

MSP Executive Board Meeting (via Zoom) October 13, 2021

Board Members Attending: Eve Weinbaum, Marc Liberatore, Jen Adams, Jacquie Kurland, Sigrid Schmalzer, Christine Turner, Paulina Borrego, Jeanne Brunner, Maciej Ciesielski, John Staudenmeyer, Tristram Seidler, Kevin Young, Caleb Rounds, Dean Robinson, Sandy Litchfield, Priyanka Srivastava, Jeremy Smith

Staff: Mickey Gallager, Lori Reardon, Emily Steelhammer

Agenda (posted in Chat)

Updates

Health & safety

Ventilation

FY21 teaching assessments

University budget/Andy Mangels meeting

Provost's email on FY22 planning and budget process

Updates on department visits; planning bargaining priorities

MSP's FY21 uncollectible dues (see attached)

In-person board (not board & rep) meeting in November?

The meeting was called to order at 8:47

- I. **Overall health and safety.** Positive COVID cases are down dramatically. Over the past month, that campus community dropped from 400 positive cases to 20. This is a move in the right direction. Meanwhile, wastewater testing continues. There is some concern about a possible spike as the weather gets colder but overall people are feeling optimistic.

II. **Ventilation.** The MSP continues to request information from the administration about air change per hour in each classroom, office, or other workspace. We have received some information, but it's spotty and sometimes wrong. Specifically, the MSP has asked for a report on each newly built or majorly renovated building on campus over the last five years; our union has received reports for only three. We're still waiting for more and are taking a long-term view on this. Some buildings have no ventilation and fitting them with airflow dovetails with climate change plans. Still, there is some worry about people who work in those buildings who have only windows for ventilation. So while we are willing to wait on some reports, and to harmonize them with climate concerns, the MSP also plans to continue to pressure administration to provide adequate ventilation in all buildings for the winter months.

III. **University budget/Andy Mangels meeting.** The campus budget office has embraced austerity as the solution to the university's previous year's budget deficit. Context: The Board of Trustees expect the UMass Amherst campus to run a 2% budget surplus every year, but last year, during the pandemic, the campus ran a deficit of 9 million dollars. The Trustees' anxiety is compounded by the low enrollment numbers for this current first-year class. There is thus an ongoing struggle between the Trustees' desire for austerity and the MSP's position that a deficit during a pandemic is expected and acceptable, and should be written off.

IV. **F21 teaching assessments.** The administration extended the offer to faculty to choose between SRTI and Forward Focus for their course evaluations this term. This good news is slightly offset by the fact that many faculty and chairs don't really know that Forward Focus is an option. The MSP needs to get the word out that faculty have this choice.

V. **Provost's email on FY22 planning and budget process.** A few weeks ago the Provost released his list of new hires that he has approved. Are the hires meeting people's needs? Discussion about this: In some colleges (like CICS), there is ample hiring. But in other places, people are feeling shortages. The libraries continue to be severely understaffed. In Communication Disorders, some staff vacancies remain unfilled. TCS is

down one staff person plus it has undergone a reorganization that has shifted work to faculty. General feedback is that hiring is unevenly felt.

VI. Updates on department visits; planning bargaining priorities.

What are people hearing? Discussion about this: Based on visits to colleagues, faculty and librarians would like raises. Faculty and librarians are feeling the increase in the cost of living. Childcare options are also important to many people, who remain frustrated by the campus childcare center's limited capability. Gender and racial equity remain an issue. The administration's calendar change proposal has made people unhappy.

VII. MSP's FY21 uncollectible dues (see attached) from last fiscal

year. There are currently 9 MSP members who are no longer part of the unit and who have a balance of \$200.56 in uncollectable dollars. Motion: Christine Turner made a motion to approve this list. Jacquie Kurland seconded this motion. The Board unanimously approved this list. We will not collect these fees and will write them off.

VIII. In-person board (not board & rep) meeting in November. The MSP officers would like to explore the possibility for a once-a-month in-person board meeting starting in November. Board members were invited to email officers with their thoughts/concerns. Also, the MSP presidents reminded the board of the all-membership scheduled for noon on October 27. It will be on Zoom.

IX. New Business. The Board solicited an update on the current state of contract bargaining. The MSP presidents reported that the administration re-activated their proposals in the spring, and that the MSP represented their own proposals in the summer. The MSP has worked hard to craft its bargaining principles, but is willing to be flexible on some details. If the administration has better ideas of a way to meet MSP principles, the MSP is willing to work with alternate plans. The board had some conversation about specific proposals (Teaching Tenure Track, Merit Pay) that the MSP has made.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:51