Dear Legislature...

SUSS asks for 10 percent raises and enough money to stay status quo

USF and President Betty Castor have joined the State University System in requesting raises for all full-time state university employees their number one request from the state legislature this year. President Castor has already met with the legislative members in Tallahassee and in the Tampa Bay area, although the legislative session does not begin until Feb. 8.

"She is covering all her bases," said Jeff Muir, associate vice president of USF Government Relations.

If a 10 percent raise request were granted, the total cost to the state would be $97 million. The Governor's office has proposed a 3 percent raise and spending $99 million for all the state universities needs this year. It also proposed cutting $3 million from the Florida Mental Health Institute (FMHI). Muir said something between a 3 percent and 10 percent raise would be more likely.

Max Dertke, FMHI dean, said he is concerned with 3 percent raises and others that the Legislature will realize that more cuts are not in the best interest of USF or the state.

USF is asking for money to protect the base budget. This past fiscal year marks the fourth year in a row that funding per student has gone down.

President Castor said that any budget cuts additional money to maintain the same level of services while covering inflationary increases and workloads from a growing enrollment.

USF's other budget priorities are: The Aging Studies Initiative, the running programs on the St. Petersburg and Tampa campuses, FMHI's Minority Mental Health Training Program, the enhanced liberal arts curriculum, a professional development school network for the College of Education and environmental studies.

Castor's goals include increased Library funding. She would like to see the state provide funds that could be matched with private donations to increase the libraries' resources.

"Make them aware that they have USF employees living in their district and that part of what they will be judged on for re-election is the extent to which they support the university's initiatives," Muir said. "It is important for all of us to discuss the issues and make sure we are all all advocates for the university."

By Alissa Algarin

President Castor off and running

Although President Betty Castor's first official day at the university was in mid-January, the 18th first day of USF was hard at work long before then.

Caster's national media at the University Center minutes after being hired by the Board of Regents and went straight across campus to her new office. She left soon thereafter for a downtown Tampa meeting with community leaders and elected officials and has been working at a feverish pace since.

Her first public appearance on campus was at opening ceremonies for a week of events celebrating the life of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Castor spoke about the Institute on Black Life and a broad exchange agreement in 1995 with a cultural organization representing 23 African nations.

"These are but a few of the examples of how USF people are working to keep the dream alive," Castor said. "It is my hope and prayer that, with the help of the many committed faculty, staff and students already hard at work at this university, I can make a difference in helping USF not only to keep the dreams of Dr. King alive, but to realize their fulfillment."

Over the next few days, Castor continued meetings with on-campus constituents and appearances at USF functions. Those appearances included remarks at the 15th-anniversary of the award-winning Tampa History Center and an official first-draft-on-campus meeting with media.

"President Castor wants to quickly absorb as much as possible in order to be most effective in representing the university," said Vice President for Advancement Gordon McGough, who has been assisting the president. "It's been a real pleasure to watch her at work. I'm confident that during the coming months and years the university community and the Tampa Bay area are going to understand and appreciate the many positive implications of the Board of Regents' selection of Betty Castor as USF's fifth president."

By Todd Simmons

Betty Castor shakes the hand of Elton Smith, English professor at a welcoming reception Jan. 13.

Teaching center to offer workshops on new liberal arts curriculum

Preparations are well underway for the implementation of USF's revised liberal arts curriculum to give students more perspectives on the world.

More than a decade in the making, the new curriculum was approved by the faculty in September 1992. The new requirements will affect students entering USF under the 1994 catalog. The General Education Council, a subcommittee of the Undergraduate Council, has certified about 200 courses for the new curriculum so far.

The Center for Teaching Enhancement will provide general education course design workshops into the fall faculty work to revise courses for the new curriculum.

Ellen Stevens will conduct "Saying What I Do," a design workshop for faculty to help them this academic year, Feb. 25 and April 15. Early registration is required. For more information, call the center at ext. 4-2576.

The liberal arts curriculum coheres around five 'dimensions': values and ethics, international, environmental, race and ethnicity, and gender. The faculty-approved document on the curriculum emphasizes that these dimensions "so profoundly shape daily life and scholarship as to warrant systematic attention in a university environment."

"Today's students have to have this kind of preparation to be leaders and deal effectively with the world they will be entering," said Provost Gerry G. Meets.

"Teaching these new courses will revitalize the curriculum and energize the faculty."

"The things that may not have been a part of the curriculum before are the dimensions," said associate professor of communication Marsha Vanderford.

Vanderford developed a class, "Fundamentals of Human Communication," which is already being offered. The perspectives of women, African-Americans, Hispanics and others are part of the newer scholarship in that field, Vanderford said.

With the exception of some courses in quantitative methods, each course in the curriculum emphasizes at least one of the dimensions.

The new curriculum also emphasizes thinking skills: conceptual thinking, such as abstraction, planning and design; analytic thinking, including interpretation, practical application and problem solving; and creative skills that involve originality or imagination.

Each course will also stress written and oral communication skills.

The General Education Council will host roundtable discussions for faculty and chairs interested in talking about the new curriculum. These discussions will occur during the lunch hour on Jan. 26, Feb. 4 and 15 and March 9 and 29.

"We've been hearing a lot of questions about the new curriculum," said GEC Coordinator Carol Jablonski. "We're encouraging faculty across the disciplines to take part in these discussions, because the new curriculum is going to shape the way students think and how they respond in all their classes."

For more information about the liberal arts curriculum, call Jablonski at ext. 4-6822 or ext. 4-3571.