

Important Membership Meeting

MSP has been negotiating for a new contract since last spring. We are now at a key juncture and our Negotiating Committee wants to report to the membership about where we have and have not made sufficient progress. Please try to come:

Thursday, February 24 12 Noon Lunch Provided
Campus Center Room 165-69

FROM THE PRESIDENT

In addition to pushing for salary increases and our retroactive pay, this spring the MSP is working on two main issues: increasing the number of tenure-track faculty, and improving conditions for contract (non-tenure track) faculty. Some people see these two issues as opposed to each other; we see them as linked, supporting one another.

Our basic aim is to see to it that the university has an adequate number of top-quality faculty with the security, pay, and job conditions that enable them to do their work well. We and others are concerned that the university today has 350 fewer tenure-track faculty than it did in 1986 and 140 fewer than in 2001. Given that we have roughly the same number of students, it's obvious that something has to give. We want the university to commit to specific near-term actions to restore the number of tenure-track faculty, at least to what it was in 2001.

About half of the faculty decrease has been made up by hiring contract (or non-tenure track) faculty. UMass contract faculty are outstanding teachers, do substantial service, and are dedicated to their students. Our position is that contract faculty should be well paid, receive the job security that builds a commitment to the institution, and have opportunities for promotion. That is, to the maximum extent possible, their job conditions should approximate those for tenure track faculty. Doing so not only helps our contract faculty, but it reduces the administration's incentive to gradually replace tenure track faculty with contract faculty, since the cost and job security of the position is more comparable to that of a tenure track slot.

We are working to achieve these goals both through our contract bargaining and through other actions. If you'd like to be involved, or have questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact the MSP office (mSP@external.umass.edu or 545-2206).

Dan Clawson, MSP President

FEBRUARY 10: RIDE THE BUS TO RETROACTIVE PAY

Many of us are totally frustrated by the continuing delays in winning retroactive pay. If you are an average member who has been on the payroll since June 30, 2001, the state owes you a lump sum equal to more than 22 percent of your 2001 pay. For the average member that's about \$13,000.

It's infuriating that money that should have been paid in 2001 has still not been paid in 2005. It is a bad sign when state leaders say that this year, due to higher than expected tax revenues, the state has a "surplus" of \$700 million – and not make it the highest priority to pay the money they owe us. (Collectively, state workers are owed \$118 million.)

We won funding for the contracts in the fall of 2003 when many people had given up and thought we were fighting a lost cause. We won that funding by going to the State House to make our case to legislators, and by bombarding them with phone calls and emails. Then we stopped using activist methods and sat back, because we had a promise from legislative leaders, and we were told we could count on their public commitment.

Six months after the first installment of retro money was due, it is now obvious that legislative leaders' promises aren't enough. We are about to stop being patient and return to active reminders. **On Thursday February 10, ride the MSP bus to Boston and join union members from public colleges around the state in talking with key legislators.** Showing up in person is by far the most effective way to make our case, but *if you can't go to Boston PLEASE sign up to make phone calls and send emails to key legislators.* Your efforts could win you (and your colleagues) many thousands of dollars.

If you can participate, please contact the MSP office (msp@external.umass.edu or 545-2206). If you are in touch with retired members, please call them and urge them to participate. They will not only receive a lump sum payment if we succeed, but will also win a higher pension for the rest of their lives.

MEETING FOR CONTRACT (NON-TENURE TRACK) FACULTY

The MSP has been trying to secure improvements for contract faculty: longer contract lengths, some presumption of contract renewals, increased salary floors, promotional increments, parental leave, and other improvements.

At this meeting, our negotiators will report to you on progress so far, and to get your input on what our next steps should be. We expect this to be a lively and important discussion!

Please RSVP (msp@external.umass.edu or 545-2206) to reserve a LUNCH.

WHEN: Tuesday, February 8 12 Noon
WHERE: Campus Center Room 165-169

IF YOU ITEMIZE deductions on your tax return, here is how much you paid in union dues in 2004: Full time \$659.60 Half Time \$329.80

WHY WE NEED MORE TENURE TRACK FACULTY: DISTINGUISHED PANEL HEARS TESTIMONY

Massachusetts now spends more on prisons than on higher education. The UMass Amherst administration is planning on spending more on facility improvements than on new faculty. What is wrong with the priorities?

The MSP is challenging these priorities through our campaign to reverse the steep decline of tenure track faculty on campus. This was the number one issue in last year's contract survey and is one of the MSP's major campaigns this year. A major issue at the bargaining table, it was also the topic of a public hearing on December 1. The distinguished panel taking testimony consisted of State Representative **Ellen Story**, Student Government Association President **Eduardo Bustamante**, and Professor **Michael Denning**, the William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of American Studies at Yale University.

Students and faculty spoke eloquently about the impact the decline has had on academics on campus: the difficulty students have getting recommendations, the over-filled classes, the demoralization,

the need to take classes elsewhere, the over-reliance on lectures, less time for research, the inability of departments to offer all the courses they should, the decrease in personal interactions between students and prominent faculty. Many other faculty, staff, and students who could not speak submitted written testimony. [If you have a story to tell, please send it to mSP@external.umass.edu]

The media picked up on the significance of the slide in tenure track faculty, with articles in the Boston Globe and most of the local newspapers, and reports on various radio stations.

The panel will be issuing its findings in a report this semester, which we expect will again put this issue in the spotlight.

In bargaining, the administration has so far been unwilling to seriously address the union's concerns. The MSP has made it clear that, if necessary, we will take the issue into the public arena. It is that important to the University and the Commonwealth.

Ratio of FTE Students to tenure-track faculty:
2000-2001: 20.4 2003-2004: 23.4



--- Faculty-Librarian Lunch 12/8/04 ---



--- The Membership in Action ---

MSP IS HERE FOR YOU EVERY DAY

One of the most important things your union provides you with is assistance with employment-related problems. When you call the MSP office, you'll probably speak with Lori Reardon, MSP's staff member most involved with this kind of work. Everything you say will be kept confidential, and the MSP will not go forward with any action on your behalf unless you want us to.

Sometimes your problem can be solved with quick advice over the telephone; other times we may want you to come by the office for a face-to-face meeting. You will most likely meet with our Member Services Team which consists of Lori, Beth Boyer (our MTA consultant) and Jenny Spencer (MSP officer and grievance chair). MSP files very few formal grievances, but we resolve lots of issues informally, often through our regular meetings with Susan Pearson, Associate Provost for Faculty Relations.

We have assisted unit members with a variety of problems over the years. These have included issues surrounding pay and benefits, job security, workload, tenure and promotion, non-reappointment, intellectual property, office space, etc. We've also represented unit members in sexual harassment cases (both the accused and those who were harassed) and discrimination cases. To give you an idea of how we would approach a particular issue, consider the following scenarios:

Suppose you thought your pay was significantly lower than that of your colleagues with comparable records and years of experience. We would invite you in to take a look at salary printouts with us, talk about the situation, and discuss what could be done through the salary anomaly process.

Or suppose you were going through a mini-tenure (4.2) review and you weren't quite sure what to make of your department or dean's level evaluation. We would take a look at the letter, use our experience to assess the evaluation, and brainstorm with you about how best to position yourself for tenure.

Finally, imagine you are a lecturer on a 3-year appointment and you receive notification in the middle of the fall semester of year 3 that you will not be reappointed for the following academic year. You call your union and learn that the administration is legally obligated to give you notice of non-reappointment no later than August 15th prior to the last year of your current appointment. In this case, you would have grounds to file a grievance. The likely outcome would be that you would receive an additional year's employment due to the administrative error.

Even if your situation is not something MSP can directly help you with, we will offer assistance and advice whenever possible. So if you have a problem related to your employment, you should contact MSP promptly. After all, that's why we are here.

MEETING WITH THE CHANCELLOR

MSP leaders meet with Chancellor Lombardi and Provost Seymour about once a month; we occasionally meet with President Wilson. According to the ground rules for these meetings, they can't duplicate contract bargaining discussions. We also don't discuss individual members' problems. But we do share information about a wide range of issues, with each side both giving and receiving information. For example, in recent months we've discussed the likelihood of winning retroactive pay, projections for faculty hiring in the coming year, and how to make the public more aware of the university's many accomplishments.

WHO'S TAKING CARE OF THE KIDS?

For the past five years, University Child Care (UCC) has been under attack. For several decades, faculty with babies and young children have been able to get started in their careers with the help of UCC. UCC has won national recognition for UMass as a model of excellence in early childhood education and care. Now the administration is saying that administering such a good program is too expensive. The center has been seriously downsized and threatened with elimination.

Faculty and librarians with small children face formidable obstacles to obtaining child care:

- The sliding scale has increased drastically. For most faculty, full-time child care costs \$298/week or **\$15,496 per year**.
- UCC has long waiting lists. Currently there is one toddler classroom, and **68 toddlers are on the waiting list for 9 slots**.
- Faculty do not have designated slots available – only **7 of 49 children** served at UCC's full-day programs are faculty children.
- **No care** is available at UCC until children are 15 months old.

The MSP has been working with the other campus unions to formulate and present joint proposals around family issues. In bargaining, we have proposed a Family Issues Committee, including members of the administration as well as the unions, to research employees' needs for child care, as well as elder care and other family-friendly policies.

The MSP also has proposed contract language to guarantee that UCC can continue to provide excellent, affordable, and accessible child care. Child care is crucial for young faculty who are attempting to teach, do research, write grants, and launch their careers – and it is also essential for recruiting and retaining new faculty with small children. The availability of child care most heavily impacts women, and universities that want to increase the numbers of tenure track women must take seriously their obligation to help provide early education and care for the kids.

For more information, or to help work on child care issues, please contact Eve Weinbaum at weinbaum@lrrc.umass.edu.

AND HOW ABOUT THE CARS?

The University has notified the unions that it intends to raise parking rates on campus by an average of 12.5% starting next July. As in the past, the increases would be on a sliding scale: rates for higher paid employees would increase by a larger percentage; lower paid employees would see their rates increase by a lower percentage. The highest paid faculty member parking in the most expensive (red) lots would pay about \$60 more next year under the administration's plan. In 1999, the University and the campus unions, including the MSP, agreed that there should be a sliding scale and that parking fee increases would be limited by the percentages the unions received in salary increases. Therefore, there have been no parking fee increases since 2002-03 (those were based on salary increases in 2000-01).

The Campus Labor Coalition is asking the University for financial data and will be meeting with the administration to explore alternative ways of increasing revenue for Parking Services. The MSP will keep you posted as we get more information.

HEALTH INSURANCE

A year and a half ago, the state passed a law raising the employee share of health insurance premiums from 15% to 20% for those earning \$35,000 per year or more (25% for new employees). That law states that the increase “sunsets” on July 1, 2005 so that theoretically our share should revert to 15%. However, Governor Romney is proposing that state workers’ share increase again to 25%, which is effectively a \$500 pay cut. There is no question we will need to bring pressure to bear on the Legislature. We’ll kick off a campaign about this on March 3 at 12 Noon with an all-union Health Care Forum in Campus Center Room 162-75.

FREE SPEECH AND THE PICKETING CODE

Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Michael Gargano unilaterally changed the campus Picketing Code to include a statement that “Any demonstration within a campus building is inherently disruptive.” Students who violate the picketing code are subject to discipline up to and including expulsion from the University. The MSP believes this change is unconstitutional and is signing on to an effort, and potential lawsuit, by the ACLU to challenge it.

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS COMMISSION

The MSP Constitution calls for a Nominations and Elections Commission to be elected each fall at a general membership meeting. The charge of this commission is to solicit nominations for MSP officers and board members in preparation for annual elections in the spring. Commissioners also seek representatives from MSP to attend the Mass. Teachers Association (our state affiliate) Annual Meeting of Delegates held each May in Boston, this year on May 13-14. Commission members elected this year at our December 8th luncheon were **Arlene Avakian** (Women’s Studies), **Dan Clawson** (Sociology), **Kourosh Danai** (Mechanical and Industrial Engineering), **David Lenson** (Comparative Literature) and **Joya Misra** (Sociology). If you are a member in good standing and are interested in either running for an MSP Board seat or attending this year’s MTA Annual Meeting, please let one of the commissioners know.