Anneta Argyres  
**president**

*My Dream for PSU is for all of us—PSU, USA, CSU, GEO—to work together to build the best public higher-education institution and the best public higher-education employer that we can imagine.*

*My First Goal is to strengthen and deepen the connections among our leaders in our two chapters and continue to involve more members in our efforts.*

*What would you like members to know about you?* I believe very deeply that working people are powerful when we stand together—I believe it, I’ve seen it, and I will always want us to organize for it.

*What do you do in your free time?* I love to escape into my garden or into a good book, hang out with family and friends, play indoor soccer (as in our kitchen) with my family, and fix things in our house (like the windows we break by playing soccer indoors).

Sarah Bartlett  
**vice president**

*My Dream for PSU is that we continue to deepen activism among our members to protect and strengthen our contract and our rights; and that we build alliances with others to defend and strengthen public education and workers’ rights.*

*My First Goal is to work with leaders from the membership to find new ways to build on outreach and communication.*

*What would you like members to know about you?* I work hard and try to play well with others. I am very committed to public education and to unionism. I am constantly awed by the commitment, dedication, and talent of the people I work with.

*What do you do in your free time?* I enjoy wandering around the city on foot, practicing for my next career as a pastry chef, and, though somewhat ashamed to admit it, enjoy a good football game from time to time.

Tom Goodkind  
**grievance secretary**

*My Dream for PSU is that we would help create a single union to represent all UMass employees, one which would build strong ties with the diverse communities we serve and help lead a fight against those who would privatize the common good.*

*What would you like members to know about you?* I will use whatever tools the union has to help you; I am a believer in collective action and democratic unionism; I’ve been here for 33 years, work as a research machinist for the sciences, and know where the bodies are buried.

*What do you do in your free time?* I like to play drums, walk our dog, hike in the woods, banter with our grown kids, read, and worry.

James Allen  
**treasurer**

*My Dream for PSU is to survive the next 25 years—benefiting workers in spite of the politics in the present executive branch of our government.*

*My First Goal is to respond to the Janus ruling. I don’t know how—but to learn from others.*

*What would you like members to know about you?* I believe in climate change, sustainability, conservation of water and other resources—and the importance of farming.

*What do you do in your free time?* I enjoy the outdoors but spend too much time indoors playing games on the internet.

Peter Tattlebaum  
**recording secretary**

*My Dream for PSU is to raise awareness about our work so membership meeting pizza lunches are towards the bottom of the “Reasons Why I Love the PSU” lists; and infusing our members with the knowledge that their continued input and activism will strengthen PSU.*

*My First Goal is to engage and inform our members about current events and benefits.*

*What would you like members to know about you?* I am open to suggestions and believe there may be more than one way to resolve an issue. I also believe that for every four cookies you eat, an apple completely balances that from a nutritional standpoint.

*What do you do in your free time?* I am not a mason, carpenter, or pool cleaner but play one at home.

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**Talk Back**

Questions, opinions, letters to the editor:

psu@external.umass.edu

Find us on Facebook:

facebook.com/psumta

and on the web:

umass.edu/psumta

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Boston officers were elected June 12 and began their duties July 1.
PSU: The Way You Make Me Feel

By Dan LaBonte, PSU member

This must happen to every driver who listens to their car radio: they fumble through the stations, which all seem to be playing commercials, and then miraculously uncover a throwback song that instantly calls for them to crank the volume. For me, it’s Michael Jackson. *Beat It, Smooth Criminal, Man in the Mirror, Billie Jean,* and more—songs that are iconic and nostalgic. I have a relationship with them. I have some story attached that evokes a palpable emotion and that compels me to turn up the radio to sing loudly and off-key!

Car karaoke aside, emotional connections are what drive us—they are the authors of our personal stories. In becoming more engaged with PSU, I realized there are so many members whose stories not only underscore their genuine emotional connection to PSU, but also highlight numerous reasons for making the union a central part of their UMass experience.

Take for instance Erin Joy Seibert, interim rape crisis advocate at the UMass Amherst Center for Women & Community, and new PSU member. Seibert shares that they are motivated by the work of PSU’s CORE (Committee on Racial Equity), mainly through its connection to the PSU social justice mission. Likewise, Erika Dawson-Head, also a new PSU member and codirector of diversity at the UMass Amherst College of Information and Computer Sciences, appreciates PSU’s commitment to diversity and inclusion. She was amazed to learn about the PSU CORE book group, whose participants were reading a book centered on the challenging topics of race and racism, commenting, “That fearlessness is what I’ve been seeing with the union. They are fearless, willing to take a chance, and willing to learn.”

Others connect to PSU’s values as they intersect with student-centered missions. New PSU member Kori Lantas at UMass Boston’s University Advising Center notes that in times of transition and change, the unions simplify university communications and share clear information. “I work with students every day and know what our students need. The PSU organization has been responsive to those needs,” she explains. Kori aspires to get more involved in PSU, and potentially assume a leadership role to support the focus on improving public education. Fermin Valle, academic advisor at UMass Amherst’s Commonwealth Honors College and new to PSU, notes, “The wave of teacher strikes demonstrated that we need to rethink our need for a collective voice.” Fermin affirms that the union is a space that “celebrates the diversity of every voice in our community,” and asks, “How do we preserve the heart and soul of the union to ensure that our union members’ voices are heard?”

The answer to Fermin’s question lies within each of us. It is our responsibility to find how we connect to our union’s vision and mission. It is our responsibility to engage with our union, with our community, and with each other. “Together,” as Fermin suggests, “our collective voices shape the direction and organizing power of the union.” We mustn’t settle on a “union working for me” mentality; rather we must each embrace an “I am the union” mentality. So, whatever it is that drives you about our union—an alignment with your values, equitable employee benefits, or a sense of pride and community—let’s collectively write our union’s story, let’s commit to turning up the volume and singing out loud for PSU!

Reforming Dues for the MTA

A task force will be studying the structure of dues, specifically moving from the present structure to a more equitable one. At present, a full-time union member earning $35,000 annually pays the same dues as a member earning $125,000. Under a resolution adopted at the Massachusetts Teachers Association (PSU’s parent union) annual meeting in May, a task force will be created to investigate a more progressive dues structure. This change will affect MTA dues, not local dues.

A report is expected at the 2019 MTA annual meeting. David Gross, a Massachusetts Society of Professors member at UMass Amherst, proposed the study, with Annetta Argyres, PSU Boston president, helping with writing the resolution. “Our dues structure is so highly regressive that it’s disgraceful,” says Gross. Argyres notes that pay scales in higher education greatly vary from support staff to administrators. “This means that a flat dues structure is simply not fair,” she says.

If you want to get more involved with PSU contact:

Amherst
Ferd Wulkan ............ferdwulkan@gmail.com

Boston
Mary Jo Connelly........maryjoconnellypsu@gmail.com
YOUR UNION AT WORK: Addressing Problems

By Ford Wulkan, PSU Staff

Unfair performance evaluation? Unreasonable workload? Hostile work environment? One of the most important reasons to have a union is to collectively address workplace problems. A large portion of union dues goes toward negotiating and enforcing the contract, training members to identify problems, advocating for improved contract language and laws, and building the union’s power so that problems are quickly identified, addressed, solved, and prevented from recurring.

Just because something is not a contract violation doesn’t mean we ignore the problem.

Most of us hope we will never need to turn to the union for help, but the reality is that many of us will at some point in our career. So here is a quick overview of the three main ways PSU can help address problems.

Informal

Sometimes all it takes is a conversation or series of conversations. These could take place with a supervisor (with or without a union representative present) or with someone from human resources in which case a union official will be involved. It is best to consult with a union representative even if a representative won’t be present for the informal conversation.

Legal

Sometimes your union representative will suggest that you file a grievance alleging a contract violation, a bullying complaint, or a discrimination claim. In certain situations, PSU may file an unfair labor practice charge if we believe the state’s collective bargaining law has been violated. Many formal cases involve the Salary Administration Program (SAP). These include position classification and equity reviews, fighting for compensation for interim appointments or additional duties, and carrying forward appeals.

Organizing

Some situations, especially ones involving multiple people, lend themselves to public campaigns, pressure tactics, or mass actions. While each situation is unique, PSU has developed a variety of creative and effective strategies.

These three approaches are not mutually exclusive. For example, sometimes we make a point of asking many people to sign onto a grievance, or we begin informally and escalate to an action campaign if there is no informal resolution.

Each of these approaches has its pros and cons, and a trained union representative will be able to advise members on the best course of action. Members always make the final decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADVANTAGES</th>
<th>DISADVANTAGES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>Most collegial; least stressful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>Outcome is legally binding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizing</td>
<td>Increases member activism and usually builds union’s power</td>
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For more information or to consult a union grievance officer, contact:

Amherst
Bob McDowell ............robert.mcdowell@umass.edu

Boston
Tom Goodkind ............tom.goodkind@umb.edu

Progressives Rise in MTA

Educators for a Democratic Union (EDU), a progressive caucus within the Massachusetts Teachers Association, the PSU parent union, is recruiting new members to help organize to improve education and their workplaces and communities.

The caucus represents members from the elementary level through higher education. The heart of EDU is pushing locals and the MTA as a whole to take strong stands and bold action for public education and to bring social justice to communities and the commonwealth.

For more information: EducatorsforaDemocraticUnion.org or email educatorsforademocraticunion@gmail.com
BOSTON PARKING: The Battle Against Suffocating Fees for Staff and Students

By Peter Tattlebaum, Boston recording secretary

The past few months at UMass Boston have been unsettling and challenging, and the end of this fight is nowhere near the rearview mirror. Faculty, staff, and students have received multiple emails about forthcoming parking rate increases despite PSU still bargaining over them. Even after receiving testimony from employees and students about how devastating the elimination of existing parking options and higher rates will be, the administration remains tone deaf.

The crux of the problem is that shoddy construction of the parking garage has required building a new one. And the UMass Boston administration wants to force employees—who didn’t cause nor are responsible for the need for a new garage—to pay this legacy debt. Under management’s plan, parking fees will increase between 102 and 170 percent.

Affordable parking is essential for students and workers alike on a commuter campus. Instead of recognizing this, Boston administrators only view parkers as a source of revenue.

In the past, there have been discounted multi-use passes, used by a majority of our members, for those who do not drive to campus at least 20 days a month. Now, this intransigent administration insists on eliminating this basic benefit with dramatic impact. The increased costs would mean that PSU members who drive would in effect lose their raises and even take pay cuts.

In order to cover the costs of operating and maintaining parking areas, and in order to make the parking fees more equitable, the PSU and the Classified Staff Union bargaining teams have agreed to accept some increases in conjunction with adopting:

- a sliding scale based on income and convenience (modeled on the UMass Amherst scale)
- multiple parking pass options to ensure that employees and students who drive to campus fewer than five days a week get discounted parking rates
- a labor/management committee to oversee the parking system and fee increases.

Check the PSU website for updates: umass.edu/psumta/