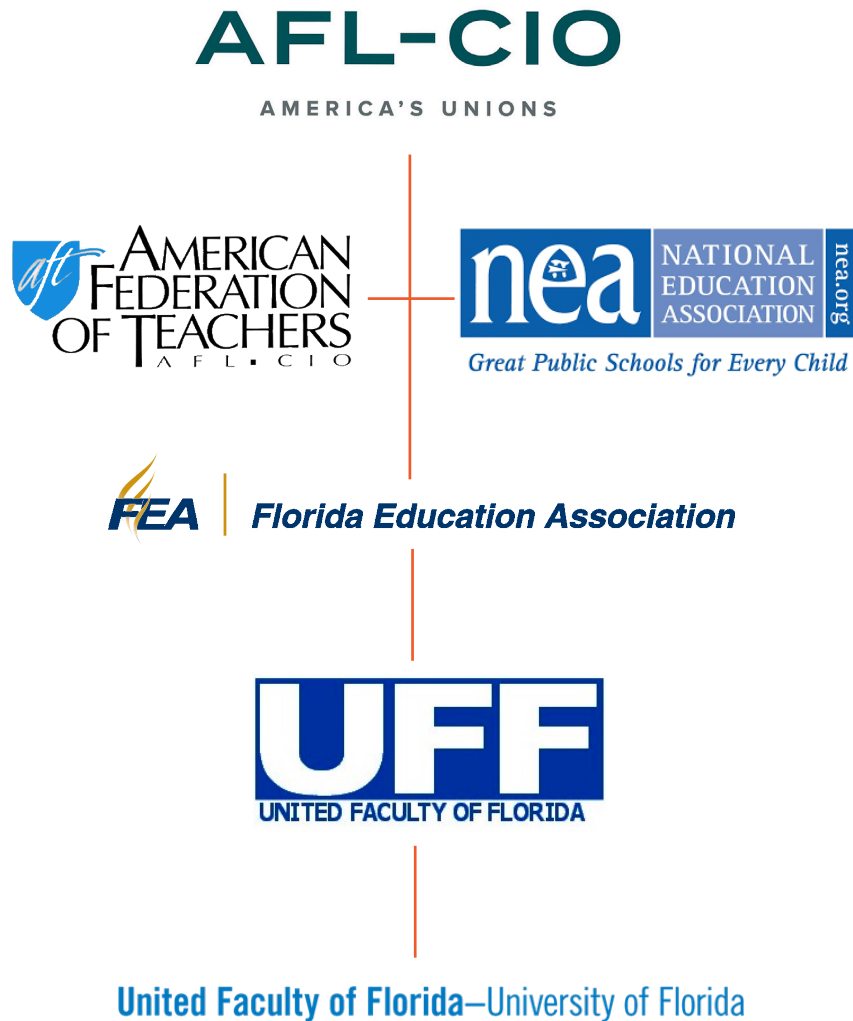


## 2021-Present

UFF-UF continues to fight attacks on our academic freedom and defend our students and colleagues against racism and xenophobia.

## UFF-UF's Family Tree

Our union, UFF-UF, is part of a much larger family tree of labor unions.



## Chapter Leadership and Committees

UFF-UF is a member-led organization: all of our leaders and officers are full-time faculty who volunteer their time. We choose our fights democratically; our chapter members shape and drive our priorities.

### Chapter Council Officers:

Chapter President  
1st Vice President  
Vice Presidents (4)  
Secretary  
Treasurer

### FEA Delegates:

15 delegates represent UFF-UF at the Florida Education Association Delegate Assemblies.

### UFF Senators:

32 Senators represent the UFF-UF chapter at statewide UFF meetings.

### UFF-UF Committees:

Membership  
Grievances  
Bargaining  
Government Relations  
Communications  
Nominations  
Non Tenure Track (NTT)

\*Members of UFF-UF are also members of our parent unions – FEA, NEA, AFT, and AFL-CIO – and are eligible for member benefits from each organization.



## What is the Bargaining Unit?

The term “bargaining unit” refers to faculty whose working conditions are governed by the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and who are eligible for union membership. For more information on the CBA, please see the section on “Collective Bargaining” later in this pamphlet.

Because Florida is a so-called “right-to-work” state, the bargaining unit includes both members and non-members of UFF-UF, as bargaining unit members are **NOT** automatically enrolled in the union upon hire.

Membership in the bargaining unit is dependent upon your position and your college. Colleges, centers, and programs within the bargaining unit include Arts, Business, the Counseling and Wellness Center, Design Construction and Planning, the Dial Center for Written and Oral Communication, the Digital Worlds Institute, Distance and Continuing Education, Education, Engineering, English Language Institute, Health and Human Performance, the International Center, Latin American Studies, Libraries, Liberal Arts and Sciences, Journalism and Communications, Natural History and Harn Museums, Student Health Care Center, Whitney Marine Laboratory, and University Writing Program.

Everyone categorized as faculty in these units is part of the bargaining unit. To check if your position is a faculty position, please see Appendix A of the CBA, which provides a comprehensive list of bargaining unit faculty titles.

Colleagues in TEAMS, OPS, or graduate assistant positions are not eligible for membership in UFF-UF, but would be welcome as members in Graduate Assistants United (GAU) or United Campus Workers (UCW) at UF.

Faculty from outside the colleges and units listed above are eligible for at-large membership in UFF-UF. While at-large membership is an important solidarity statement and provides some important benefits, it does not qualify members for grievance services nor does it provide members with the protections of the CBA (see the sections on ‘Grievances’ and ‘Collective Bargaining’ later in this pamphlet for details).

## What Are Dues?

UFF-UF members pay dues to support our colleagues, advocate for quality education, defend academic freedom, and grow our union. These dues represent 1% of a member’s *base salary*. Overload assignments, summer teaching, grant funding, and other forms of income do not count toward a member’s dues assessment. For most members, dues cost \$1.50-\$3.00/day – less than your daily Starbucks fix!

### WHY PAY DUES?

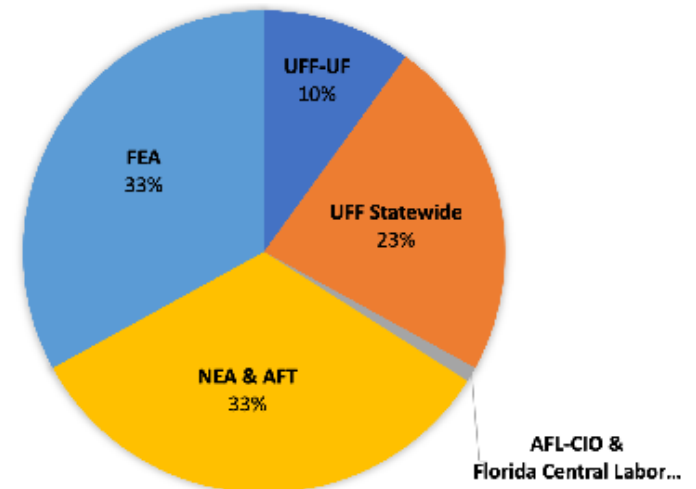
Our dues fund everything UFF-UF does, from legal support for local grievances to political advocacy in Tallahassee and Washington, DC. They fund staff who assist with organizing, bargaining, record keeping, and grievances; they help fund member events like socials and dinners; and they fund efforts to thwart attacks on education and academic freedom at the state and national level.

### EDUES

As of July 2023, members pay dues using the eDues system. This secure process allows faculty to join their union anonymously; the one-time sign-up process only takes a few minutes. By taking this proactive step, we ensure greater confidentiality for our members and protect ourselves from ongoing attempts by the state legislature to weaken our union and our right to collective bargaining.

All eDues payments are processed by Dwolla and Plaid, secure vendors that meet international industry standards for data security.

*Pie chart showing distribution of dues*



# What is Collective Bargaining?

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Unionized workers in Florida are legally entitled to negotiate the “terms and conditions of employment” with their boss. In higher ed, these “terms and conditions” include pay, work hours, leave benefits, tenure, promotion, and many other matters. The process of negotiation is known as “collective bargaining” and it results in a “Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA),” sometimes referred to as our contract.

This CBA codifies working conditions for all workers in a “bargaining unit.” The term “bargaining unit” refers to all the workers at a given workplace who are eligible for union membership.

## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AT UF

At the University of Florida, UFF-UF negotiates with representatives of the UF Board of Trustees (BOT). Our union is represented at negotiations by a dedicated Bargaining Team. This Bargaining Team consists of unpaid faculty volunteers who receive advice and support from paid union staffers.

Over the course of negotiations, the two bargaining teams meet regularly, passing proposed changes to the CBA back and forth across the bargaining table and discussing the merits of their proposals. Negotiations conclude when the UFF-UF and BOT teams reach a tentative agreement (TA) on changes to the CBA.

All agreements between the UFF-UF and BOT teams must then be ratified by both the UF Board of Trustees and all members of the UFF-UF bargaining unit, irrespective of union membership. Because Florida is a so-called “right-to-work” state, all member of the UFF-UF bargaining unit are entitled to the protections and benefits of the CBA, regardless of whether they’re a union member.

## WHAT / WHEN DO WE BARGAIN?

Every three years, the full CBA is open for negotiations. This means that both UFF-UF and the UF BOT can propose changes to any aspect of the document. Our current contract is the 2021-24 Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), which was ratified on June 18, 2021.

Additionally, every year, UFF-UF and the UF BOT negotiate our salaries, including any raises.

When needed, the UFF-UF and BOT bargaining teams engage in “impact bargaining,” which often produces Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). These MOUs typically involve short-term amendments to the CBA in response to a crisis (or “impact”) like the COVID-19 pandemic.

## ARTICLES HIGHLIGHTS

### Article 10 on Academic Freedom and Responsibility:

This article is the gem of CBA, providing the strongest academic freedom protections across the entire SUS! Academic freedom rights are fundamental because they enable faculty to teach and research their areas of expertise without fear of censorship.

### Article 19 on Tenure and Promotion:

This article includes provisions that protect tenure and define a politically-neutral, expert-driven sustained performance evaluation process.

### Article 21 on Other Leaves:

This article contains one of our biggest recent wins: eight weeks each of paid parental and medical leave.

# What is a UFF-UF Grievance?

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A grievance is a formal complaint made by a faculty member about a violation of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Its purpose is to:

- Defend faculty members' rights, both individually and collectively
- Protect our academic and professional integrity
- Enforce the Collective Bargaining Agreement

Any violation of your rights and protections, as codified in the CBA, represents a potential grievance. The most common grievance causes include:

- Inaccurate or unfair annual or third-year evaluations
- Violations of the tenure or promotion process
- Improper non-renewals or layoffs
- Changes in workload and assignment (e.g., a significant increase in course size or number of courses)

## WHO CAN GRIEVE?

All members of the bargaining unit can grieve violations of the CBA. UFF-UF members can be represented free of charge by UFF-UF. To access this benefit, you must have been an active member at the time of the perceived violation of the CBA.

*Faculty who are not UFF-UF members must either represent themselves or hire a lawyer at their own expense. Legal expenses associated with a significant grievance will typically exceed \$20,000.*

## WHO WILL HELP YOU NAVIGATE THE GRIEVANCE PROCESS?

UFF-UF has a dedicated, experienced Grievance Team. This Grievance Team consists of unpaid faculty volunteers who receive advice and support from paid union staffers.

Our Grievance Officers have decades of experience and a strong track record of successfully resolving faculty concerns, often without resorting to the formal grievance process.

## WHEN TO CONTACT THE GRIEVANCES TEAM?

Contact the Grievance Team as soon as something happens in your work life that you feel is inappropriate, even if you are not sure whether a violation of the CBA has taken place. The team will help you determine what, if any, violation has occurred.

Contacting the Grievances Team does **NOT** commit you to filing a grievance. The team is always eager to resolve problems informally without resorting to the grievance process. You can contact our Grievance Team via email at:

[uff-uf-grievances@googlegroups.com](mailto:uff-uf-grievances@googlegroups.com)

## HOW DO GRIEVANCES WORK?

If our Grievance Team believes that a violation of the CBA has taken place, they will – with your permission – investigate the case and begin drafting a formal grievance. In the meantime, they will attempt to resolve the situation informally.

The grievance process has three stages:

- In the first stage, often referred to as a “Step One Grievance,” the Grievance Team meets with a representative of the dean of the college in which the incident occurred and seeks a formal resolution.
- If the grievance is not resolved to the faculty member's satisfaction, the grievance process proceeds to the second stage, often referred to a “Step Two Grievance”; in this stage, the Grievance Team meets with a representative of the university provost and seeks a formal resolution.
- If the grievance has still not been resolved to the faculty member's satisfaction, the grievance proceeds to arbitration, often referred to as “Step Three Grievance”; in this stage, a neutral arbitrator hears the case and delivers a legally-binding resolution.

## HOW ARE GRIEVANCES RESOLVED?

If you ask the Grievance Team for help, they will typically resolve your concern without initiating the grievance process. Should you initiate a formal grievance, your grievance can – and likely will – be resolved in either the first or second stage. Grievances only rarely proceed to arbitration (or a Step Three Grievance - see above).

In most instances, the UFF-UFF Grievance Team finds a satisfactory resolution to faculty concerns. In recent years, our team has:

- Helped a tenured faculty member get their job back after wrongful termination
- Enabled a faculty member to create a specialized course of study after UF deemed the program controversial and sought to suppress it
- Forced UF to reconsider promotion decisions for faculty members whose promotion packets were improperly reviewed

## CAN THE UNIVERSITY RETALIATE IF YOU FILE A GRIEVANCE?

Retaliation is prohibited by both federal and state labor law, as well as your Collective Bargaining Agreement.

# UFF-UF Glossary

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## ACRONYMS

### NTT:

Non-tenure track, referring to faculty who are not eligible for tenure. NTT faculty are sometimes referred to as CRI Faculty, which stands for clinical, research, and instructional faculty, the three categories in which most NTT faculty work.

## UFF-UF, PARENT UNIONS, AND COMMITTEES

### Parent Union

A term for the larger union or unions of which one's union is a part.

### UFF-UF

The University of Florida chapter of the United Faculty of Florida, the organization about which you're currently reading!

### UFF

The United Faculty of Florida, a higher-education faculty union with chapters at nearly all two- and four-year public colleges and universities across the state of Florida.

### FEA

The Florida Education Association, a union representing Florida educators, from K-12 to higher ed.

### NEA

The National Education Association, a union representing US educators, from K-12 to higher ed.

### AFT

The American Federation of Teachers, another union representing US educators, from K-12 to higher ed.

### UF-GAU

The University of Florida chapter of Graduate Assistants United, a union of graduate assistants.

### UCW-UF

The University of Florida chapter of United Campus Workers, a union representing TEAMS and OPS workers, including adjunct faculty.

### Executive Council

A body consisting of the eight highest-ranking officers of UFF-UF, including the President, First Vice President, four Vice Presidents, Secretary, and Treasurer, who make decisions involving a significant degree of confidentiality or expediency.

### Council

A body consisting of all elected officers of UFF-UF, which functions as the chapter's main governing body.

## GENERAL LABOR TERMINOLOGY

### Rank and File:

The lifeblood of a union - the members. This term is often used in contrast to paid, full-time union staffers.

### Union Card:

The paperwork faculty fill out to become dues-paying members of UFF-UF. Although most faculty join UFF-UF electronically, we still talk about "union cards" and "signing a card."

### Authorization Card:

To form a new union, organizers must get a certain number of authorization cards from workers who are interested in unionizing. Once this threshold is met, an election is held and a union can be formed.

### Canvassing / Door Knocking:

Visiting potential members to hear their workplace concerns and discuss how the union can earn their membership.

### Certification / Decertification:

When a union is certified, it is officially recognized as the negotiating representative of the workers. Decertification refers to loss of the union's official recognition (including the union's CBA and ability to file grievances).

**Dues (Union Dues, Membership Fee):** Union members contribute a portion of their pay towards collective union funds. Dues are how we fund organization operations, legal costs, member training, and more. For UFF-UF, dues represent 1% of faculty members' base salary.

### Direct Pay / eDues:

Because the Florida legislature outlawed payroll deduction as a method for paying union dues, UFF has transitioned to eDues, sometimes referred to as "direct pay." Once you set up your eDues payment, you pay dues directly to the union rather than via payroll deduction.

### Membership Density:

The percentage of workers in a bargaining unit who are dues-paying union members. The 2023 union busting bill in Florida requires us to reach 60% membership density to retain certification.

### Organizer:

A union representative who recruits non-members to the union. In the greater labor movement, organizers also help workers form new unions at their workplaces.

### Steward:

A union leader at the department level who serves as a bridge between their colleagues and union leaders. Stewards are a vital conduit for raising local workplace concerns to the union leadership.

### Right to Work Laws:

These laws state that employees cannot be required to join a labor union as part of their terms of employment. However, public employees in Florida DO have the right to form and join unions.

### Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC):

The Florida government agency responsible for managing and enforcing collective bargaining law. PERC conducts union elections, manages union certifications, and negotiates impasses between unions and employers.

### Unfair Labor Practices:

Employer or union activities classified as "unfair" by federal or state labor laws. Some examples include employer threats against union activities, discrimination against union members, and failure to bargain in good faith.

## UNION ACTIONS

### Collective Action:

When a group takes some form of action together in order to achieve a common goal or demand.

### Inside Strategy:

Collective actions by union members designed to pressure employers into meeting union demands without resorting to a strike, including actions like informational picketing, sick outs, mass grievances, and working to rule.

### Informational Picketing:

Actions to raise consciousness among the workers and put pressure on the employers through public information sharing. These actions might take the form of holding signs in public spaces, wearing shirts/buttons, signing petitions, and more.

### Sick Out:

A type of collective action where union members coordinate to use sick leave at a given time.

### Work to Rule:

A work slowdown action where union members strictly limit their work to what is required by their job position and refuse to take on any extra labor.

### Strike:

A work stoppage that is authorized by a vote of the union members, typically as a negotiating tool during collective bargaining. Public employees in Florida lack the legal right to strike.

## BARGAINING AND CONTRACTS

### Collective Bargaining:

The process through which unions and employers negotiate the rules governing employees' work, as codified in a Collective Bargaining Agreement. See the section entitled "What is Collective Bargaining?" for additional details.

### Collective Bargaining Unit:

A recognized group of employees who bargain collectively with their employer. See the section entitled "What is the Bargaining Unit?" for more information on who falls within and outside the bargaining unit.

### Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA):

A legally-binding contract that governs the working conditions for employees within a bargaining unit. See the section on "Collective Bargaining" for additional details.

### Impact Bargaining:

The process through which unions and employers negotiate the impact of management responses to crises or other incidents that require a timely response, including news laws that impact a Collective Bargaining Agreement. See the section entitled "What is Collective Bargaining?" for additional details.

### Impasse:

A stalemate between union and employer representatives during collective bargaining that triggers a formal process of conflict resolution.

### Mandatory Subject of Bargaining:

Aspects of a job that unions and employers must have an opportunity to negotiate, including pay, benefits, work assignment, and working hours. An employer may not make a change in a mandatory bargaining subject without providing prior notice to the union and an opportunity to bargain.

### Memorandum of understanding (MOU):

A formal, signed agreement that serves as an addendum to the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

### Tentative agreement (TA):

A provisional agreement between a union and employer on an article of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, the full CBA, or a Memorandum of Understanding. TAs must be ratified before taking effect.

### Ratification:

The process through which a tentative agreement becomes an official document that governs employees' working conditions.

### Cost-Of-Living Adjustment (COLA):

An increase in salary to offset losses to inflation; COLA adjustments maintain the value of an employee's salary.

### Merit Increase:

A raise based on the quality of an employee's work, as evaluated by their supervisors.

### Across the Board Increase:

A general raise applied at one time to all employees in the bargaining unit.



# Call to Action

**We are proud to be UF faculty and want to make our university even better. Joining UFF-UF and getting involved is how we make UF even greater!**

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**As academics, we like to believe that knowledge is power.**

**Knowledge is powerful. But courage, solidarity, and collective action are even more powerful. Now that you know the basics about UFF-UF, we ask you to join your colleagues in collective action.**

## Join Now

If you are not a member, the single most important step you can take to defend yourself, your colleagues, your university, and academic freedom is becoming a dues-paying member. Growing our membership is crucial for two reasons.

First, if we do not reach 60% membership density by February 2024, we risk decertification – meaning we lose our union, our CBA, and access to grievance services.

Second, membership density directly correlates to power. When we have 30% membership, UF administrators can easily ignore us – discounting our union as an organization that represents a minority of faculty. When we have 60% membership or higher, we speak confidently and authoritatively for the majority of faculty we represent.

## Get Involved

If you're already a member, now is the time to get involved. UFF-UF is a volunteer organization. Our leaders and nearly all the people who carry out the chapter's day-to-day functions are full-time faculty members just like you. We need your help to get more done on behalf of UF faculty and educators statewide. Email [uff-uf-membership@googlegroups.com](mailto:uff-uf-membership@googlegroups.com) if you'd like to learn more about opportunities for further involvement.

Your involvement can range from simple tasks like talking to your colleagues about the issues we're facing as UF faculty to more official roles, including:

### **Becoming a Departmental Steward:**

Stewards serve as a two-way information conduit between UFF-UF leaders and the department they represent; they also advocate for their colleagues' interests with union leadership.

### **Joining a standing committee:**

#### Bargaining Team:

This team negotiates the Collective Bargaining Agreement, the document that governs pay and working conditions for 2,000 UF faculty.

#### Communications Team:

This team communicates about chapter actions and priorities with the 2,000-person UFF-UF bargaining unit via email, website, and social media.

#### Grievance Team:

This team enforces the Collective Bargaining Agreement when the rights of individuals or the chapter have been violated.

#### Membership Team:

This team builds union membership, manages the Departmental Steward Team, and provides onboarding for new union members.

### **Joining a special committee:**

#### NTT Committee:

This committee advocates for more equitable pay and working conditions for non-tenure track faculty.

#### Government Relations Committee:

This committee develops relationships with elected officials at the local, state, and national level and advocates for the union's interests.

### **Running for elected office in the union:**

All chapter leadership roles, from President to Senator and everything in between, are up for reelection every spring.