

Main Identity

From: "MSP" <msp@external.umass.edu>
To: <allunit@external.umass.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2007 10:33 AM
Subject: [Allunit] Report from MSP Contract Negotiations

Dear Members,

Your bargaining team has met twice with the administration since I last wrote to you, and I wanted to tell you what has taken place.

The MSP/FSU team has presented all of our proposals once, and we are now going back over each one in greater detail. The team has really done outstanding work in making strong cases for each of our proposals. For example, Randy Phillis (Biology) researched how our tuition remission benefit has declined in value dramatically over the past decade and how much better our peer institutions do for their faculty. Sharon Domier (East Asian Studies Librarian) did remarkable research on early/phased retirement plans at institutions across the country and suggested ways it could work at UMass, to the benefit of our members and the administration alike. We have also made strong cases for full year sabbatical at 3/4 pay, getting new hires covered by health insurance by the time they begin teaching at UMass, and the need for a much better professional development benefit.

That's the good news. The bad news is that the administration has been immediately resistant to any proposal that costs even a dollar. (They are even resistant to the full-year sabbatical at 3/4 pay, even though we have the data to show that in many cases it would save the university money, not to mention enhance faculty productivity). The team is not, however, alarmed as this is the typical stance of the administration at the start of bargaining. They are also, reasonably, reluctant to discuss some economic items -- like salary increases -- until they have received parameters for bargaining from the Governor's Office of Administration and Finance. It is Governor Patrick who must forward the financial elements of our contracts to the legislature; he therefore sets the bargaining parameters.

The administration has made some proposals as well. Some are not dramatic, but some are quite disturbing. For example, the administration is proposing that any courses they pay faculty to develop for online use will become the property of the university. This means that you would lose your intellectual property rights to the course content and it would become part of the university's online library, to be taught by anyone at any time. This, and other proposals, deserve serious discussion.

You can see our proposals, as well as the administration's proposals at the MSP website: www.umass.edu/msp

I encourage you to write to me or the msp office (msp@external.umass.edu) to let us know your thoughts on the proposals.

We will be bargaining virtually every Friday until we have an agreement and I intend to keep you informed about OUR progress. No doubt, MSP will also need to call on you to help us gain important benefits, and to protect rights we already have.

Max Page, MSP President and member of the Negotiating Committee

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