

MSP Executive Board - November 4, 2020

Present: Eve Weinbaum, Michael Ash, John Staudenmayer, Maciej Ciesielski, Jen Adams, Clare Hammonds, Asha Nadkarni, Tristram Seidler, Jeanne Brunner, Christine Turner, Sigrid Schmalzer, Marc Liberatore, Paulina Borrega, Fareen Parvez, Kevin Young, Jeremy Smith, Sheila Pennell, Prianyka Srivastava, Kate Hudson

Staff: Lori Reardon, Mickey Gallagher, Emily Steelhammer, Heather LaPenn

1. **Approval of minutes from 10/21/2020.** Motion to approve from Jen. Second by Asha. Approved unanimously.
2. Sharing good news about the election. No winner yet but looking positive for Biden
3. **Report back from the Chancellor/Provost meeting.** We asked a lot of questions about spring semester planning.
 - Half capacity in dorms expected; adm want to offer on campus students at least one F2F course
 - Will there be enough PPE for F2F, especially for labs
 - They will be meeting w/ faculty who taught in fall to find out what worked and what didn't work in terms of access PPE, training on proper use, etc.
 - They will be holding walk throughs in classroom w/ instructors so that instructors are better prepared in terms of safety
 - We will not be holding classes in buildings w/ bad ventilation (e.g., Herter). Additionally, air filters in classrooms being used have been upgraded and air quality tests are being performed.
 - Can faculty be informed whether a student tests positive? They are working on HIPAA and FERPA constraints - right now the student has to contact the instructor, but at some institutions students sign waivers so the instructor can be informed, some schools are handling it like disabilities services sharing student accommodations with instructors. [Jen asked today - what if an instructor tests positive? How can students be informed while safeguarding the instructor's privacy?]
 - They will consider allowing instructors to use quarantine spaces on campus if needed.
 - They are planning on releasing some metrics that will be used to determine whether and when students should be sent home due to infection rates.
 - We spoke about delays in grants and contracts processing. Jen Donais attended the meeting and said that furloughs have been having an impact, as well as retirements, and a new to UMass but experienced staff member has joined the office and she hopes that any past delays will be alleviated. Faculty are

encouraged to email Jen Donais and Martina Nieswandt directly if there are problems/concerns.

- There have been some successes in reinstating hours for staff whose hours were cut. We need to point out to the administration how harmful furloughs are, and that staff work is essential. Cautioned about faculty performing work of furloughed staff as this will only make it easy for administrators to say they really aren't needed. Goal is to have staff back by January 1st.
- There will be another email going out about the extension of AFR deadlines.
- There have been no discussions about faculty furloughs. If we hit the 50% mark of students on campus for spring, the budget numbers should be OK, and we wouldn't expect to hear more about faculty furloughs.
- Mutual aid fund is up to \$30,000, we'll be sending out gift cards soon.

4. Report back from the organizing committee. (Sigrid)

- There will be a meeting on Friday with the PSU campaign committee, USA members have been invited to participate in the PSU committee. AFSCME folks will also be invited. Since one of the goals of our committee is to promote solidarity and collaboration among the different unions, having a joint meeting is a step in the right direction!
- A form has been launched to collect testimonials about impact of staff reductions. Board members urged to submit. Can we reach out to faculty affected by delays in grants and contracts (public health departments) to capture the impact of furloughs (as emphasized by Jen Donais in the meeting with the Chancellor.) Work of personnel committees is affected by furloughs, delays in personnel actions - reach out to PCs. Issues with course registration and scheduling.

5. Discussion about spring semester plans. We have been told by the Chancellor that it is entirely up to the individual faculty to decide if they want to teach face-to-face. If anyone is feeling pressured they should definitely let MSP know. Some reported that in their departments lecturers and grad students are being impacted in terms of who is being asked to teach F2F - and in some departments NTT and grad students tend to teach first year students.

- We're hearing concerns about multi-modal classes (meaning more work for the instructor) - in a meeting with Carol Barr she said that multi-modal is NOT happening. Classes that are F2F are for students who are able to be in-person. There shouldn't be any need for multi-modal approaches. But not everyone seems to be getting this message, including some deans.