

Report on University Welfare for Faculty Senate, April 22, 2009

By Senator Jack Fiorito, UFF-FSU President

Good afternoon!

Collective Bargaining

We've held one or two sessions since the last Senate. Cancellations, including a session scheduled for yesterday and preempted by TK's "town hall" meeting make it difficult to keep track. We've made some progress on:

1. Paid parental leave – we agreed that we will extend this benefit through fall semester at our next session, next Monday. We will discuss further extension soon as part of a broader overhaul of Article 17 on leaves.
2. New position classifications for non-tenure track teaching faculty (NTTF): There are still some major differences, but we are closer.

Also important: What we are NOT discussing. As noted previously, the Admin/BOT team stresses that it cannot meaningfully discuss budget-related items until the legislature acts. We appreciate that there is much concern about budget matters, but we understand the Administration's position on this and agree that there is limited value in attempting to negotiate over hypotheticals. We are aware and deeply concerned that the strategy of "vertical cuts" (or program closings) can be seen as an attempt to circumvent tenure and layoff protections in our contract.

Consultations

We have raised budget issues, promotion and tenure decisions, faculty governance, and other issues in consultation meetings with Provost Abele and Dean Rowe since March's Senate. We expressed concern about criteria and procedures behind the "Draft Plan" for dealing with the budget crisis, and we have discussed other options.

Florida Legislature

The United Faculty of Florida statewide and the UFF-FSU Chapter leaders' views are much the same as the Administration's. I don't get to say that often! In fact, the one-penny sales tax hike recently endorsed by TK and Bob Bradley in published op-eds started as a proposal of our Florida Education Association affiliate and was endorsed by the statewide UFF Senate in January. It's not a long-term solution, but may be among the few options that are still viable at present. We will continue to urge faculty and others to contact legislators urging them to recognize the critical role of higher education and its funding.

Take the April, 2009 FSU Faculty Poll, and urge your colleagues to do so as well!

Questions?

Thank you for your time.