

UFF-LSSC

**United Faculty of Florida
Lake-Sumter State College**

July 19, 2020

Dear District Board of Trustees,

On July 13, the Bargaining Team met with the administration for the first time in 4 1/2 months. We met in person for two hours. The team consisted of only two members of the faculty as medical and safety concerns prevented most of the team from participating per college policies. We were joined by two UFF representatives. Lake-Sumter State College is the only college covered by UFF that required an in-person meeting for bargaining; our representatives have not been physically at a table since the outbreak began despite making strides in impact bargaining across the state (who represent units in over 30 Colleges and Universities). For safety reasons, we wore additional PPE and sat at our own separate tables in the Magnolia Room. About 25 additional faculty members joined us via Zoom (which we set up ourselves). The administration did not provide a virtual option for participation in this public meeting. When we asked about a virtual option going forwards, Mr. Koji restated the college's position as unchanged based on the board attorney's decision. We would, once again, urge you to reconsider this position and allow virtual meetings to take place due to the increasing danger this virus presents to all of us. We know, and feel that you would agree, that it is not in the college's interest to put employees unnecessarily in harm's way.

This was the first opportunity, after a long delay, to conduct crucial working condition discussions. We discussed our proposed Memorandum of Understanding, submitted in March, and numerous issues relating to college policies and faculty concerns. No agreement was reached on the wording of this document, but the sides are very close. We look forward to getting the MOU agreed to at the next session for everyone's benefit. We also presented a counter-proposal to the Tenure and Faculty Promotion article and received proposed Leaves language to consider. We look forward to discussing the long-promised responses to the Workload and Compensation articles we presented last April in which we were assured the administration has consulted you about.

In addition to bargaining, faculty also expressed concern over the abrupt change in leadership of our division, Academic Affairs. Dr. Sidor sent an email on July 7 titled "Organizational Changes" stating that Dr. Wymer has been looking for other positions outside the college and is being reassigned to a new role here as Vice President of Accreditation and Curriculum Development. We were told that we have a new Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. Michael Vitale. This came as a surprise because there was no position announcement, no interviews or presentations, nor any interim designation for our new VP. Each of these measures has consistently occurred in the past for a position such as this. The faculty are curious as to why the process was different this time. Dr. Sidor declined to discuss the staffing change, the process taken, or the reasons for it at the table. The faculty value transparency and clear processes and we would welcome any information or dialog on these changes or their impacts.

Sincerely,

United Faculty of Florida
Lake-Sumter State College Chapter
<http://www.uff-lssc.org/>