

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Tom Auxter, UFF President 352-219-0020
Jack Fiorito, UFF Vice President 850-443-2321

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The First District Court of Appeal ruling issued on February 14, 2005 makes it clear that the effort of politicians to deny the collective bargaining rights of faculty and public employees by reorganizing the governance structure of Florida's universities is not acceptable under the state constitution and in accordance with state law. The Court specifically prohibits "a rule allowing state government to alter terms and conditions of employment unilaterally based solely upon reshuffling in the higher reaches of the bureaucracy – reshuffling that does not alter the work that state employees, whose wages and hours might be affected, must do in the same way at the same place under the same supervisors to the same end"

United Faculty of Florida president Tom Auxter states, "This ruling demonstrates that the constitutional right to collective bargaining for faculty and public employees at universities cannot be taken away by politicians and their appointed representatives on university boards of trustees no matter what excuses they use about "reorganizing" to change the employer while retaining the same employees working under the same conditions. This transparent attempt to break faculty and public employee unions at the universities has now failed."

Jack Fiorito, UFF vice president comments, "The rights held by faculty during this period are once again recognized in Florida. It is time for all university boards to negotiate seriously with faculty on each campus to improve upon the statewide contract that should have been honored all along, to show respect for faculty by repairing the damage that was done in the interim, and to keep improving upon previous contracts on the path to excellence in Florida universities. There is no way to undo the damage in relations with faculty except for local boards to negotiate better contracts."

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