Chairman Lutgert convened the special conference call meeting of the University Board of Trustees in the Sprint Room on the Florida Gulf Coast University campus at 10:00 a.m., March 6, 2003 with the following members present:

Brian Cobb
David Lucas
Bernie Lester
Linda Taylor
Jerry Starkey
Larry Hart
Scott Lutgert
Ed Morton
Michael Villalobos
Peg Gray-Vickrey

Members of the staff present were:

William Merwin, President
Brad Bartel, Provost
Curtis Bullock, Vice President, Administrative Services
Robert Quatroche, Vice President, Advancement
Susan Evans, Special Assistant to the President
Wendy Morris, General Counsel

Guest: Dr. Gil Hutchcraft, UFF/FGCU Chapter President

1. **Call to Order & Roll Call – Chair Scott Lutgert**

   Chairman Lutgert greeted the Trustees and asked Susan Evans to take a roll call for the record and also indicate the members of the FGCU staff present.
Presentation of Agenda Item – President Merwin

- Voluntary Recognition of United Faculty of Florida (UFF) as Collective Bargaining Representative for a General Faculty Unit at FGCU

President Merwin greeted the Trustees and stated that on December 20, 2002, the United Faculty of Florida (UFF), a labor organization, filed a representation-certification petition with the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC) seeking to be the collective bargaining representative for the faculty employees at Florida Gulf Coast University. In the petition, the UFF certified that they cited 129 out of 179 employees faculty indicated their desire to be represented by the UFF. To date there has been no other petitioner to make such a representation. On January 8, 2003, PERC asked the threshold question as to who would be that employer for the faculty of the State of Florida. In a sweeping Motion the Board of Governors passed a resolution covering span of things including the employer status for the local boards of trustees. That was a unanimous vote by the Board of Governors and therefore our Board of Trustees is the local employer. The FGCU Faculty Senate by unanimous resolution, expressed collective support for the voluntary formal recognition of the UFF as the collective bargaining agent for the faculty. He stated that they submitted that resolution to him and the Board of Trustees is being asked to endorse today is voluntary recognition. Our General Counsel, Wendy Morris has obtained verification of the collective bargaining unit and we agree with that and have verified the cards are accurate. President Merwin recommended that the Board of Trustees officially endorse and accept the United Faculty of Florida as the collective bargaining agent. Upon approval, this petition would then be sent to the Public Employee Relations Commission in a joint resolution between Florida Gulf Coast University and the UFF. (Appendix A)

President Merwin introduced Professor Gil Hutchcraft, Chapter President of the United Faculty of Florida/FGCU. Dr. Hutchcraft provided the Board with an overview of UFF. The text of Dr. Hutchcraft’s remarks is provided here:

“President Merwin, Mr. Lutgert, and ladies and gentlemen of the Board I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you on behalf of the United Faculty of Florida and the faculty of Florida Gulf Coast University.
UFF Who We Are

United Faculty of Florida (UFF) is the professional association and collective bargaining agent for faculty and professional staff at 10 public community colleges and eleven campuses of the state universities in Florida. UFF has served in that capacity for over twenty-five years. UFF also represents graduate assistants at FAMU, UF, and USF, as well as the faculty at St. Leo University. UFF is affiliated with the Florida Education Association, the National Education Association (NEA), the American Federation of Teachers, and the AFL-CIO. Here at FGCU UFF represents 172 faculty in teaching, advising and librarian roles in all units of the university.

In our profession, there are many things we can accomplish as individuals: completing advanced degrees, writing lectures, teaching courses, advising students, doing research, writing scholarly articles and books.

But there are others we cannot accomplish alone: such as working to improve state funding for increased faculty salaries and benefits, working to improve the faculty's role in decision-making on campus, assisting in negotiation of collective bargaining contracts for professionals, protecting academic freedom and tenure, defending faculty rights, influencing the formulation of policy by the governing boards, working for legislation to improve the quality of education in our colleges and universities, and advancing academic excellence. Class load, equipment, salaries, professional advancement, instructional resources---ultimately every decision that affects higher education faculty is either a bargaining issue or a political decision and involves UFF.

Here at FGCU UFF has worked collaboratively with the administration and the Faculty Senate to address issues such as these. As you know from task force reports on institutional climate, continuing multi-year appointments, and faculty salary equity, as well as other sources, there are significant problems facing the faculty and the university here at FGCU.

A recent Fort Myers News Press article reporting on the faculty salary equity task force findings revealed that, and I quote, “nearly 25% of FGCU professor’s is severely underpaid, and it costs more to replace them than to give them a raise, end of quote.” Provost Bartel was quoted as saying that “if you don’t address these issues, a number of the 54 faculty in question will contemplate other jobs.” He is no doubt correct in that assessment.

UFF has worked, and will continue to work, diligently, both statewide and here at FGCU, to fulfill it purpose of promoting the quality and effectiveness of academic excellence in all phases of instruction, research and service.
FGCU faculty have clearly expressed their desire to have UFF represent their interests through the collective bargaining process. As you know more than 70% of faculty in the bargaining unit have signed authorization cards, which have been certified and found sufficient by PERC, supporting UFF. Further, the faculty senate passed a unanimous resolution supporting “voluntary recognition” of UFF as the bargaining agent on their behalf.

We invite and encourage all faculty at FGCU to join UFF so they may actively participate in the collective bargaining process. UFF firmly believes that it would be in the best interest of the faculty, the university and the community for the Board of Trustees to accord UFF voluntary recognition and to proceed with the collegial, collaborative process of improvement through the collective bargaining. We look forward with optimistic anticipation to working with you and the administration in continued pursuit of quality and effectiveness of academic excellence here at FGCU and solving the problems that face our university.

In light of clear faculty sentiment, to postpone or deny recognition of UFF, as the representative bargaining agent, would unnecessarily delay the opportunity we have to work together to build the trust of the faculty and the community and to move forward to insure the future of FGCU. Therefore we respectfully request that you vote in the affirmative to accord voluntary recognition to UFF as the exclusive bargaining agent and status quo to the current collective bargaining agreement to provide a foundation for and continuity of certain critical issues as we transition into the new contract. Thank you!”

3. Board Discussion & Vote (Includes Public Input prior to Vote) – Chair Scott Lutgert

President Merwin thanked Professor Hutchraft and commented on the distinction between shared governance with the Faculty Senate collective bargaining agent United Faculty of Florida. He stated the UFF is responsible to negotiate with the management team for the University Board of Trustees on issues that deal with wages, hours, terms and conditions of employment. President Merwin wished to clarify that shared governance at Florida Gulf Coast University is done with the Faculty Senate and the UFF deals exclusively with wages, hours, terms and conditions. President Merwin stated he heartily endorsed the recognition of the United Faculty of Florida as the collective bargaining representative for a general faculty unit at Florida Gulf Coast University.

A motion was made by Trustee Hart to approve the resolution. Trustee Taylor seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.
Chairman Lutgert called on President Merwin for final comments. President Merwin stated that that time is now to make contact with legislators regarding our need for enrollment growth funding for this institution. He stated that if this is not provided our enrollment pattern would be jeopardized and force the administration to invoke some amount of enrollment capping.

3. Chair’s Closing Remarks – Chair Scott Lutgert

Chairman thanked all the Trustees for their presence during this phone conference and stated the next regular meeting would be held on Thursday, April 10, 8:30 a.m. Meeting adjourned. 10:17 a.m.