BOT Update, January 28, 2008

The Board of Trustees and the United Faculty of Florida bargaining teams continued to discuss appointments, disciplinary policies, and salaries at the January 28th meeting.

The UFF team presented their revised proposals for Articles 8 (Appointments), 23 (Salaries) 16 (Discipline and Job Abandonment) and a new proposal for Article 21 (Other Employee Rights), which had not previously been discussed.

The UFF wants to add a summer rotation policy to Article 8, guaranteeing supplemental summer teaching is offered first to UCF employees before assigning adjuncts and graduate students. It has been the administration’s general practice to offer faculty the first opportunity to teach summer courses. The BOT maintains, however, that it needs the continued flexibility to balance offering faculty the courses, addressing budget concerns, ensuring there are adequate sessions offered for students, and making sure graduate students have opportunities to teach. The two sides remain far apart on this issue.

Regarding Article 23, Salaries, the union also requested a 2 percent salary increase for all faculty and requested that the university not withhold 2 percent in reserves in anticipation of budget shortfalls next fiscal year. The university this past year withheld 2 percent of its budget to be in a better position to absorb further cuts projected to be made by the state this year.

The BOT’s latest proposal offered no new UCF Teaching Incentive Program (TIP) awards nor any new UCF Research Incentive awards (RIA) for the 2007-2008 contract year. It did propose to offer up to 31 recycled TIP awards and up to 5 recycled RIA awards. No Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Program awards are planned under this proposal.

In their last proposal on Article 23, the UFF proposed doing away with new versus recycled awards. It proposes a total of 31 TIPS and five RIAs, to be distributed on a university-wide basis.

The two teams have agreed on most of Article 16, which covers disciplinary action and job abandonment. The two sides spent some time discussing if employees may grieve a proposed disciplinary action before any formal discipline is taken. At the BOT’s request, UFF brought new language to address concerns raised by the BOT team. The BOT said it would review the new language and have a response at the next meeting.

The union also asked that the university be the sole entity responsible for maintaining e-mail records that are subject to the public records law, and to provide an email account that meets all legal and policy requirements for communicating with students. It should not be the responsibility of the employees, said UFF negotiator Jim Gilkeson.

BOT’s negotiator, Sheryl Andrews, said that she would work with the administration to clarify what e-mails are subject to the rules and which are not. She said it was not the
intention of the university to require employees to buy extra hardware to keep copies of e-mails.

Opening with proposal #1 for Article 21, Other Employee Rights, Gilkeson also said faculty should be entitled to offices with locks and which have air conditioning and heating as well as ready access to a telephone, computer and Internet. He said the union has received complaints of poor air conditioning. Last among this new proposal from the UFF team is the request for monitored meeting space. The union team explained that some professors may want a third party to monitor meetings and appointments with students to protect themselves from accusations of inappropriate behavior. The UFF contends that a monitored meeting space would alleviate that worry. Employees would have to make the request in writing before such space would be made available, under the new proposed policy.

The BOT team said it will consider each proposal, but because of the amount of new information, requested more time to respond. The February 4 bargaining session was therefore canceled. The next bargaining session is February 18. The next negotiation session is scheduled from noon to 3 p.m. in Millican Hall, Room 243.

For updates on collective bargaining visit: http://www.collectivebargaining.ucf.edu/pages/Announce.htm