

MSP Executive Board Meeting

September 15, 2021

Board: Michael Ash, Asha Nadkarni, Jen Adams, Marc Liberatore, Steven Brewer, Jacquie Kurland, Eve Weinbaum, Tristram Seidler, Caleb Rounds, Maciej Ciesielski, Paulina Borrego, Clare Hammonds, , Sandy Litchfield, Jeanne Brunner, Sigrid Schmalzer, Christine Turner, Kevin Young, Jeremy Smith, Dean Robinson.

Staff: Lori Reardon, Emily Steelhammer, Mickey Gallagher

Updates

Health and Safety

- Ventilation
 - MSP pushed for months to get updated information about ventilation. We had to threaten to go on strike to get this information. (We drafted an email to that effect and then they gave us a meeting and the spreadsheet).
 - We are not satisfied with the data because they only gave us one number per building – not granular enough, and told us nothing about air quality in most spaces.
 - They also didn't give us any actual data about real airflow.
 - We met with an MTA attorney who is a specialist on these issues – he recommended an information request, which we filed on September 14, 2021.
 - EH&S are starting to reply to queries about specific spaces (approximately 40 faculty have made requests) and they are sending out teams.
 - We are still waiting for the data on some spaces where the university has done airflow testing. We'll follow up on this.
 - Big thanks to Jacquie Kurland for agreeing to be our Health and Safety Chair – she will follow up with Shane Cocklin or Tilman Wolf.
 - In the meantime, if there are spaces with really bad air quality the University will provide portable HEPA filters.
 - In general the MSP is pushing for more permanent fixes that will also meet our environmental/green new deal agenda
 - \$5.8 billion sitting unused – one time money. Perfect use for this is retrofitting buildings and improving ventilation and efficiency.
 - They claim that if you contact them they will do this and have done so for about 3 dozen people.
- COVID testing
 - Unobserved testing is great – been very popular and the system is overloaded. But they are still getting results within 24-36 hours.

- No testing on weekends or Friday afternoon. This seems like a problem.
- The administration told us that you can get symptomatic testing at UHS over the weekend. We've asked them to be clearer with the messaging about that.
- We also pushed for some mandatory testing. There is a disincentive for people who are living on campus to test.
- The administration is doing wastewater testing so they can see if there is an uptick in viral load. They haven't found enough of an uptick to do this on campus, but they may do "adaptive testing" off campus as those numbers are rising.
- The dashboard is back up but the information is sparse at this point. Jeff Hescok said that they are adding information but that they are open to suggestions, so if you want to see something then email them and cc us.
- What about students testing positive in your class? At the moment faculty are not allowed to say that someone in the class has tested positive. The administration first said this was because HIPA (no) then they said it was FERPA (also no). They've abandoned the legal argument at this point, and have been clear that it is their policy. We had a disagreement about this in our meeting with the Chancellor on 9/14, and the Chancellor said that they would reconsider this policy after talking to University counsel.
- In the meantime, contact tracing will not contact the faculty member unless the student names you.
- Students still haven't gotten the message about not coming to class if they are sick.
- We continue to push on things like tents for meeting – they said they will have some but soon the weather is going to prohibit using tents in any case
- We are asking for N95 and KN95 masks – we had to push hard to get any masks though, and so far they are saying no.
- How to accommodate students who are sick? We haven't asked the administration about this, but you should resist the pressure to create a multi-modal class. You do have to accommodate them but you don't have to allow them to zoom in or set up all kinds of technology. People should NOT be setting up multi-modal courses. No heroic measures.
- If you or your children should test positive use sick time! You do not need to cover your classes – be kind to yourself.

Health and Safety Questions and Answers?

Who knows when a student tests positive? UHS and the Public Health Promotion Center (which runs contract tracing) knows who is positive.

- Masks: could UMass hand out N95s for students living off campus in those big apartment complexes? So far they are saying no. Our argument is just give them to faculty and we'll hand them out to our students. But, again, so far that's a big no. Tristram Seidler has been handing out N95s and his students are happy to have them. Plus at least 10% of his students have either tested positive or been exposed.
- People can make Corsi-Rosenthal boxes for teaching in spaces with little or no ventilation.
- Faculty in economics are very disillusioned with the administration. They feel that it's clear the the administration is operating with the assumption that people will get sick, and they are just betting that people won't die because vaccinated. Also the gag order in reporting positive cases in classes is setting up an extremely bad precedent. The administration is risking a long term breach in credibility.
- The Chancellor said that EH&S have never been denied resources, so if you need things WRITE TO THEM (and cc us).
- In general, they need to hear directly from a plurality of voices so that the MSP are not the always the middlemen.
- One of our biggest problems is that the administration is disorganized and no one is communicating with each other or with faculty and staff.
- We said again we'll do another joint communication with you.
- But until we said it yesterday it doesn't seem like the Chancellor understood why we would need to know if someone is positive.

Bargaining Update

- All proposals are on the table.
- Our proposals:
 - Salary and benefit packages (we proposed 4%/4%/4%)
 - Gender and Race Equity issues
 - NTT Equity (including proposing a Teaching Tenure Track)
 - Climate Justice (coalition proposal)
- Their proposals
 - Change to how NTT are evaluated. They want the 3 years to Continuing Appointment to be 6 years with a review at three years; this mirrors the tenure process without any of the rights and benefits of tenure.
 - Title proliferation: They have proposed creating a series of new titles without benefits and privileges, such as expanding the Visiting Professor title, creating a Professor of Practice title based on industrial experience, and expanding the use of clinical titles.
- Salary proposal
 - Our proposal – 4%/4%/4%
 - Chancellor's email – 2.5% (with a 1.5% one time bonus)/2%/2%.
 - Admin bargaining team's proposal – .

- First year: .5% ATB, .5% PFML offset (which means we can't bargain about PFML) 1.5% merit for the past 4 years. 1.5% or \$1000/FTE
 - Second year: 1.5% ATB, .5% merit
 - Third year: 1.5% ATB, .5% merit
- The bargaining team is still discussing how to deal with this. We will have a membership meeting in mid-late October – we aren't going to do a big organizing push right now. We are hoping that we will get the chancellor's proposal plus merit coming from the University.
 - MSP's principle is that merit should only be after we meet the cost of living (and given the high cost of living we aren't even meeting that with the Chancellor's proposal)
 - For the last contract the cost of living was less than 2%. On the other hand insurance, parking, and other costs have increased. So there are a lot of ways that they are rolling back our salaries
 - At the same time, there are other ways to get money out of the administration. But the flavor of this proposal given everything we've been through is very bitter.
 - There are ways of thinking about merit in ways that are more equitable – tend to transfer funds from richer to poorer departments. In the hands of departments that are thinking about equity there are ways of bringing up the salaries of those who have anomalous salaries.
 - MSP also has big pay equity proposals on the table. So there may be ways of resolving anomalies without involving the merit pool
 - We are also going to counter with longevity pay, and a proposal about the PMYR being on base.

Signing up for faculty meetings

- What we're signing up for is to contact the chair and get on the agenda.
- Marc has talking points that he will send out shortly.
- Sign up for those departments that don't already have coverage.

Save the Date!

- Follow up with new hires and invite them to the new faculty reception (on 9/30 at Groff Park) RSVP to Emily for that.
- PC meetings – 9/20 and 9/23 at noon on zoom.