THE FUSA INFORMANT

Issue 8.2

The FUSA Informant Newsletter October 2026

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Ken McCullough
& Jeff Rubinstein

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From the President's Desk – Get out the Vote

President Jeremy Bullian, Ybor Campus

With only a couple of weeks left until election day and with early voting already underway, I'd like to address just how important this election is for Florida. At stake is the future of education in Florida, and that includes the future of higher education. We've seen what a supermajority can do in a short amount of time. While the attacks on higher ed are not new, just since the Governor's second term we've witnessed the state takeover of New College of Florida, cronyism at its worst with political appointments at higher ed institutions around the state, an assault on academic freedom in the classroom, the censorship of history textbooks, and the cancelation of disciplines like sociology. One party's ideology has controlled the conversation around education in Florida for thirty years. When politicians don't have to engage with the other party due to their supermajority, they are no longer participants in representative democracy. We desperately need a change in Florida and the only wat to make the change is to get out and vote for candidates that support our values as educators and workers.

Unions are a great example of what solidarity can produce; that is a unity in voice speaking as one for the interests and values of a community. Likewise, making our voices heard en masse in this election can bring about the change we desperately need for public education and workers in Florida.

I'm challenging all faculty to consider how they can help **Get Out the Vote** and encourage family, friends, and neighbors to vote. Yard signs and bumper stickers are fine, but the only way to move the needle and achieve results is to engage with people. We need to engage with, encourage, and educate people one-on-one on the issues imperiling education and working people because these issues ultimately affect all Floridians.

The recent Sept. 28 post on the FUSA website has a wealth of information on the election, including an endorsement list screened by the West Central Florida Labor Council, part of the FL AFL-CIO, and other resources to help you and others get informed on where, when and how you can vote. But pay attention to the ways you can **Get Involved**. Both the FEA and WCFLC are offering multiple phone-banking and canvassing options in the weeks leading up to the election. You can also reach out to your favorite candidate's office to see how you can help their campaign. If you have questions or would like more information, feel free to contact me, your FUSA President, or a campus rep.

Let's not leave anything to chance on November 3. Let's ensure we did everything we could do to make the change we want to see in Florida.

The Dale Mabry Faculty Taskforce

Jeff Rubinstein, Dale Mabry Campus

With the recent news that the Rays and the city will be developing the Dale Mabry campus into a mixed use complex that will include a new building for the college, many faculty have had numerous and legitimate questions. This was the impetus for a new DM Faculty Taskforce to hear, address, and forward any faculty concern, specifically regarding our workplace conditions and our ability to fulfill our contractual obligations during the next three years or more.

FUSA can play an important role in protecting our rights as employees by ensuring that this complex process is handled in a safe manner and that we can maintain the same level of teaching excellence. The FUSA faculty contract lays out the specific requirements for our working conditions and these can't be altered arbitrarily or easily, no matter how promising this new mixed-use project is.

Even if you don't work on the Dale Mabry campus, this development affects us all. Programs are moving, enrollment is sure to be affected, and who knows what other issues will arise when the entire campus is shifted to the "Nest". What our new, temporary campus is going to look like hasn't always been clear.

It's been a challenge digging into all of the memorandums and leasing agreements, and information from administration has been inconsistent at best. Perhaps that's to be expected in such a transformational time for the college.

Unless there is more recent info, the Nest will be a complex of 49 temporary buildings. This AI summary of the Board of Trustees Agenda Packet from April 22, 2026, includes the following:

In April, HC sought authorization to lease **49 temporary buildings from WillScot for 30 months** at **$550,925 per month**, totaling **$16,527,750**. The stated purpose was temporary instructional and related facilities at Dale Mabry. Most importantly, the agenda identifies the source of that money as:

"Funds will be provided from the College's Fund Balance."

An important role your FUSA reps will continue to play is getting to the source of reliable information instead of any speculative plans or overly optimistic marketing. It's important to note that contrary to previous claims, the Rays are not paying for the temporary campus, and the money comes out of the state provided 50-million-dollar fund. No other additional funding is guaranteed for the college.

This historic time for the Dale Mabry campus is sure to be a challenge even if everything goes as planned. As always contact any FUSA campus rep if you have concerns or any questions about your campus working conditions. And now Dale Mabry faculty has a dedicated taskforce of FUSA reps to address any workplace concern over the next three or more years.

FROM A MEMBER LIKE YOU

Stronger Together

Thank you and the FUSA officers, for your long, hard work in moving closer to our goal. Thank you also for updating faculty every step of the way. I appreciate you and the team for pressing forward and not relenting. - Diane Grey

Understanding Your Unions: United Faculty of Florida (UFF), Florida Education Association (FEA), National Education Association (NEA), and American Federation of Teacher (AFT).

John Hardin, Brandon Campus

Florida's public education system includes several labor organizations that play important roles in supporting students, educators, and educational institutions in our state. Although these organizations operate at different levels, they share a common interest in strengthening public education, protecting the interests of the people who teach and work in educational institutions, and influencing education policy in Florida and across the nation.

UFF is the higher ed chapter of the FEA, and represents faculty and other academic employees at Florida public universities and state colleges. Their primary responsibilities include bargaining for members' workplace rights, pay and benefits, tenure, and academic freedom. They also campaign for policies affecting higher education in the state.

FEA is a statewide labor union and is the state's largest association of professional employees. They are a united voice for educators regarding academic policies affecting K-12 public schools and higher education. FEA is affiliated with both the NEA and the AFT.

NEA is one of the largest labor and professional organizations in the nation, representing millions of educators and education employees at the national level. They work with lawmakers on federal, state, and local funding and lobby for policies that support public education. Their primary focus is on improving the quality of education and increasing student achievement across the U.S.

Like NEA, AFT is a national labor union representing teachers, school staff, and higher education faculty, along with healthcare workers and other public service professionals. They work to ensure high-quality education, health care, and public services across the U.S.

Simply put, UFF focuses on higher education in Florida; FEA focuses on public education across Florida, and NEA and AFT focus on education nationwide.

When you join FUSA, you become a member of each of these unions.

Real Impact, Real Voices

I especially want to thank you for the countless hours of hard work that you, the rest of FUSA council, and the bargaining team put in to ensure all of us are compensated fairly for the work we do……your commitment to the college and the faculty has impacted my life and my family's, as I'm sure it has for all faculty. The economic impact of the significant pay increase we got a few years ago has greatly benefited my family….the higher yearly salary, increased points for lab and clinic, increased pay for overload, and the unexpected PTO payout will greatly contribute to helping my daughter graduate with er Master's degree with very little school debt. As a parent who spent many years paying off school loans, that means more to me than I can fully express. - Gwen Suarez

DALE MABRY REPS

Stephanie Lance
Walt Ellis
Elizabeth Key-Raimer
Ken McCullough
April Muchmore-Vokoun
Jeff Rubinstein
Brienne Sardoni
Kathryn Smith
Bryan Shuler

YBOR CITY REPS

Myrah Dijamco
Rick Gaspar
Judy Nolasco
Melissa Gonzalez-Lam

BRANDON REPS

Dave Flanigan
John Hardin
Ken Hawkins

SOUTHSHORE REPS

Lorelei Tarter
Theresa Scott

PLANT CITY REPS

Karen Dufraine
Teresa Hesse

UFF SENATORS

Margaret Hopson-Fernandez
Jeremy Bullian
Myrah Dijamco
Charity Freeman
John Hardin
Elizabeth Key-Raimer
Ken McCullough
Wendy Pogoda
Michael Losaso

What Can I Do?

Josh Corson, Dale Mabry Campus

If you're anything like me, you're tired.
Tired of grading, tired of the growing pile of excuses from students, tired of the news, tired of your partner leaving their dishes in the sink when you've asked them, like a million times, to put them in the dishwasher.

I asked myself this very question a few months ago, in particular about helping out with FUSA—I want to do something, but what? I'm not the best at talking to strangers. I don't have a lot of time outside of work. Numbers certainly aren't my forte. [JR1.1]

But if you really are anything like me, you still want to do more. You want to do "something" to help your neighbors, colleagues, friends. But what can you do? Time and energy are in short supply these days, but then again, has volunteering ever been easy or convenient? The Saturday morning beach clean-up sounds like a great idea on Wednesday—but come the weekend, mustering up the energy to crawl out of bed at 7am on your day off is another story.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not trying to persuade you to suddenly become Captain Planet (although the beaches do need to be cleaned up). What I am hoping is that you'll consider what your strengths are. What're you good at?

That's when I discovered The Informant; when I realized what my strength was—writing. Although writing takes time it doesn't take a lot of energy. In fact, finishing a piece often gives me energy. This is the secret to volunteering, and at the risk of sounding like a cheesy self-help book: you, too, need to find the thing that fills your cup, not just drains it.

I don't want to imagine a workplace without a union bargaining with administration for better wages or lobbying the state for more academic freedom. I also don't want to add another thing to my to-do list that I end up dreading, procrastinating, and/or forgetting about altogether. That's why I wrote this. That's why I took the time (and a little bit of energy) to write this article for FUSA because I bet you feel the same as me. So, what are your skills? What talents can you share with your colleagues? How can we work together to get the job done?

REPRESENTING YOU AT AFT IN WASHINGTON, DC

From L-R
Delegates
Jeremy Bullian
& John Hardin,
Former UFF President Theresa Hodges,
Delegates
Elizabeth Key-Ramer
& Ken McCullough

