2004 USA Annual Meeting – Officers Reports

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Donna Johnson
President

USA members,

This past year has been one that has been both frustrating and rewarding. We have had many issues to deal with and unfortunately we are not going to see many positive changes this year. As long as we have a Governor unfriendly towards public employees (and certainly public higher education) we will have many hurdles to jump. It is becoming more apparent everyday that the Republicans are going to fight to take over the House and the Senate… and we must not let that happen! Those legislators that helped us get our contracts funded may now need our help to keep their positions. We must make sure we are all registered to vote, help them with phone banks, mailings or holding signs in their districts, but most importantly we have to get out there and vote. We have a voice, and our vote is the way we can send a message to the Governor, and also to show the legislators that if they continue to do the right thing, then we will be there to support them!

We have seen layoffs and bumps on this campus during this past year, which were unprecedented. All tolled, we assisted fifty-nine (59) people to retire early, bump, or find a new position. Most people tried to bump into unfilled positions on campus and others had to bump least senior members, but in the end we helped over 95% of them to a satisfactory solution.

We achieved a victory in the Controller's office by insisting that long-standing temp workers be removed and as a result, three of our laid off members have filled those positions. We have a long way to go with the 03 positions on this campus but we will need everyone's help to achieve this. Please let your steward or the union office know when a temp is working in your department, whether they are retired and have come back or they come from an agency. We must insist that these positions be filled with permanent employees as soon as possible, so that you and your co-workers are not forced to assume responsibilities from those other positions, which ultimately leads to a merging of two positions into one. Remember the more work you do in your seven and half (7 ½) hour day (beyond what is outlined in your form 30) the less likely they are to fill vacated positions. You cannot and should not be expected to do the work of more than one person, but if you do, then they will NEVER feel the need to hire more staff.

Our contracts have been funded and I for one am proud of the work that we all did to make this happen. Working together with the other unions on this campus, as well as from across the state, has truly proved that “united we stand and divided we fall”. We DID it! But we didn't do it alone.
I have never been prouder to be your President than I am right now. The USA has come a long way, and we need to keep working together as an association and with the other unions both on campus and across the state to insure that the retro money we were promised becomes a reality. But not only do we stand together for the retroactivity, but also we must remain unified for all of the upcoming issues we face. The Governor wants to take away our collective bargaining rights, chipping away at them a little at a time. This year it is just cause, our step increases, seniority, and other rights …next year, who knows? He is threatening our pensions and our health insurance. He wants to run this state like it is a corporation and we must all band together to remind him that he is dealing with people who have integrity and collective power!

We have a lot of work ahead of us in the next couple of years and I hope that you will take the time to join us in whatever capacity you can, to make our voices heard. And to make sure that the rights that many before us fought and died for will not be taken away. What's next: 7 day workweeks, no overtime, no UNION…think about it, the job they come for next may be yours or mine! I look forward to working beside each and every one of you to make sure this does not happen.

In closing, I would like to say that I have been honored to work with all of you and I look forward to our continued alliance against those forces that wish to strip us of our basic rights. The University Staff Association members are the heart and soul of this institution. We must never forget that without the students we would not be here, but without the USA members this University would never survive.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Johnson
President USA
VICE PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Linda Hillenbrand
Vice President

I’d say that USA had a pretty good year since our last annual meeting. Our contracts are funded and many said it couldn’t happen. Even months before legislators were telling us it wasn’t on the radar screen of other legislators. But we didn’t give up. And we still can’t give up. We have more fighting ahead of us to get our retro and to negotiate our new contract. Our Governor would like to take away many of the rights we have bargained and fought for over the years. It’s very important we work together to maintain those rights.

Over the past year, as Vice President, I’ve had the opportunity to work more closely with Donna Johnson.

The newsgram has returned after a long hiatus. It’s an important part of USA and it’s fun putting it together.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Barbara McGlynn
Treasurer

USA¹s FY04¹s proposed budget for operating expenses was $37,050., down $8,887 from FY03. In September, the final number of dues payers who had taken early retirement and/or were laid off became available. The Executive Board voted to reduce the original budget by $6,893 to reflect this loss. The budget is now $30,157.

We have reallocated several line items in order to reflect the Newsgram printing costs, a step increase for the Office Manager, an increase in hotel costs for the USA delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting and a decrease in the number of delegates to the NEA/RA.

We are within budget at this time and I expect we will come out in the black at the end of the fiscal year.

TREASURER¹S NOTE: Please take note that none of the officers of the USA Executive Board, including the President, receive any financial compensation for their service to the membership. Their service is strictly voluntary. The entire budget goes solely to the operating costs of the USA office and the organization.

Respectfully Submitted,
Barbara McGlynn
Treasurer
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY’S REPORT

Jim Kierstead  
Membership Secretary

The main part of the Membership Secretary’s duties are to enroll new bargaining unit employees into USA, MTA and NEA, to keep membership and dues payment records, and maintain the mailing list.

The process has changed very little since last year. We have about 50-60 fewer members than last year, mainly to layoffs and early retirements. The approximate size of the bargaining unit is 925; about 800 are members and 125 pay agency fee.

I am also the Reallocation Officer, which conveniently comes under the purview of the Membership Secretary and the Membership Committee. While we have more people taking on additional duties because of the layoffs and retirements, I have seen some reallocations going through without USA’s assistance; I attribute this to departments’ awareness of the reallocation process and pursuing management-based appeals. However, not all departments are so enlightened. If you believe you are working out of title, please contact me to see if a reallocation is warranted.

MEMBER-AT-LARGE REPORTS

Agnes Ting  
Member-at-Large

This has been my first year on the Board as a Member at Large, not only has it been a learning process but it has also been a challenge. Reflecting back this past year, it has been a year filled with many accomplishments. Under the strong leadership of the USA President, many dedicated stewards, and the solidarity of other members we have overcome many crisis, such as the massive layoffs across campus, budget cuts, and the early retirement issue. The union as an organization has assisted its members in these situations by providing input, support, and successfully resolving these concerns. The most rewarding victory was the battle to win back our contract funding.

USA consistently works for our members by standing up for their rights. I am looking forward to serving our members again next year. Working collaboratively as a team to fight for what we deserve.
Jim Plaza  
Member-at-Large

This past year has been extremely busy for me as a member of the University Staff Association Executive Board, as I am sure it has been for many USA members. Staffing reductions in many departments (fortunately mine was spared) exacerbated the long wait for our contracts to be funded by the Legislature. Successful funding was achieved only through numerous actions including; campus rallies, a public relations campaign, and lobbying visits to the state house by hundreds of higher education employees. This was a major accomplishment due in large part to the Massachusetts Teachers Association and the other members of the Higher Education Unions United coalition (HEUU).

During the year I attended monthly meetings of the HEUU, along with USA president, Donna Johnson. I also held the position of Member at Large on USA’s Executive Board with the responsibility of board liaison to the stewards’ council. Our Association stewards perform many duties such as representing members for grievances, and providing communication on local and state association activities. They are the direct link to the Association for the member, and if you, as a member of USA are not familiar with your district steward, then please contact the USA office (545-0165) to find out who she/he is. There are now sixteen (16) districts covering the Amherst campus and extension offices off-campus.

May USA together with our colleagues at the other higher education institutions be successful in obtaining economic and social justice in next fiscal year.

Best Regards,

Jim Plaza
USA/Member at Large

Sylvia Snape  
Member-at-Large

Annual Report—Sylvia Snape, Member-at-large, Board of Directors

Committees:
Communications, Newsgram
The Newsgram has been revitalized beginning in February. Linda Hillenbrand produces the Newsgram monthly, while Andy Steinberg, Dave Korowski, and I provide reports and editing. We meet monthly to plan and divide the tasks. We invite member feed-back and contribution of information.

Membership:
New Member Drive
Two receptions were planned for agency fee payers, inviting them to join the union. Refreshments were provided, the cost of which was shared by MTA. At the time of this report...
the second meeting had not yet happened, but I will provide the number of new members gained through this process at the annual meeting.

**Activities:**
In October, with a group of 3 other UMASS people, I lobbied 6 representatives’ and senators’ offices at the Statehouse in Boston, as part of the campaign to get back our contract funding. There were about 300 Higher-Ed activists involved in that lobbying effort, and we were very successful in gaining the attention of the legislators. As you know, the funding went through and we now see the raises in our paychecks. I pledge to do everything I can to keep the legislature on track with their promise to fund the retroactive money that is owed to us, over the next two legislative sessions, FY ’05 and FY ’06, along with getting the retro for retired people who were employed between July ’01 and December ‘03.

I attended National Education Association (NEA) Northeast Conference in Mystic, CT, January ’04. While there, I attended three workshops and assisted at the campaign booth for Rosemary Riley’s candidacy for Executive Director of NEA. One workshop was about legislative actions coming up, and another provided ideas for how to stay organized as a leader, and how to involve members in the local.

I attended NEA Education Support Professional (ESP) Pre-conference Emerging Leaders Workshop and NEA ESP Conference in Charlotte, NC, March ’04. There were over 80 emerging leaders in this workshop, and we all participated in several sessions geared toward understanding leadership, assertiveness training, public address, parliamentary procedure, and running a campaign for office.

As part of a 3-member team, I presented a workshop called “Building Stronger ESP Locals in Higher Education and K-12.” Each member of the team shared success stories from our locals that provided models for other locals to use in building their local. I told about Umass’ loss of contract funding and how we got it back, as well as inviting agency fee members to join the union, and inviting members to attend district meetings and respond to a survey prior to bargaining. The workshop was attended by 18 people from all over the U.S. and we were given favorable evaluations.

Statewide, I ran unopposed for office on the MTA board of directors, representing region 48H, and therefore will be elected on a waiver. My duties will begin in July ’04 and last until June, ’07. I appreciate the signatures given on my candidacy petition. It really couldn’t have happened without individual members’ help.