
THE FACULTY VOICE

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Who Protects Academic Freedom and Tenure? A look at Minnesota

Dan Kimel

During 1996-98 there was considerable local discussion about the utility of tenure as an institution. The same discussion was occurring in Minnesota where the Board of Regents was calling for the elimination of tenure. In February 1998 the Minnesota Board approved the collective bargaining agreement for the Duluth campus which retained tenure without the draconian changes that had been forced on the other, non-unionized university branches in Minnesota. The new agreement effectively ended the debate about tenure in Minnesota for the time being. It is interesting that collective bargaining rather than other more traditional centers of faculty governance was the responsible entity in parrying the attacks on tenure in Minnesota.

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The debate in Minnesota and in Florida concerned the corporatization of higher education. The evolution of institutions is moving toward vocational enterprises that exist to sell credentials to students. It is the direction of this evolution that is the central problem. Attacks on tenure and academic freedom are merely symbols of the underlying changes in institutional focus. The existence of a unionized campus, and the threat of general unionization in Minnesota effectively stopped the direct attack on tenure. The battle over the direction

of institutions of higher education is still in full swing. Only careful, collective attention on the part of the faculty has any hope of changing the direction of higher education back to learning and research rather than certification and product development.

In Florida the entire SUS is covered by the collective bargaining agreement, so our debate about tenure never reached the shrill proportions seen in Minnesota. The trends in the two states are, however, indistinguishable. Florida State has administratively moved to eliminate automatic consideration of candidates for tenure in their fifth year. We have also moved to eliminate any give and take discussion of the issues involved in granting tenure to any given individual. From my point of view, both of these administrative efforts have resulted in a weakening of the tenure process. Weakening the process is the first systematic step in its elimination or lethal transformation.

The faculty is the only group that defends either academic freedom or tenure in any significant way. The faculty can only do this as a unit entirely independent of administrative or legislative concerns. The United Faculty of Florida is the only faculty body that meets the requirement of independence, and it is also the sole agent for bargaining concerning terms and conditions of employment of the faculty. If we are to protect tenure and academic freedom in Florida, we need to reverse administrative erosion of the tenure process. This can only be done by bargaining. Strength in bargaining is directly related to membership.

Your membership in UFF counts. By becoming a member of UFF you express your interest in maintaining the values of higher education. You make it possible for the faculty to prevail in negotiations concerning issues like: renewable contracts; adjunct

appointments; additions to work load through web courses; and tenure.

Join UFF!

1999-2000 UFF/FSU Survey of Faculty Opinion and Evaluation of Administrators

All faculty and professional staff should have recently received UFF's annual survey of faculty. We are seeking your opinions on significant issues for faculty at FSU. This survey includes questions about faculty morale, salary distributions, evaluations, policies and actions of the administration, and the effectiveness of administrators, from Department Chair to President.

This questionnaire will be handled in the strictest confidence. The raw data will not be released. We will not release any information that could be used to identify respondents.

Please take a few moments to fill out and return this survey.

Information from these surveys has been effective in the past in lobbying the Legislature and the Board of Regents concerning faculty salaries and governance issues. We will use this information in developing bargaining priorities, lobbying, and presenting faculty positions in local consultations.

UFF's Web Site

UFF has revised and expanded its Web Site. It now includes the complete text of the current Collective Bargaining Agreement, a link to UFF's web page on salaries in the State University System, where you can browse salary data for in-unit and out-of-unit faculty, staff, and administrators for the **whole State University**

System. The data can be down-loaded into your favorite spreadsheet for analysis.

Use your browser to access this resource at <http://www.fsu.edu/~uffinfo/>

Nominations for the following positions are being solicited by the present board for UFF-FSU Executive Board for Apr. 2000-Mar. 2001:

President
Chair, Grievance committee
Vice President
Treasurer
Senators (3)
Alternate senator (7)

The first four positions are automatically also Senators. The position of President usually has available 2 units (50%) release time for the fall and spring semesters for the purpose of carrying out union-related duties. The Grievance Chair normally gets 1 unit of release time for the summer, fall and spring semesters.

Responsibilities of all include being available for monthly board meetings (generally the second Tuesday of each month during the academic year) and willingness to attend the semi-annual statewide UFF Senate meetings (generally in either Orlando or Tampa at union expense).

Requirements are a willingness to serve your colleagues in this important area of faculty life and to help in several important annual activities.

Names (yours or others) may be submitted to either Dan Kimel, Department of Physics (campus mail code 4350) or to Chris Gorsuch, Library Technical Services (campus mail code 1005) or cgorsuch@mail.fsu.edu. Thank you for your consideration of this area of faculty life.

Know Your Contract

In the Fall semester consultation of the UFF leadership with the FSU administration, the administration estimated that approximately \$300,000 – \$350,000 will be available to faculty this year for market equity raises. Below are the guidelines set out in the UFF/BOR Collective Bargaining Agreement concerning these raises.

Market Equity

(1) Market equity is to be addressed at each university taking into consideration meritorious performance, years of service, and years in rank.

(2) Each university shall develop procedures for the distribution of funds for market equity to eligible employees, or shall delegate development of such procedures to the colleges or equivalent units. Each university or college/equivalent unit shall establish a committee to develop such procedures. The majority of the committee's membership shall be elected employees who may be drawn from existing elected employee committees. The procedures shall be submitted to the President or representative for final approval. The procedures shall specify how meritorious performance, years of service, and years in rank shall be included in the determination of these increases, with meritorious performance being given the highest consideration, but with each criterion being included in a meaningful way. The procedures shall also specify how appropriate market data, including the distance of individual employee salaries from market, shall be incorporated. Each employee with a current satisfactory performance evaluation shall be considered for a market equity salary increase.

UFF General Membership *Free Luncheon*

UFF Members and Non-members are Invited

As a guest of UFF, you are invited to our annual UFF General Membership Meeting in the Micro Room of Oglesby Union, on

Thursday, Feb. 24, at 12:30PM

The Micro Room is on the second floor of the Union, just outside of the elevators near the food court.

In addition to being treated to a free lunch, you can hear from our guest, Leona Geiger, Executive Director of the United Faculty of Florida. She will speak on two topics:

Prospects in the Upcoming Legislative Session and Early Results from the UFF State-wide Faculty Survey

and discuss pending bargaining issues affecting faculty and professional staff. Please indicate whether you will attend the Luncheon by sending a note to Dan Kimel, UFF/FSU President, Physics Dept., Campus Mail code 4350 or e-mail to kimel@hep.fsu.edu