

March 23, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Empty roads, extended stays at home, and barren bread shelves at the grocery store are all reminiscent for me of the first Gulf War while growing up in Jordan. Whether it is Amman in 1991 or Southern California in 2020, what becomes evident very quickly is that the people lifting this nation and keeping it running during a crisis are its nurses, delivery drivers, postal workers, military personnel, and teachers; not the CEOs. We are the value producers.

A few months ago, I thought there was no better time to be a part of our union. Today, I stand corrected. It is during these unusual times that I feel very fortunate to be a union member. Our union's work has only become more crucial than ever. As we continue adapting to these very bizarre circumstances, a lot of unanswered questions emerge about negotiations, working conditions, and compensation. The Union is here to protect you. I hope this email will address some of the immediate concerns.

**Will the COVID-19 stay-at-home orders have any impact on Fact-finding?**

As of right now, we continue moving towards a fact-finding session. CTA assigned us Mr. Alan Frey as a panel member. Alan is extremely experienced and has been working with CTA for over 42 years. We are very excited to work with him, and after reviewing NOCCCD's financial documents, he is very optimistic.

The only delay that we anticipate due to the COVID-19 stay at home orders is the fact-finding session itself, which requires all parties to be in the same room (which usually has more than 10 people). We plan on keeping you posted as soon as a date is scheduled. Meanwhile, our negotiations team is putting together an informational video that we plan on releasing by the end of the week that will explain the process of fact-finding in-depth.

**My working conditions have changed dramatically due to the COVID-19 stay-at-home orders. What does this mean in terms of compensation and the Collective Bargaining Agreement?**

First, our Union leadership has made it very clear to the District that any working conditions that would risk the health of our faculty and their families are non-starters.

Given the dramatic and sudden changes in working conditions, our Union's leadership already sent a Demand to Bargain to the District. The shift to online/remote working conditions required an enormous amount of work by faculty across the state. This additional work has already been recognized by some of the surrounding districts that agreed to compensate their faculty accordingly. We expect the same from our district. We already sent three temporary MOUs to the District's Lead Negotiator, Irma Ramos to address the following:

1. First year probationary faculty tenure review,

2. All office hours will be virtual office hours, and
3. Suspension of other campus hours.

These are three simple temporary MOUs that address immediate and urgent concerns. Unfortunately, instead of signing them, the District responded with their own MOU that added punitive language (please see attached documents). Since we are doubtful that our Representative Council would ratify a punitive MOU, we urge the Chancellor to step in and make sure that these MOUs are signed in a timely manner. This is not a time for politics or punitive measures for a faculty that took on most of the burden of these circumstances and kept the District afloat.

Three additional MOUs were emailed to the District this morning to address the following:

1. Compensation for additional workload for Full-time faculty.
2. Compensation for transitioning lab-teaching methodologies to lecture-teaching.
3. Evaluation of tenured-unit members.

Once the MOUs are signed, they will need to get ratified by the Representative Council. Please make sure that you provide feedback to your Division Rep Council as soon as possible.

During a time of crisis, inequities are accentuated. Faculty that rely on a dual household income might have lost some or most of that pay, especially if their partner is an hourly worker or suffered a layoff. For others, concerns about health coverage for dependents and questions about lab/lecture parity become essential. A view in which the District thinks that they can address the pandemic without putting issues of equity at the front and center is a privileged view. During an emergency Board of Trustees meeting on Friday, 3/20/2020, the BOT delegated authority to the Chancellor to act in response to the COVID-19 crisis. We urge the chancellor to use these powers to address our faculty needs, especially since the District will continue receiving their apportionment. You can't put students first if you put teachers last.

### **How do the Governor's stay-at-home orders impact the Union's organizing efforts?**

Undoubtedly, the COVID-19 crisis has reshaped organizing efforts. Fortunately, there is plenty to do to maintain solidarity and make sure the District understands that meaningful on-schedule raises, health coverage for dependents, and lab-lecture parity are more essential than ever. We urge our faculty to do the following:

1. Red Shirt Wednesday is still happening! Please wear your red shirt on Wednesday and send us your pictures via email or share them on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ufnorthorange>
2. Dial in the next BOT meeting, which will take place on April 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm. UF will send a reminder with the Zoom Meeting ID.
3. Share your story with us by emailing us how this crisis has impacted you and your family.
4. Email your comments and statements to the Board of Trustees and the Chancellor.

While there can be a lot of unknowns in a rapidly evolving situation, you can count on your union leadership to adapt quickly and efficiently.

As expected, our faculty did rise to the occasion during a time of crisis. I have heard stories of faculty working 12+ hours a day, 7 days/week, to make sure that this transition is done as quickly as possible. I want to thank every single one of you for your hard work and dedication to our students. Without you, there is no District.

In Solidarity,

Mohammad M. Abdel Haq, M.A.  
Professor of Sociology  
UF Lead Negotiator  
Fullerton College, Fullerton

"Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will" - Frederick Douglass

