

Notes from the UF General Informational Meeting on Wednesday, October 21, 2009  
Curris Auditorium, Room 109, 3-5 PM

Meeting Agenda:

Wednesday, Oct 28, 2009

3:00 pm to 5 pm

CBB 109

- I. Call to order
- II. Introduction of the UNI United Faculty/AAUP Meet & Confer Team
- III. Summary of the initial Meet & Confer session held on Oct. 26
- IV. The Path Forward
- V. Questions & Answers

Opening Remarks by Dr. Hans Isakson, President of UF-AAUP

Introduction of Meet and Confer Team

Tom Kessler, Chuck Quirk, Joe Gorton, Mitch Strauss, Hans Isakson, Cathy Desoto,  
Frank Thompson , Chris Neuhaus

Overview of the Meet and Confer with the Administration on October 19<sup>th</sup> , 2009

Proposed plan will be presented by university presidents to the BOR on October 23<sup>rd</sup>

One idea being discussed is some type of tiered furloughs – those in attendance wondered

About what would be the definition of a furlough, questions raised about the logic of

A temporary loss of faculty instruction in terms of educational quality

Hans noted that the team agreed to discuss financial matters at the initial meet and confer, but there was no agreement on opening the contract ---- the Central Committee may consider reopening the master agreement under certain circumstances or limitations --- however, these types of negotiations would be outside the normal bargaining process – ultimately the UF membership would have to approval whatever may be mutually agreed to by both UF and the BOR.

A question arose as to whether UF would be required to go to arbitration if the contract were to be reopened --- Isakson indicated that UF would not agree to this – such a move could be costly.

If the contract is reopened, the UF meet and confer team will meet with the BOR after having collected information from UF members and the general faculty. If any type of agreement is reached it must be ratified at a UF general meeting.

Questions came up with respect to layoffs --- Could faculty be laid off? Hans explained Article 5 in relation to this question which deals with layoffs when there is a financial exigency. It was noted that a financial exigency has not occurred and that at UNI Article 5 has never been invoked. Hans noted that he has been asked to share perspectives on the current budget crisis

with the BOR. He noted that he will push for strategic cuts rather than across the board cuts as being the best way to protect the integrity and long-term academic quality of our institution.

From 3:45 – 5:00 PM there was open discussion in the following areas by faculty in attendance:

Presentation of the 2009 Actuarial Report on the UNI Health Care Plan - the \$6 million surplus over and above the reserve for incurred but not year reported claims [\$2.3 million], why did the UNI administration take some of these funds out without consultation with UF, how much was taken, why aren't these funds being credited to UNI faculty's contribution to the budget shortfall, and objections to the taking of these surplus funds in light of the fact that faculty under the family plan paid into this surplus and are entitled to a portion of it as a return of an overpayment in premiums.

It was also noted that some \$1 million was transferred during the summer out of the general education fund over to the UNI Foundation due to a shortfall in that area. Some faculty questioned why general fund money was being used to support the UNI Foundation which is being operated as an entity separate from the university --- shouldn't the \$1 million be returned to meet the current budget crisis?

It was also suggested that UF conduct a survey as soon as possible to assess the views of all UNI faculty. A vote was taken on a nonbinding resolution to have UF develop an online survey to assess UNI faculty responses to the present budget crisis and proposed ideas for meeting funding shortfalls. This nonbinding resolution passed by voice vote.

There was a review of the 2009 Actuarial Report showing the \$6 million surplus over and above what would be required to maintain the actuarial integrity of the plan.

A number of faculty stated that the bottom line should be no layoffs of faculty. Some wondered whether in order to meet this objective would the contract have to be reopened. Others noted that a failure to negotiate would put UF at a disadvantage in terms of public perception. It was also noted that if TIAA-CREF retirement funding were reduced [which could be accomplished without negotiation], these reductions would represent decreases in faculty compensation.

An appeal was made to those who are not UF members to join. It was noted that having a large UF membership would help in preserving jobs by showing a stronger presence at the bargaining table.

One opposite view to layoffs was expressed if there were faculty operating in areas outside the scope of our academic programs. However, another perspective was the sacrifices faculty – particularly new faculty --- have made in coming to UNI and that if they were forced to leave it could have dire consequences --- loss of permanent residency status, costs of relocation, also impact on future recruitment and retention of good faculty in the future.

There was considerable discussion on what UF might negotiate in the way of concessions if the contract were to be reopened --- it was noted that if there are salary or benefit concessions then the BOR will have to give up something in return based on mutually agreeable bargaining.

Suggested ideas --- Family Leave in the Contract --- currently we have this leave, but there are not funds available to pay for coverage of classes for those seeking Family Leave, Sick Leave expansion, definition of what a day means of work at UNI, overload compensation, a flat payment of the faculty development funds to each member of the bargaining unit, tuition remission, opening up the wellness center.

if furloughs were agreed to, consideration of whether faculty would have the right to choose those days, whether furlough days could be on teaching days, should faculty have a teach-in to inform students about the impact of furloughs on the education during the period of any furlough, how would coaches participate in furloughs --- would furloughs occur for them during the season? How would furloughs be negotiated --- would this be a one time event? Could the entire university be shut down --- one faculty noted that you should not shut down the entire university because of ongoing experiments that might be jeopardized . Would it be more appropriate to look at a non-permanent pay cut? A number of faculty noted the deception involved in having furloughs which are really de facto pay cuts, without calling them that.

It was noted by many that over the year's the university has absorbed cuts where the faculty has cooperated in receiving less pay or delaying compensation, but the administration has gone on with a business as usual attitude [particularly with athletics, non-academic programs], there has also been a lack of information to the public about how cuts impact directly academics, the view was expressed that the administration in the past has taken the wrong path in minimizing the impact funding cuts have on academic quality at UNI.

There was another nonbinding resolution related to whether any cuts should be transparent to the extent that any pay cut would be just that, rather than a pay cut couched in terms of a furlough --- there was a consensus that a one time pay cut would be preferable to furloughs.

Some argued that if there are furloughs they should be teaching days during the semester to demonstrate to the public the impact furloughs have on instruction at UNI. Another idea was to use a furlough day for everyone for a teach-in where faculty would provide information on the impact of state budget cuts to educational quality, but cover all materials in the course in those non-furloughed days in the semester.

One other issue was the difficulty in determining at this stage what the administration and the Board of Regent's wants --- in reopening the contract on a limited basis, both UF and the BOR are bound to negotiate on that narrow scope.

Some strongly opposed reopening the contract --- others felt it necessary to prevent layoffs.

If was noted that under meet and confer, rather than collective bargaining which this negotiation will be --- an opportunity exists for providing our members with more information on the substance of negotiations. With collective bargaining once each side presents its proposal there can be no information coming out of the negotiations to faculty until an agreement is reached. In this case, faculty can learn of what is being proposed and provide input during the negotiations. It may be possible for some UF members outside the team to attend these sessions assuming the open meetings law is applicable.

Hans again encouraged those in attendance who have not joined UF to become members and for UF members to help their colleagues join UF-AAUP.

The meeting ended at 5 PM.