

# MSP Chronicle

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



## From the President's Desk

By Eve Weinbaum, MSP President

**a**n injury to one is an injury to all. The labor movement is based on the idea that we are stronger together. When we stand up for others, it isn't because we are kind or selfless, but just the opposite: collective action is in our own self-interest. We become stronger by lifting up others, and the next time we need help we will know where to turn.

This year, MSP has been working hard to strengthen our coalitions with other unions and organizations around the state. We are a key part of at least four labor coalitions:

- The UMass Amherst labor coalition, consisting of all of the unions on our campus
- Hampshire-Franklin Central Labor Council, soon to become the Area Labor Federation (ALF) representing unions in the Pioneer Valley and Berkshires.
- UMass Unions United (UUU), representing unions from UMass Boston, Lowell, and Dartmouth, mostly affiliated with the Mass. Teachers Association (MTA)
- The coalition of state employees, including the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), National Association of Government Employees (NAGE), Massachusetts Nurses Association (MNA) and others who represent state workers

All of these coalitions are focusing on the primary goal of settling good contracts as quickly as possible. Coalition members stay in touch regularly, in meetings and conference calls.

Together, we have been putting pressure on Governor Baker's office to improve the economic parameters that determine our salary increases. We have had some success; the original parameters indicated no raise in the first year of the contract, and now we hear there will be raises each year. But the numbers are still too low, especially given the booming



## Help Us Turn Up the Pressure on Solidarity Wednesdays

By Emily Steelhammer, MSP Staff

After more than a year at the bargaining table it is **time to turn up the pressure!** We continue to fight for our bargaining priorities including fair cost of living increases but we can't do this without your help. Join us on Solidarity Wednesdays when each week, in collaboration with the labor coalition, we will send a strong message to the Governor and/or to the UMass administration that we are united in our fight for excellent education, equity, good jobs, and fair raises. Look for an email from MSP for details for each week's action. ■

## SAVE the DATE

MSP General Assembly,  
Amherst Room, Campus Center  
Dec. 11, noon -2 PM

MTA Annual Meeting of  
Delegates, Boston, May 4-5, 2018  
(Contact the MSP office for  
information)

Have an upcoming event  
enhancing MSP's mission you  
would like MSP to announce?  
Contact the MSP office at:  
[mvp@external.umass.edu](mailto:mvp@external.umass.edu)  
(413) 545-2206

Massachusetts economy, record stock market, and low levels of unemployment. We are keeping up the pressure to improve our salaries.

On Solidarity Wednesdays (see the inset at left), many of our members have called and emailed the Governor's office and the UMass President's office, and our messages are getting through. We are asking for basic raises that match the cost of living for the next three years – and anything beyond that can go towards

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# MTA Initiates GIC Labor Coalition in Response to Increases in Health Insurance Costs

By Mickey Gallagher, MTA

The Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) represents higher education bargaining units as well as over 20 cities and towns that rely upon the Group Insurance Commission (GIC) for their health insurance options. The GIC is composed of members appointed by the Governor of whom a minority directly represent employee/retiree constituency groups. One of the Commissioners is an MTA member, Tim Sullivan, who was appointed by then-Governor Patrick.

As a result of changes to your health insurance coverage voted on by the Commissioners last year which resulted in higher deductibles and co-pays, the MTA initiated discussions with all Massachusetts labor unions that represent members who have GIC health insurance coverage. Together these bargaining units seek legislative changes and more direct input into the decision making of the Commission.

The legislative initiatives we are pursuing include a restructuring of the Commission so there are more seats held by those who are directly

impacted by its decisions. In addition, we are pursuing legislation that will cap all out of pocket expenses to assure unit members are protected from catastrophic health care costs.

Other changes initiated by the GIC labor coalition include more effective input into the information considered by the Commissioners at their monthly meetings. As a result of this effort, the Commission is now conducting a 'Listening Tour' across the state with open meetings to share health insurance coverage information and provide time for members to ask questions and provide direct input. In addition, the GIC recently conducted an all member survey to solicit member concerns. We are currently engaged in reviewing the data collected from this survey.

It will be important for members to have the necessary information regarding state provided health insurance and be aware of any proposed changes to address the ever-rising costs of health care passed on to state and municipal employees. ■



Randy Phillis on a "yellow card" at the 2017 MTA Annual Meeting. MSP would like to send a full slate of delegates to the 2018 Annual Meeting which will feature elections of the MSP President and Vice President. The Annual Meeting is always lively, and this one is key to continuing with a progressive MTA agenda. Contact the MSP office to sign up to be a delegate or alternate. MSP delegates incur no personal costs to attend the Annual Meeting.

## Interview: Florence Sullivan

The following are excerpts from an interview between the MSP Chronicle and Prof. Florence Sullivan, Department of Teacher Education & Curriculum Studies.

**Chronicle:** Tell me about the work you do as a faculty member here at UMass.

**Florence Sullivan:** I'm affiliated with the Learning Media and Technology Masters' Program, which I started along with a colleague who has since left. Now my

current colleague Torrey Trust and I collaboratively manage and coordinate this Master's program. I'm also involved in the Math, Science and Learning Technology doctoral program. I do research on student learning with computational media like robotics, Scratch, that sort of thing. I've been working on the development of a method that we call Microgenetic Learning Analytics. This method uses

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## Open Access: What It Means to Me

By Marilyn Billings, Head of the Scholarly Communication Department, University Libraries

Open Access, as defined by the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resource Coalition (SPARC), is the free, immediate, online availability of research articles coupled with the rights to use these articles fully in the digital environment. Open Access can also be applied to all forms of published research outputs, conference papers, theses and dissertations, book chapters, and monographs.

The term “open access” was first coined in the Budapest Open Access Initiative in 2002. In 2008, the National Institutes of Health was the first US federal grant agency to develop a Public Access Policy that requires that final peer-reviewed manuscripts arising from NIH funds be made publicly available within 12 months of publication. This was followed by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy directive issued in February 2013 to each Federal agency with over \$100 million in annual research and development expenditures to develop a plan to support increased public access to the results of research funded by the Federal Government.

Locally, the UMass Amherst faculty passed an Open Access Policy in April 2016 after negotiations with the MSP, endorsement by the Faculty Senate’s Research Council and many meetings with academic departments. This policy, based on the model Open Access Policy developed at Harvard University’s Office of Scholarly Communication, became effective July 1, 2016. It benefits faculty members directly by protecting our rights to distribute and reuse our own scholarly publications, to improve and stand up for open access to scholarly articles published by academics, and to help address the unreasonable subscription costs of many journals. Additional reasons include compliance with mandates from federal, private, and global funding agencies and increased visibility and impact of the authors and the campus.

For additional information, please contact [scholarworks@library.umass.edu](mailto:scholarworks@library.umass.edu). ■

## Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Title IX

By Eve Weinbaum, MSP President

For a couple of years, the MSP has been discussing issues of sexual harassment and violence with the Chancellor. We feel strongly that no one at UMass should be subject to any form of harassment or misconduct in the workplace or in the classroom. We also have been concerned that existing procedures for addressing charges of harassment are unclear, cumbersome, and take far too long to resolve. MSP has four goals:

1. Work with EO&D to streamline the process for complaints, investigations, and resolutions of any allegations of harassment or misconduct.
2. Ensure that both complainants and respondents are aware of the process and policies, and that everyone’s due process rights are protected.
3. Allow faculty to continue to have confidential conversations at a student’s request, rather than making all faculty “mandatory reporters.” Mandatory reporting can create a situation where students and staff do not reveal harassment or violence because of privacy concerns, and we do not want to create a chilling effect at UMass.
4. Make training available to all faculty and librarians; be sure that everyone knows how the process works and where to refer complaints of harassment or violence, to ensure a swift resolution. ■



**View from the entry to the Cape Cod Lounge during an all-union meeting on September 26. Leaders from MSP, AFSCME, PSU, USA and GEO told the assembly about contract negotiations, ballot initiatives, and the All In initiative. Attendees enjoyed pizza.**





The Metawampe statue.

(President's Desk, continued from p. 1)

merit increases. Particularly if salary offers are not going to be generous, we expect the administration to provide other benefits that faculty and librarians deserve, including professional improvement leave and workload improvements for non-tenure-track faculty, better pay and protections for CPE instructors, and a fair and transparent system to rectify salary anomalies.

Our sibling UMass unions similarly are seeking improvements to their contract language and benefits. For example, classified staff have insufficient sick leave banks, and their jobs are often at risk if they or their loved ones fall ill. Clerical staff have only ten days of paid parental leave when they have a child – far less than faculty and professional staff – and no right to paid leave when they are dealing with domestic violence. MSP stands with these unions in their fight for better contracts.

MSP is also working with

other organizations across the state. With Raise Up Massachusetts, we collected signatures for ballot initiatives to raise the minimum wage and to provide paid family and medical leave. MSP collected more signatures than any other higher ed union. We also partnered with the Pioneer Valley Worker Center to hold a successful training around immigrants' rights – you can sign up to fight unjust deportations in our area: <https://pvworkerscenter.org/sanctuary-in-the-streets/>. And we are supporting the workers at Plimoth Plantation, who recently formed a union and have been trying to negotiate their first contract. Sign their petition at <https://www.change.org/p/plimoth-union-contract-now>.

We expect to have more active Solidarity Wednesdays this month – as well as our General Assembly meeting on December 11th. I'm looking forward to seeing you there! ■

S	H	E	Y	T	E	I	C	O	S	E	T	E	B
C	O	N	T	R	A	C	T	R	R	C	K	L	Y
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O	F	O	A	S	S	D	U	V	H	G	O	P	U
L	N	T	S	T	U	D	E	N	T	S	B	R	O
A	A	E	M	E	N	I	N	S	O	S	R	V	R
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B	U	S	I	S	T	E	R	S	I	T	B	T	A
S	D	T	R	U	S	T	E	E	S	E	T	I	E
A	Y	T	I	S	R	E	V	I	N	U	S	T	L

## THE MSP PUZZLE

The puzzle for the previous issue asked you to identify the campus location of an "M" image. The "M" is the first letter of Metawampe, whose statue faces the courtyard bounded by the Student Union, the Campus Center, and the ILC (see above). There is a similar "M" also engraved in granite on the Minuteman statue facing the campus pond near the library. There were no entries for this challenge.

This issue's puzzle is a word search. The words listed below are arranged in the box above in vertical, horizontal or diagonal directions. The words may be written in forward or reverse order. You need to circle the letters of each word (as illustrated for the word BOOK). Once all are circled, the remaining uncircled letters can be arranged into a five-word phrase. Send that phrase to [MSPpuzzle@gmail.com](mailto:MSPpuzzle@gmail.com) by midnight, December 31, 2017. The first entry correctly identifying the location will win a \$25 gift card. Decision of the judge is final. Open to all MSP members. You can't win unless you enter!

ACHIEVE, AVATAR, BLOG, BOOK, BRAIN, BREAK, BROTHERS, BRUNT, BUS, CAMPUS, CHOIR, CLASS, CONTRACT, DUES, DUTIES, GROUP, LEARNING, LIBRARIAN, ONES, OVER, PLEASURABLE, PROFESSOR, RARE, SCHOLARSHIP, SISTERS, SOCIETY, SOLIDARITY, STUDENTS, STUDY, TEACHER, TENOR, TITLE, TRUSTEES, UNION, UNIVERSITY

**(Interview, continued from p. 2)**

computational linguistic techniques to support discourse analysis of middle-school-students' collaborative problem-solving conversations.

Just recently I was elected Department Chair, which unfortunately is going to take me out of the union for three years. I'm very interested in helping my department move to more of a rotational view on department chair. We have a big department and we have a lot of licensure programs and I think that the department chair job has been seen as a huge headache for many people and I'm hoping to make it more appealing by doing my three years, organizationally developing systems so that the next person who comes in to do their three years can feel comfortable. I'm really hoping we can do that here to deepen knowledge and share governance.



**C:** I know that you lived through the big changes that happened in the College of Education. What can you tell me about that?

**FS:** I think the big changes that happened were challenging. It was a challenging time for us here. Depending on who you speak to you'd get different perspectives on what actually happened. As far as I can tell, there was a general desire for a different direction in the College of Ed among the faculty. They wanted to move in the direction of transparency and openness related to policies and budget decisions. This is just my perspective and I want to emphasize that it's my perspective, but that is what I view the issue to have been. Over time, that became a sticking point for many faculty to the point that they felt they needed new leadership.

We do have new leadership, and it's very telling that the person we did hire [as dean] is absolutely transparent.

**C:** What do you think about the MSP?

**FS:** Oh I love the MSP. For example, just this year, our pretenure faculty who are tenure-track were able to, I guess last year was the first year, they were able to take their research-intensive semester thanks to the MSP.

**C:** So you didn't have that before?

**FS:** No, we did not have that. When I was going up for tenure I did not have a research-intensive leave, but I think it became policy through the MSP that all schools and colleges would now receive this, which I think is fantastic. It really is important support for faculty, pretenure, to push out some publications and make a good show for tenure.

I think that the parental leave is very important -- that's a wonderful thing. I like the idea that's coming up of a professional development semester for senior lecturers. Lecturers do very important work at the university and they should have time to also develop themselves and bring back what they've learned to their teaching and their program coordination and their specialties.

I feel that the MSP is a very important voice for faculty and that the better the working conditions are for the faculty, the better the learning conditions are for the students. It really

just improves the university overall to have a faculty that is well supported, and frankly, I think we need the union in order for the faculty to have the type of support, especially at a state-run university.

I believe in unions, and I'm sad about the direction in the United States, because it's definitely moving in the direction of union busting and corporate elites.

**C:** There's a Supreme Court case that's coming up soon, *Janus*, that would remove the requirement that non-members must pay an agency fee for support of the union contract that protects them.

**FS:** I'm very worried about that as well. I hope that the faculty understand what the MSP does for them, and so if the Supreme Court does rule against unions, that the faculty here still support our union. It is very important that we have that voice fighting for us.

**C:** What do you see as the most important aspects of the University's mission and what role can MSP play in ensuring we fulfill them?

**FS:** For me, there are two important elements for the University mission. First and foremost is that UMass Amherst be a university for the Commonwealth, that Massachusetts students are well served by the University. So first and foremost for me is that we understand our mission as involved with supporting the students of Massachusetts to have a high quality, accessibly priced university available to them. The second thing that is very important to me is, I do believe the research mission of the University matters. Part of what creates the environment for a high-quality education are researchers active in their field who can get their students active in research, research networks and education networks in the Commonwealth, in the nation, and internationally. The research mission supports the economy of the Commonwealth to a certain degree. ■



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