

UFF

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United Faculty of Florida-Florida Atlantic University

June 18, 2009

Governor Charlie Crist  
State of Florida  
The Capitol  
400 S. Monroe St.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor Crist,

I am writing to bring a very serious matter to your attention. On May 29 Florida Atlantic University's administration terminated five tenured professors in FAU's College of Engineering under the auspices of budgetary constraints and departmental reorganization. Each professor had in excess of fifteen years of service to the university. FAU's faculty members as a whole consider this act to be one that threatens the academic profession not just at FAU but nationally. Many FAU professors now rightly fear for their livelihoods, while the university's reputation has been placed in serious question. This does not bode well for the economic vitality of our region. Nor is this an economically wise move on the university's behalf. Our union is filing grievances and a costly series of individual lawsuits will also likely proceed. Of what may be of particular concern to you is the fact that Florida Atlantic has accepted over twelve million dollars in federal stimulus money for the 2009-10 fiscal year--funding which of course is intended to shore up the broader economy by *preventing* layoffs.

Faculty members are now arrayed against the unchecked power and questionable judgment the university's top administrators and Board of Trustees. On June 5 the University Faculty Senate unanimously condemned the firing of the five faculty members. This action was dismissed by the President and Board of Trustees. UFF-FAU has repeatedly informed FAU administrators and attorneys of the university's significant financial reserves that could be utilized to sustain its programs, faculty, and staff. For your information, a June 3 statement from me to faculty provides further details, and a version complete with hyperlinks to relevant data is available at our url below.

I think you will agree that quality teaching and research by competent and fairly paid faculty constitute important ways out of the present economic recession. Yet here and elsewhere the profession that can lead this effort is in considerable peril, and this situation likely portends what lies ahead for higher education as a whole.

On behalf of Florida Atlantic University's faculty I greatly appreciate your consideration of the above and look forward to hearing any appropriate actions that may be taken or suggestions from you or your staff.

Sincerely,

James Tracy  
President

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The Higher Education Affiliate of Florida Education Association,  
National Education Association, American Federation of Teachers, and AFL-CIO