

# Why We need a Union

**So why do we need a union? Our salaries are adequate and our benefits are good. I could use the dues I pay for groceries, car repairs, braces for my kids, etc. This is a good question, especially in light of the recent passage “right to work” legislation.**

What economic advantages have the Ferris Faculty Association (FFA) won for its members? **Remember that all the gains listed here were won despite the administration’s claims of dire economic straits and predictions of greatly reduced enrollments. They had the money then and they have it now. It’s just a question of how they want to spend it.**

Before the union the administration gave promotions and raises without any faculty input. For the most part, it was a reward your friends and punish your enemies system. Once established, the union began the slow process of changing this patently unfair process. At first we negotiated a system whereby we recommended candidates for promotion, but the administration could strike any name off the list they chose. The promotions committee consisted of faculty and administrators. Today we have bargained for an all-faculty committee with an A list which can be changed only under extraordinary circumstances.

Before the union, there were no merit pay increases> Once you attained the rank of full professor you were no longer eligible for any substantial raise. The FFA negotiated merit increases and demanded that these raises be added to the base salary. The administration wanted the merit increase to be a one-time bonus, not applied to the base. This would keep salaries low. The union prevailed on this issue.

Before the union, health insurance included only the faculty member. Families could be covered but only after a substantial monthly payment by the faculty member. Today the

union has obtained through hard bargaining family coverage with a greater university contribution, dental insurance, vision insurance, and long term disability insurance.

Before the union retirement contributions consisted of 5% of your salary paid by you and 5% paid by the university. Again through tough bargaining the FFA got the administration to cover the entire 10% and subsequent union bargaining got the administration to raise its contributions.

Before the union, if you or your family member wanted to take Ferris classes, the faculty member paid the standard tuition fee. The FFA won eight hours per semester of free tuition course work for the faculty or any family member. It would be interesting to know how many faculty or their family members have received a Ferris degree under this program.

Before the union, if your salary was below the CUPA national average, you had a difficult time catching up with your colleagues across the nation. The FFA bargained for the Market Adjustment salary increase in an effort to keep our faculty salaries competitive with other institutions. Over 80% of the Ferris faculty have had additional salary increases because of this program. A person can obtain a raise equal to 1% of their wages through this system in addition to other raises in the base pay.

The administration never proposed any of the economic gains noted above. They were all initiated, negotiated, and won by the Ferris Faculty Association. But these benefits, which we have become accustomed to and perhaps taken for granted, are always in jeopardy. Nothing we have is secure. In every contract negotiation the administration has attempted to reduce or take away all of our gains which we have fought for in the last thirty-eight years. Without the FFA to fight for us we are in trouble. Support your union. It has supported you.

**FFA Crisis Committee**