

UFF-LSSC

**United Faculty of Florida
Lake-Sumter State College**

November 28, 2021

District Board of Trustees:

In the past few months, you have heard from us concerning wrongful terminations, dire morale issues, and a lack of serious response from the administration in addressing our concerns. Today I want to focus on what this is all costing the college. We understand that the message you have received from Dr. Sidor and his attorney is that they are working to wrap up negotiations efficiently and chart a new course for the college. That is not our lived experience at all, even today.

For nearly three years, we have endured consistent roadblocks and excuses as to why we have not been able to reach agreement on contractual issues on our way to the first collective bargaining agreement (CBA). We presumed that the college would approach these negotiations in good faith and work to efficiently work through the process in order to save the college both staff time and precious educational funds. We have done those things, but they have not.

I spoke to you at the October board meeting about the fiscal toll this process is taking on the college. We have since investigated further via public records requests. We asked how much has been spent on outside legal representation from Brian Koji and his firm, Allen, Norton & Blue, and the college charged us \$160 for what should have been easily obtained financial records. The attached is what we received, including details on how much the college has spent and what it was used to pay. These payments total nearly \$120,000 so far. This money was spent to argue against our college faculty at a series of negotiation sessions and hearings. None of this went to students or to support programs, and it was paid using taxpayer funds and student tuition dollars.

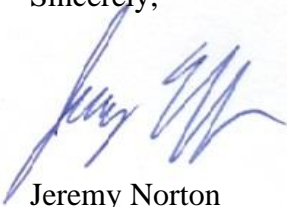
While I encourage you to read through the details provided by the law firm on the invoices, I would draw your attention to several important points:

- Since the summer of 2018, there have been three union votes at the college. Each one was contested on the administration side with many billable hours of strategy sessions, legal filings, and email content reviews. All of these votes were easily won by the faculty, program managers, and adjuncts, respectively. All of this time and money was wasted.
- Each time Brian Koji responds to or reviews an email, it costs the college \$75.
- Each time Brian Koji plans for, travels to, and attends a bargaining session – it costs the college nearly \$2000. We have had more than 20 sessions so far without a CBA to show for it.
- Each time Brian Koji travels to and attends an executive session of the Board to discuss “strategy” and update his “progress chart” it costs the college nearly \$1000.

- It is evident in the invoice notes that the administration works for multiple hours on articles, even finalizing them, without presenting them. Case in point, the Workload article. We presented our version in April 2019 and did not receive a counter until a few weeks ago despite the fact that it was worked on for 7.5 billed hours in December 2020 and “finalized” in February 2021 for another 5.8 billed hours. The output we received was incomplete and based on our conversations so far, it appears that our initial proposal was not even read during that time, and stakeholders, such as Deans and Advisers, were not consulted. We have already spent over 5 hours at the table negotiating their proposal without any agreement – all billed to the college by Allen, Norton & Blue, of course.
- So far, it has cost the college nearly \$30,000 to defend the president’s wrongful termination of our colleague, Dr. David Walton. That does not include the time and effort on behalf of the faculty and administration or the representatives of the Board during this fiasco.

I find it ironic that simply sending this letter to you will cost the college money as it will be forwarded on and “reviewed” by the attorney for, probably, \$75, with an additional half-hour phone “conference” totaling another \$125. It is not our intention to financially burden the college. In fact, we have taken the equivalent of a 1% pay cut to our own salaries to exercise our rights and codify a better working relationship with our administrators. I do not blame Allen, Norton & Blue, or Brain Koji for charging the college for their services; that is business. It is the administrations’ bad decisions that have dragged this process out for so long and cost the college so much money. The District Board of Trustees has a fiduciary duty to the students, state, community, and taxpayers to ensure that college funds are used efficiently. I hope that you take the time to investigate what we have provided and guide the college towards something better.

Sincerely,



Jeremy Norton
President
Lake-Sumter State College Chapter
United Faculty of Florida
<http://www.uff-lssc.org/>