Good morning, members of the Board of Trustees, President Maidique, administration, faculty and staff of FIU. My name is Connie Freeland and I am here today on behalf of the over 1100 employees that are represented by the University Support Personnel Senate.

The USPS provides a formal structure of representation for all University Support employees, to act as a liaison between University Support personnel, faculty, students and the administration, to participate in the total governance of the University, to provide a forum to discuss matters of concern to all University staff, and to provide proper channels for explanation, or solution through the University Support Senate. Accomplishments of this body include the establishment of the "Sick Leave Pool Program", the "USPS Employee of the Year Award", the "USPS Employee Scholarship Fund" and the "FIU Annual Employee Picnic".

When we envision what FIU embodies, many thoughts come to mind. There is the FIU of the Board of Trustees, the FIU of the administration, the FIU of the faculty, the FIU of the students, and last, but not least, the FIU of the staff. We know who most of you are, but you may only know a handful of us, even though many have been here 20 years or more. Our staff consists of a very diverse group of individuals, such as… nurses, electricians, cashiers, telephone operators, computer technicians, accountants and clerical personnel; along with other positions that are part of the day-to-day functions of the University, all of whom keep the University operational on a daily basis. A group of loyal employees who give 100% of themselves everyday to accomplish whatever is asked of them.

We each have our specialized responsibilities, and depend on one another to keep FIU running. The USPS staff provides the continuity that allows each department to function efficiently. As the body is reliant upon the spine, the University cannot function without its USPS employees.

The Administration has offered to assist whenever possible, however, their efforts, although well intended, are limited, and more needs to be done. Like the administration and faculty, we too, have similar issues and concerns. We feel a need for recognition, for others to understand our needs, to participate in decision-making forums that affect our future, and to have a review of salary inequity. In preparation for today’s meeting, the USPS Steering Committee composed and distributed a survey to most of the USPS employees. We had a return of over 60%. Not surprisingly, we have learned that the most important issues to University employees are:
Connie Freeland  
Presentation to FIU Board of Trustees

1. Insurance benefits  
2. Equitable salary  
3. Morale  
4. Longevity benefits for 20+ year employees, and  
5. Retirement benefits  

These are the issues we ask the Board to take under serious consideration as it restructures benefits for our University.

Respect and recognition for all who contribute to the University are the basis of good human resources policy. Respect comes from an honest reflection of the nature of our various contributions to the University, and the proper recognition that validates the worth of each of its employees.

In closing, we thank the Administration for the decision to recognize qualified USPS employees to receive a one-time $1,000.00 bonus and we thank you, the Board of Trustees, for giving us the opportunity to voice our issues publicly. We are career employees, who have a vested interest in our University, and we have many great ideas and concepts to improve FIU. We are available to meet with you to further explore how we can work together to make FIU the best state university in the country.

Thank you.

USPS Employees please stand and be recognized.