

# MSP Chronicle

The Massachusetts Society of Professors | Representing Faculty & Librarians on the UMass/Amherst Campus



## Working Together

By Eve Weinbaum, MSP President

Welcome back to fall in Amherst! Even after many years of teaching, this time of year still feels ripe with possibilities, hope, and new beginnings. Here's to a joyful and engaging year ahead.

I was honored to begin my term as president of the MSP in July. Thanks to our outgoing President, Randy Phillis; a dedicated group of officers; a terrific MSP executive board; outstanding MSP and MTA staff; and a great group of campus activists; our union is strong. We have an ambitious agenda that includes issues that faculty and librarians hold dear. We have partners on campus and around the state who are working with us to advocate for public higher education. We have bold plans to improve the student experience, and to support teaching and research initiatives at UMass. All we need is you.

This fall, the MSP will enter into negotiations for a successor collective bargaining agreement. Our current contract expires at the end of June, 2017. We have agreed with the administration that it is in our best interest to negotiate early so that the financial parameters can be included in the governor's budget proposal that goes to the legislature in December. If we succeed in an expedited bargaining process, we hope that any increases will be part of the regular budget process, rather than a supplemental budget process that would require many months of lobbying efforts to obtain funds already agreed upon. We hope the negotiation process goes smoothly this year and produces better results for a new collective bargaining agreement.



As we prepare for negotiations, we want to hear from you. What issues matter most to you? What provisions could you imagine in a new contract that would make your work easier or more productive? How would you like to be able to support your students, and what would enable you to be a better teacher or advisor?

Among other concerns, we will negotiate on certain longstanding issues, including: workload; professional development for non-tenure-track faculty; the anomaly process; Continuing and Professional Education; and, research faculty support. Because

we are hoping to expedite the bargaining process this year, we will necessarily have to trim our list of demands and prioritize only the issues that matter most to our members. Please share your ideas and help us craft the strongest possible set of proposals.

Of course, some of the goals we want to accomplish will not be resolved at the bargaining table. If you're like most faculty and librarians, you're probably working harder than ever and feeling increasingly overwhelmed with a wide range of demands. UMass Amherst is understaffed – we do not have enough tenure-system faculty, librarians, or staff members to do the work of the University, especially as student numbers have risen. These issues are best resolved through collective action. By advocating for more resources across campus, and for public higher education in general, we create the educational environment all students deserve. Increasing access, diversity, and excellence are goals that benefit our students, ourselves, and the greater community that we serve. I am looking forward to working with you to achieve these goals.

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## SAVE

■ THE ■

## DATE

Election Day No  
On 2 Phone Bank  
Suffolk Room  
Student Union  
November 8th  
9 AM - 8 PM

Election Day  
November 8th  
VOTE NO  
on Question 2

General Assembly  
Cape Cod Lounge  
December 8th  
12 - 2 PM

# Heart and Soul of the MSP

## By Randy Phillis

It was my privilege to work with Lori Reardon for the seven years I served as President of the Massachusetts Society of Professors. This summer, Lori celebrated 30 years with the MSP. I ask members to express their gratitude and appreciation to her for her dedication. Lori is an incredibly committed member of the MSP staff. She has worked tirelessly over the years on behalf of UMass faculty and librarians. She is invariably cheerful and always eager to help, even as she assists people with some of the most challenging events in their careers. Her knowledge of the contractual protections available to members, and thoughtful guidance about how to work through issues, questions or concerns is beyond impressive. Through three decades of service with the MSP, Lori has worked with countless presidents, officers, board members, staff, activists and members. She has been instrumental in contract negotiations, as well as in the drafting and editing of contract language. She has worked on MSP's behalf with a large and varied array of administrators at UMass. And in those efforts, she always maintained her smiling face and rigid spine. Again, I encourage MSP members to send Lori your good wishes and express your appreciation for what she has done for us all. We are extremely lucky to have such a smart, dedicated individual working so hard on our behalf. ■

## Working Together

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I also hope to strengthen the MSP's system of representation among faculty and librarians. In most departments on campus MSP representatives are actively involved. In these cases, representatives keep the department apprised of the union's efforts and inform the MSP about issues that emerge at the department-level. However, the union cannot do as good a job responding to the problems that arise in departments that are not well represented. The union only works if members are involved. Please let us know if you are willing to serve as a representative, join a bargaining issue committee, or if you would like to join the MSP board. We always have positions opening up, and we would love to welcome a new and diverse group of faculty and librarians to join us.

UMass Amherst is fortunate to have such brilliant and accomplished scholars and teachers, expert librarians and advisors, committed and knowledgeable staff, and engaged students. The MSP is deeply committed to preserving what makes the University great. We must ensure that faculty governance and transparency in decision-making is an administrative priority. We demand access and diversity in public higher education. We fight for the resources we need to do our work. And in doing these things and more, we make sure that UMass is the destination of choice for all of us who learn and work here. I look forward to working with you. ■

## Attention All PC Members

### By Lori Reardon

Recently, MSP hosted a set of workshops for Personnel Committee chairs and members. Over 40 people attended the lively sessions. To see materials that were distributed, please visit: [umassmsp.org/msp\\_workshops](http://umassmsp.org/msp_workshops).

In addition to routine topics we tend to cover at these workshops, MSP touched upon some major shifts we've seen in contract language recently, which will have an impact on the work PCs do.

They include:

- 1) A requirement that all academic departments establish BYLAWS by a majority vote of departmental faculty. Last spring, the MSP and the administration held joint workshops to assist departments with this task. We are currently reviewing many sets of bylaws that have been sent to us to ensure compliance with the law, the collective bargaining agreement, and University policy. If your department has not sent the MSP its bylaws, please do so at your earliest convenience. You may visit our website at: [umassmsp.org/msp\\_workshops](http://umassmsp.org/msp_workshops) for helpful resources related to developing bylaws.
- 2) An agreement between the MSP and the administration that joint deliberations by the DPC and the chair/head undercut the independence of each in personnel actions such as promotion, tenure and sabbatical recommendations. The collective bargaining agreement and the Redbook call for two independent steps at the department level, so it's vital that the DPC and chair/head do not attempt to impose their viewpoints on one another. Recommendations must be formulated independently. If you are interested please see the statement concerning personnel committee autonomy document posted on our website: [umassmsp.org/msp\\_workshops](http://umassmsp.org/msp_workshops).
- 3) Two new provisions concerning MERIT in the MSP contract:  
  
First, decisions made by PCs with regard to Pool A awards are to be considered final. This means that they cannot be changed by the administration, except under exceptional circumstances that must first be explained in writing to the PC and the union.  
  
Second, there is a requirement that no later than October 1<sup>st</sup> each year, the PC in each department must disseminate to its faculty/librarian members the principles upon which merit awards will be decided for Pool A. In other words, principles distributed this October will be applied to work done during the 2016-17 academic year. The MSP bargained this language to help make the merit process more transparent. If you've not sent out your principles, it's not too late, but please do so as soon as possible. Deans of each college are also expected to send out principles with respect to Pool B merit awards by October 1<sup>st</sup>. ■



# VOTE NO on Question 2

By Dan Clawson

Question 2 on the November ballot is drawing more money than has ever before been spent on a Massachusetts ballot question. Lots more. The measure, if passed, would permit twelve new charter schools per year; within a decade, that would triple the number of students in charter schools in our state. And it seems that the Massachusetts ballot question may represent the litmus test for future charter campaigns nationwide.

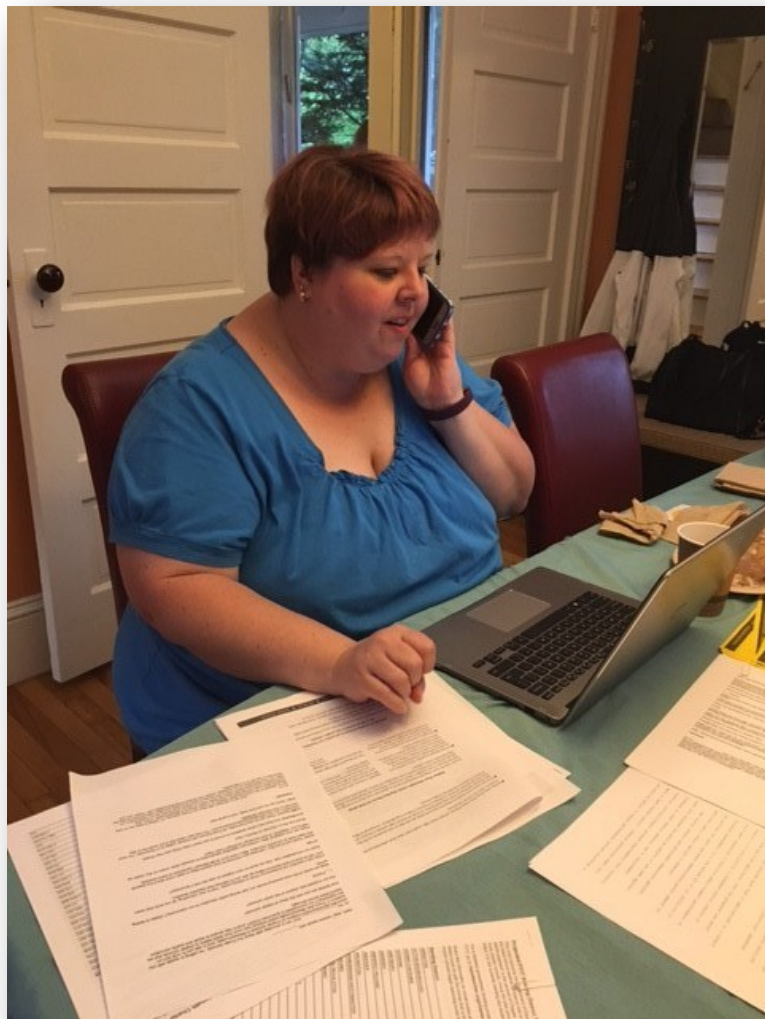
The MTA and MSP are urging members to VOTE NO. We need to protect public education. If you vote “No” on question 2, it leaves us with the system we have now. That is, all existing charter schools remain in place and new charters can be formed if they are approved by the State’s Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). There are three main arguments for a no-vote.

First, charter schools suck money out of locally controlled public schools. For Massachusetts as a whole, *after* reimbursements, charters take away an estimated \$450 million per year. In Northampton alone, charters take \$2.1 million, and in Amherst the total is \$1.4 million. You can visit [massteacher.org](http://massteacher.org) to see the amounts lost in other towns.

Second, charters are not locally controlled. Your town’s school committee, city council, and mayor have little influence on the charter schools in your town. For this reason, more than one hundred local school committees have voted to oppose Question 2.

Third, charters create what the NAACP calls a system of “separate and unequal” education. The Movement for Black Lives has also come out against charters. While in theory, charter schools are supposed to take everyone, many believe that in practice they amount to an attack on communities of color, enroll fewer immigrant English Language Learner students, and accept far fewer special education students. In some cases, if a charter school finds a student hard to educate, they can – and often do – rotate them back into the public school system.

It’s worth asking: who is funding the campaign in favor of charters? While much of the yes-vote campaign is supported by undisclosed donors, we know that \$1.8 million in publically filed donations has come from the Walton family. Walmart’s corporate headquarters is located in Bentonville, Arkansas. Why is the Walton family investing in Massachusetts education policy? Perhaps because charter school proponents believe that if they win in Massachusetts, the state with the highest test scores in the nation, they will be able to win anywhere.



**MSP Librarian Ellen Lutz working the No On 2 phone bank urging voters to VOTE NO on Question 2**



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# Inside YOUR MSP: MTA/NEA

By Eric Berlin

The Massachusetts Society of Professors (MSP) is a member organization affiliated with the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) and the National Education Association (NEA). Both of these organizations have a democratic structure that facilitates member engagement. And both are significant in size and influence.

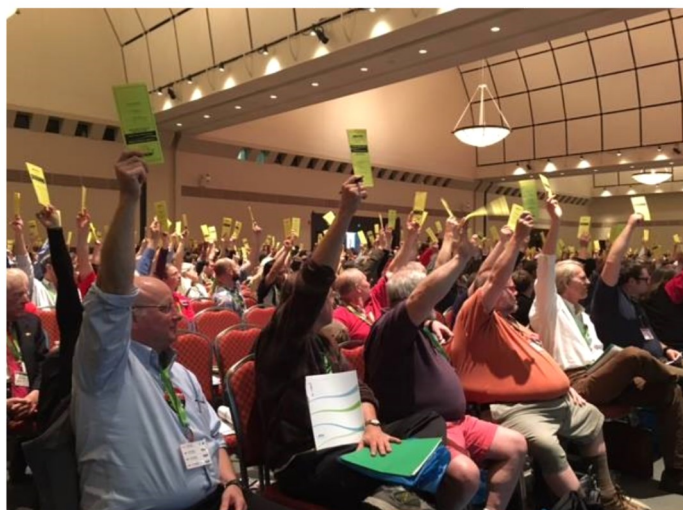
The MTA has over 110,000 members throughout public education in Massachusetts, holding positions that range from clerical and maintenance, to paraprofessional, faculty and librarian. There are over 400 local unions ("locals"), for which the MTA assists in collective bargaining, contract maintenance, and legal representation. The organization also assists locals with political organizing, legislative action, and professional development. The MTA Division of Higher Education represents over 10,000 employees who are organized in bargaining units within each sector of public higher education. The MTA higher education locals are organized under the umbrella of the Higher Education Leadership Council (HELCL). The HELCL was established nearly four decades ago, shortly after the MTA began organizing within higher education. The HELCL provides a voice for higher education members of the MTA, such as the MSP.

The MSP, along with every other higher education local affiliated with the MTA, is a voting member of the HELCL. The MTA board dedicates seats for each higher education local, and those members sit on the HELCL board. The MSP is currently represented by Max Page, Dan Clawson, and Eve Weinbaum. In addition, the MSP has an additional unit member at MTA/HELCL meetings, given that the MTA President, Barbara Madelon, is also an MSP member.

The MSP significantly influences the MTA through delegates attendance at the annual meeting. Delegates represent the authoritative body of the MTA, and the annual assembly's caucus has organizational decision-making authority. It is also responsible for passing the annual budget and electing officers.

On the national level, the NEA also holds an annual representative assembly. This assembly is one of the largest in the world, with over 8,000 delegates voting on behalf of 3.2 million members. Like MTA delegates, these representatives have decision-making authority over NEA matters. The MSP has the ability to send delegates to the annual NEA assembly.

Involvement of the MSP within the MTA and the NEA makes an impact on the direction of public higher education policies at all levels of government. Whether it's working on a constitutional amendment to provide much needed revenue for education; or it's holding the state accountable for an employer's share of health care premiums; or it's assisting locals in the fight against privatization of public education; the MSP remains actively engaged. And it is important to keep in mind that the MSP only functions with continued support from its members. ■



**MSP Members voting at the annual MTA meeting**

## VOTE NO on Question 2

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In contrast, most of the money for the no-vote campaign comes from Massachusetts teachers, professors, and paraprofessionals operating through unions, with the MTA as the single largest donor.

Advocates insist that charter schools be called "public." While it is true they get most of their money from the public, they are not subject to the same regulatory oversight as public schools. Charter schools are controlled by private boards. The great majority of board members are financiers, and they have virtually no parent representation.

The MSP wants to preserve public schools, open to all, and democratically controlled by local governments. We don't want to become New Orleans, where public schools have been entirely replaced by charters. Ironically, former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said, "[Katrina] was the best thing that happened to the education system in New Orleans." This month you are likely to see some slick commercials paid for by out-of-state billionaires, many produced by the same firm which did the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth ads in 2004. Don't be fooled.

Education is an \$800 billion a year operation; there are a lot of people eager to get a piece of that pie. But in order to do so they must first turn higher education into a for-profit industry. That's why the MSP is urging you to VOTE NO on Question 2!

# UMass Amherst Community Campaign (UMACC)

By Jennifer Page

The [UMass Amherst Community Campaign \(UMACC\)](#) is a program that allows faculty, staff, and retirees to donate to any nonprofit organization through payroll deduction or debit/credit card. Last year, more than 680 employees and retirees donated over \$400,000 through UMACC, most went to organizations in Western Massachusetts. UMACC is one more way we show that UMass cares about making the world a better place, across town and across the globe. Below are four good reasons to make your charitable donations through UMACC:

1. A small amount will go a long way. Giving through payroll deduction means that you can give a small amount each paycheck, which adds up over time to a sizable donation. For example, only ten dollars per paycheck equals a \$260 annual gift to the nonprofit of your choice.
2. It saves time. You give to multiple nonprofits in one transaction, and UMACC does the rest.
3. You are entered to win some cool prizes. Grand prize is a \$300 Amazon gift card donated by [Amazon@UMass](#). Other prizes include event tickets, parking passes, and more!
4. You choose where your donation goes. You can choose from any of the 200+ local, national, and global nonprofits who are already participating in UMACC. If you want to give to an organization that is not already on our list, you can [request that it be added](#).



Please visit [umass.edu/umacc](http://umass.edu/umacc) to learn more about UMACC and read stories written by nonprofits about the people and causes they serve ([Stories Blog](#)). You can also find out why your friends and colleagues give through UMACC ([Profiles in Giving](#)).

## I Support PHENOM through UMACC

By Max Page

The MSP takes pride in having helped to found the [Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts \(PHENOM\)](#) in 2007. Over the course of a decade, PHENOM has been the only advocacy group spanning all three levels of public higher education and concentrating the energies of faculty, staff, students, and parents around the fight for faculty and staff contracts, better overall budgets, and lower tuition and fees for our students. It has been a key source of information on higher education for the press and the legislature, and has driven a more progressive agenda for public higher education. I have given to PHENOM through UMACC because I think we are finally at a moment – thanks in part to PHENOM – where we can imagine winning substantial investments at UMass and all our state universities and community colleges.



Since 2007, PHENOM has been organizing students, staff, faculty, administrators, alumni, and the larger community to advocate for more affordable and accessible, quality public higher education in Massachusetts. It does this through statewide actions like our [Public Higher Education Advocacy Day](#) in March, and through other local events held by our [Campus Chapters](#) at public state universities and colleges. It is very fitting that in PHENOM's 10<sup>th</sup> year, we're launching a fall semester with ten active campus chapters. The generosity of programs like UMACC allows us to continue to organize, educate, and train new leaders to fight for public higher education across the Commonwealth.





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