



15 September 2026

Dear President Killingsworth, Provost Shelton, Dr. Harmon,
Dr. D. Dempsey, Chief Barton, and SGA President Stoots,

During Faculty and Staff Convocations, President Killingsworth announced his intention to recommend a 2% cost-of-living adjustment for all employees. United Campus Workers–Jax State (UCW-Jax State) and Friends of the Union (FOTU) Jax State appreciate this commitment to employee compensation, and we respectfully ask that the university consider making the COLA tiered and applicable to all university employees, including student workers, adjunct faculty, visiting instructors, and part-time workers. This request represents the collective voice of UCW and FOTU Jax State members, who identified compensation as their top priority and recently voted to put forward a more equitable approach to the proposed COLA.

We know that many Jax State hourly employees and student workers earn wages that make price increases in housing, groceries, utilities, and transportation especially difficult to absorb. A uniform percentage increase provides the largest dollar raises to the highest-paid employees whereas a tiered COLA would provide a larger percentage increase for employees at the lower end of the pay scale, demonstrating commitment and offering relief to our colleagues most in need. For example, a tiered COLA model might provide:

Salary Range	Model A	Model B	Model C
Student Workers <i>At \$8.25/hour</i>	10% <i>+\$0.83/hour</i>	7.5% <i>+\$0.62/hour</i>	5% <i>\$0.41/hour</i>
Under \$50,000 <i>At \$40,000/year</i>	4% <i>+\$1,600/year</i>	3.5% <i>+\$1,400/year</i>	3% <i>+\$1,200/year</i>
\$50,000–\$100,000 <i>At \$75,000/year</i>	2% <i>+\$1,500/year</i>	2% <i>+\$1,500/year</i>	2% <i>+\$1,500/year</i>
\$100,000+ <i>At \$125,000/year</i>	0.5% <i>+\$625/year</i>	0.75% <i>+\$938/year</i>	1% <i>+\$1,250/year</i>

These ranges are offered as illustrations. The specific tiers could be adjusted based on Jax State's payroll data so that the total cost remains comparable to the proposed 2% across-the-board adjustment.

There is recent precedent for this approach: the 2024 COLA was tiered, as were the 2024 and 2026 mid-year salary supplements. We believe a tiered approach to the 2026-2027 COLA would continue the more nuanced work on compensation pursued over the past few years through salary committees, consultants, and institutional planning, including attention to internal equity, compression, and the needs of lower-paid employees. We believe that including student workers in this COLA affirms Jax State's commitment to student success and would boost student retention.

We recognize that, following the dissolution of the Faculty Senate and Staff Council, faculty and staff input is now formally channeled through Dr. David Dempsey and Chief Barton, who are copied here. We respect their roles, along with SGA President Stoots, and appreciate their service in representing all Jax State employees.

With respect and shared commitment,
UCW-Jax State and Friends of the Union-Jax State