

## UFF-SEMINOLE NEWS & NOTES #2 February 2, 2010

### *CLEARING THE AIR*

Contrary to what a few have been saying...no one person created the current effort to organize Seminole State faculty. No one person (nor several for that matter) could have created it. There have been several previous attempts to unionize but none proceeded this far. Why now? This movement is happening because more of us feel frustrated that our concerns are not taken seriously. It is happening because we are dissatisfied with making requests that are shelved or denied. It is happening because so many of us no longer believe in the efficacy of one-on-one chats and the occasional campus-wide meeting. It is happening because we have become disillusioned with the impotence of faculty-based committees. And this effort is happening now because fewer of us are afraid to voice our thoughts, lest we be labeled "non-team" players.

In the past couple of years, particularly, many *newer* faculty members have grown uneasy about certain administrative decisions. Their growing discontent came to a head in the Fall 2009 term when a core group of *newer* faculty initiated a card-signing drive to organize a union and hold an election to gain collective bargaining rights. As momentum increased, the *newer* faculty solicited the support and guidance of *veteran* faculty, some of whom had been long time, dues-paying members of United Faculty of Florida (UFF). Within six weeks, more than 60% of Seminole State faculty had signed cards expressing their desire for a union representation election, reaching this mark in record time.

In a nutshell, *newer* faculty tapped into widespread dissatisfaction brought about by this administration. They picked up the proverbial ball and ran with it, lighting a fire of solidarity and uniting faculty, *newer* and *veteran* alike. Several months later, we have an interim executive council, we are in the process of making our by-laws permanent, and we have begun to form a bargaining team. Meanwhile, the number of card-signers and chapter members continues to grow, the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC) decision is at hand and the election is on the horizon. Today, Seminole State faculty, *newer* and *veteran* together, are moving forward in a powerful effort to solidify the college.

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We announced on January 7 at the chapter social that our Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC) registration was pending. Since then, some of you have asked about the delay. It turns out that Seminole State's name-change transition caused some confusion at PERC. This has been corrected and we are now awaiting final word from PERC. We are staying on top of the matter every day to ensure a timely election. Stay tuned.

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### **Friendly Reminder**

UFF-Seminole hosts Brevard Community College's Dr. Linda Miedema and Professor Judi Schatte. on Wednesday, February 3, 2010, 4:30pm, at the West Town Corners Panera, 200 S. State Rd. 434 Ste 1071 in Altamonte Springs. These experienced and knowledgeable speakers will talk about collective bargaining, discuss union-administration relations, and explain why nursing faculty support the union at their institution.

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Check out "Strength in Numbers: Faculty Unions Provide Counterweight in College Balancing Act" (*Community College Week*, 5/5/08) by English Professor Mark Blaauw-Hara of North Central Michigan College. Discussing the influence of a community college faculty union, the author observes that the intelligence, creativity and work ethic of faculty members is recognized and rewarded. Importantly, he posits that an effective union balances the power of a community college administration. The result is honest, deliberative shared governance. <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Blaauw-Hara,+Mark-a11603>