

The Fate of Higher Education Hangs in the Balance:

Florida Legislature 2012

The next legislative session starting in January could decide once and for all whether Florida will have a viable system of higher education in the future. The leadership, with the support of the Governor, is ready to introduce changes so radical that it would take decades to reverse the damage done to public universities and colleges. This is the last chance for right-wing forces (before redistricting possibly shifts the balance of power in the 2012 election) to pass legislation to convert Florida higher education into a “Texas style” business operation, destroy faculty rights, and dramatically cut funding.

If they succeed, we will see an end to academic life as we know it. As a result of huge budget cuts, students will be processed through diploma mills and have little contact with faculty. Without a collective bargaining contract, faculty will lose job security and be subject annually to “at will” decisions by supervisors -- depending only on whether the supervisors want to keep them after the State severely cuts their budgets for instruction.

Can we prevent this outcome? Our best hope lies in persuading the Florida Senate to defeat these drastic measures. We need to show the more moderate senators, who constitute a swing vote, that we are ready to support them if they defend the quality of higher education.

We desperately need to raise PAC funds to make this work. We do not use membership dues for campaign contributions. The only way we can raise enough money to do this is if members write checks to “UFF-PAC” now. Please mail a check for \$100 (if possible), or whatever you can afford, by December 1st. Send it to: UFF, 306 East Park Avenue, Tallahassee, Florida 32301.

The fate of higher education in Florida hangs in the balance.

Tom Auxter

UFF President