

# 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

As soon as the Winter Olympics end, all eyes are turning to the U.S. Supreme Court. On February 26, oral arguments will begin in *Janus v. AFSCME*, and the outcome may have a profound effect on unions across the U.S. Come to the Cape Cod Lounge at **noon on Monday, February 26** to eat pizza and learn more about it.

The original lawsuit in this case was funded by right-wing organizations including ALEC, the Koch brothers, and the misleadingly named National Right to Work Committee. Their goal has been to de-fund public sector unions – and to weaken our ability to advocate and organize politically – by attacking our legal rights. According to longstanding legal decisions,

individuals in a unionized workplace have a choice whether to join the union and pay dues, or whether to pay a fee that covers only the expenses related to bargaining and enforcing the contract. In either case, unions have a legal responsibility to represent equally every individual in the bargaining unit. Now the Right to Work Committee is arguing that individuals should not have to pay a penny for the services the union provides.

Economists will tell you that the “free rider problem” is a classic example of a



## SAVE the DATE

Working People's Day of Action/  
UUU Meeting,  
Cape Cod Lounge,  
Feb. 26, noon-1:00 PM

MSP General Assembly,  
Cape Cod Lounge,  
Apr. 30, noon -1:30 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?

**Monday February 26 is the *Working People's Day of Action*. There will be several rallies across Massachusetts including in Amherst and Springfield. The Boston rally will feature Sen. Elizabeth Warren, Attorney General Martha Healey, and Boston Mayor Marty Walsh. Attend one of the rallies to make a statement in support of unions.**

- Amherst: 12:00pm, Cape Cod Lounge, Student Union, UMass Amherst 01003
- Boston: 12:00pm, Boston Firehouse, 125 Purchase St, Boston, MA 02110
- Fall River: 12:00pm, 1567 North Main St, Fall River, MA 02720
- Greenfield: 3:30pm, Main Campus Building, Greenfield Community College, 1 College Dr, Greenfield, MA 01301
- Lawrence: 12:00pm, 280 Merrimack Street, Lawrence, MA 01843
- Somerville: 12:00pm, City Hall, 93 Highland Ave, Somerville, MA 02143
- New Bedford: 5:00pm, City Hall, 133 William St, New Bedford, MA 02740
- Springfield: 5:00pm, 95 Liberty St, Springfield, MA 01103
- Worcester: 5:00pm, Worcester City Hall, 455 Main St, Worcester, MA 01608

For more information, contact Rachael Running at 781.324.8230 or via email at [rrunning@massafclcio.org](mailto:rrunning@massafclcio.org)

market failure. The problem arises when individuals have the opportunity to take advantage of a common good, or public resource, without having to pay their fair share to make that resource available. That's why we have taxes (and stiff penalties for avoiding them) to pay for roads and bridges, national parks, clean air, and more. In a unionized workplace, every individual benefits from the salary increases, fair processes, and better working conditions that the union brings. Therefore, the courts ruled decades ago that individuals who choose not to

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(Continued from President's Desk)  
join a union would pay an "agency fee" to cover the costs of representation.

*Janus v. AFSCME* is the latest effort by right-wing funders to attack labor unions and other organizations that advocate for better public services – including excellent public higher

education – and to weaken social justice advocacy nationwide.

Please join us on **February 26 at noon in the Cape Cod Lounge**. At the same moment the U.S. Supreme Court is hearing *Janus v. AFSCME*, the MSP will join with other UMass unions to reaffirm our commitment to our

unions, public education and social justice. We will be joined by elected officials and the media; we will launch a social media campaign (**#WeRise**) and take selfies in a photo booth to publicize our support for UMass unions. We hope to see you there! ■

## Group Insurance Commission Awakening: Public Sector Union Outcry A Potent Tool

By Michelle Gallagher, MTA

On January 18th the Massachusetts Group Insurance Commissioners voted 8 – 5 to eliminate more than half of the insurance carriers that provide health care coverage to over 440,000 active and retired state employees. This vote was taken with no notice to any of the Commissioners representing constituency groups. In fact, the Commissioners only received notice of the move to reduce available carriers the evening before. The Commission is composed of 5 members from constituency groups (active state employee unions; municipal employees; retired members) and 8 appointees unaffiliated with groups that represent plan participants. Commissioner Tim Sullivan, past MTA Vice President, requested that the Commissioners put the vote on hold for at least 48 hours so Commissioners could become more informed about the impact such a change would have but the majority of the Commissioners pushed through the change.

Public sector unions and retirees reacted quickly and loudly to voice our objections to such a drastic change without prior public discourse or any substantive rationale for the need to cut the number of carriers in half. In response to the public union outcry the Commissioners reconsidered their vote at a special meeting and reversed their previous decision.

While carriers are an important aspect of your health care, even more imperative is the plan design you are offered through the GIC. Plan design, inclusive of deductibles, co-pays and out-of-pocket maximums were presented to and voted on by the Commissioners at the



Rally held by MTA to voice members' concerns over the sneaky GIC plan to eliminate carriers.

February 1st meeting. The good news is that our strong and forceful pushback on the change of carriers resulted in NO negative changes to your health plans. In addition, we were given assurances that health plan premiums will not be increased by any amount exceeding average wage increases (2%). The Commissioners will vote on premium increases at their next meeting on February 22nd.

This latest attempt to push through changes to your health insurance without justification or proper notice and input affirms our position that the composition of the Commission must be changed to better represent the concerns and interests of plan participants. The MTA has joined other public sector unions in seeking legislation that would alter the composition to require a majority of the Commissioners be representatives of impacted constituency groups. In addition, we are working with our labor commissioner to propose rules that require proper advance notice of any change to current carriers and your plan design. ■

# Contract Bargaining Update

By the MSP Bargaining Team

***We're still at it.*** The MSP contract bargaining team (Steve Brewer, Mickey Gallagher, Dave Gross, Kathleen Lugosch, Lori Reardon, Christine Turner and Eve Weinbaum) has been meeting with the administration since October 2016. Both the MSP team and the administration had agreed that we should complete bargaining by December 2016. Obviously, that didn't happen. So far our team has met with the administration 33 times for 2-3 hours at a time and sometimes more. Until late February, we had not received a written salary offer. And ***we have been working since July 1, 2017 without a contract.***

After much pressure from the coalition of state employee unions, Governor Baker's office moved away from its initial offer of zero percent raises in the first year of the contract. Still, UMass's current offer of one percent in the first year and less than two percent in subsequent years is not acceptable.

We need your support and strength now! We are planning to organize a mass meeting to make our case directly to the administration. If you would be willing to add your voice to help win

better contracts, please email the bargaining team at [mSP@umass.edu](mailto:mSP@umass.edu).

Our bargaining priorities haven't changed. Below are summaries of our top issues and the status of negotiations.

**Anomaly Process/Pay Equity** Both the MSP and the administration agree that the current procedure to request and receive an anomaly pay adjustment is not working. If you have served on a departmental personnel committee, you know that making recommendations on salaries that are anomalously low often produces a "not anomalous" rejection from the administration. We brought in MSP members to a bargaining session to provide testimony about their experiences with the anomaly process. The stories were powerful, and we've made good progress toward improving the process. We are close to replacing the Anomaly process with a new way to address inequitable pay, which will be called Equity Adjustments. We agreed in principle to a central joint committee of faculty and administrators, who would evaluate the data in a blind and impartial review

process. However, the administration is insisting that deans and provosts have authority to make final decisions about equity raises, undermining the blind data-driven process, and potentially perpetuating a system of favoritism and inequality.

**Faculty Governance** We have pressed to get strong language in the contract that makes clear the intent of the original writers of the contract – that faculty have the greatest voice in promotion and tenure decisions. Our contract says that faculty have primary responsibility, and an arbitrator many years ago interpreted this as meaning first, not principal. The administration feels that they have a weak position already, and so they are reluctant to strengthen language in the contract. We will continue to pursue this.

**NTT Protections** We have proposed two changes to non-tenure-track faculty contract language: professional leaves for NTT faculty and an explicit recognition of university service by full-time NTT faculty. More than 30 NTT faculty attended a bargaining session last spring to tell the administration negotiators why professional leaves are an excellent investment. Their stories were powerful and compelling. Unfortunately, the administration has not yet seriously considered our demand for Professional Improvement Leave for long-term full-time NTT faculty. We are asking for the same leave policy that professional staff have, but the administration is refusing. We changed our proposal significantly to limit the number of leaves that would be available each year, in a competitive process, but the administration has still said no.

**Continuing and Professional Education** Fairness for instructors who teach Continuing and Professional Education (CPE) and online courses has been on

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A mug seen in the MSP office that expresses the sentiments of the MSP bargaining team members who are trying to get the best possible contract language.



# MSP Looking for Health & Welfare Trustee

By Lori Reardon, MSP Staff

The MTA Health & Welfare Trust fund provides dental insurance and a vision discount to MSP members. The Trust is responsible for overseeing the collection and management of funds, and the administration of dental benefits. The role is mostly oversight – making sure, to the best of their ability – that monies that fund the benefits are received, that reserves are invested wisely, and that members are getting the most bang for our bucks.

Our wonderful trustee to this fund, Melissa Woodard, is stepping down at the end of this academic year after 18 years representing MSP members. We want to thank her for her extraordinary commitment and dedicated service.

Melissa tells us that being a trustee does not require a lot of time or expertise. The basic requirement is to attend monthly meetings (9 in all), which typically take up most of a day (including travel – mostly to Auburn, but occasionally to Shrewsbury). All travel expenses are reimbursed by the Trust. Additionally, all trustees have an opportunity to attend an annual benefits conference. The conference location varies from year to year including places like Orlando, Boston, Las Vegas, New Orleans, and even Hawaii. The conference is especially beneficial to new trustees.

If you are interested in becoming MSP's Health & Welfare Trustee please let us know by contacting the office at [mSP@umass.edu](mailto:mSP@umass.edu) or 545-2206. Melissa is also happy to speak to anyone interested in learning more about the position. ■



Reason number 7 to come to the MSP General Assembly on April 30. (You need to attend to learn reasons 1-6.) You can reserve a seat by contacting the MSP office: [MSP@external.umass.edu](mailto:MSP@external.umass.edu).



## THE MSP PUZZLE

The puzzle for the previous issue involved a word search. After finding all of the words, the remaining letters, rearranged, spelled "The Massachusetts Society of Professors" (see above). Clever, eh? The first correct entry, and gift card recipient, was Laura H. This issue's puzzle is for all of you established or budding poets. Write a limerick that conveys the spirit of the union. References to our local, the univeristy, or the Janus case (see The President's Desk on page 1), will be looked upon favorably as will a dash of humor. Send your limerick to [MSPpuzzle@gmail.com](mailto:MSPpuzzle@gmail.com) by midnight, March 31, 2018. The most apt limerick will win a \$25 gift card. Decision of the judge is final. Open to all MSP members. You can't win unless you enter!

Remember that the rhyming scheme of a limerick is AABBA with meter of 99559 or 99669. Each of the 9's has an internal 3-3-3 meter, with the second-to-last last beat being emphasized. For example,

The POTUS is currently Donald  
Who did brag that women were fondled  
To Mar-A-Lago  
He often does go  
With 4 AM tweets that are boggled

# Why should you attend the MTA Annual Meeting

By Dean Robinson, Department of Political Science, Member of the MTA Board of Directors and NEA Director

I have probably been attending the Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) for more than fifteen years, but it is only in the last four years or so that I have truly appreciated its significance in our fight to defend public education. Not coincidentally, the past four years have featured the progressive leadership of one of our own MSP members, Barbara Madeloni from the College of Education. The MSP is part of the larger MTA that, in turn, is made up of roughly 116,000 members from K-12 and higher education locals across the Commonwealth.

Under President Madeloni's leadership the MTA has adopted a new posture with respect to educational policy in the state: we reject the view that educators at all levels should follow the edicts of political and economic actors who are not committed to public education. For those of us in higher education, the lack-of-commitment to publicly supported education translates to higher costs for students, a dubious expansion of online education, and all sorts of other efforts that diminish the work of our great institutions.

We must continue to push to restore the Commonwealth's commitment to public (higher) education which serves the interests of our students, staff and faculty who make our in-

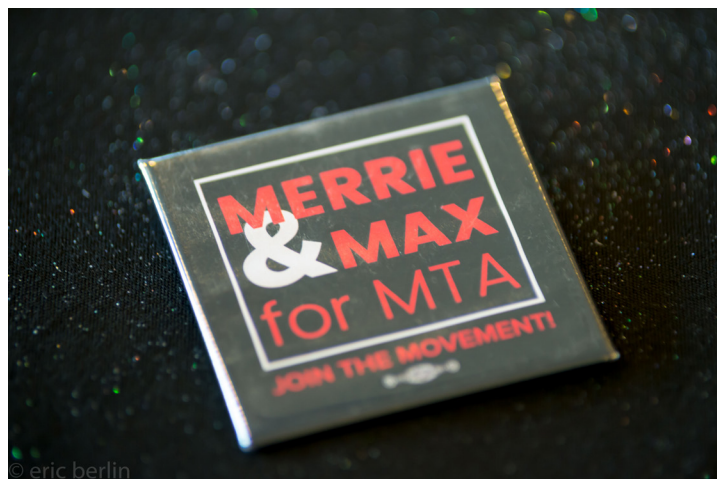
stitutions great and provide lasting and immeasurable value to the Commonwealth. In the past 4 years, a progressive movement has sprung up and flourished within the MTA. The election of Barbara Madeloni as President demonstrated that collective, progressive action can bring positive change.

The MTA Annual Meeting is where we choose the leadership—the President, Vice President, various Board seats and other positions—that work to craft the MTA's agenda towards that end. Annual Meeting is where we discuss and debate whether our budget aligns with our values, political goals and policy commitments. It is where we debate resolutions that make policy as well as symbolic statements. The delegates who attend the Annual Meeting are the voters who choose MTA officers and who vote on policy changes. Many

members don't know that the number of delegates who participate in the Annual Meeting (roughly 1500) falls substantially short of what it could be. We need to change that.

Participation in the MTA Annual Meeting is key to a stronger and more effective statewide union. More power in the state body, in turn, boosts the strength of our local, MSP. I hope that colleagues who have never attended Annual Meeting will consider doing so. It is both fascinating and inspiring; and what seems at the surface to be a simple assembly of educators turns out to be a fulcrum of power that we can and must use more effectively. Barbara Madeloni's term is coming to an end, and at the May 2018 MTA Annual Meeting we face a crucial election. Progressive delegates intend to vote for Merrie Najimy for President and our own Max Page for Vice President. These progressive candidates have pledged to continue the push for more member engagement, to resist the politics of austerity and privatization, and to advocate for a positive and enlarged vision of public education, pre-K to higher ed. MSP covers the cost of attending the meeting, so please consider joining us and helping to continue the fight! Contact the MSP office for more information at [msp@umass.edu](mailto:msp@umass.edu). ■

*fulcrum  
of  
power*

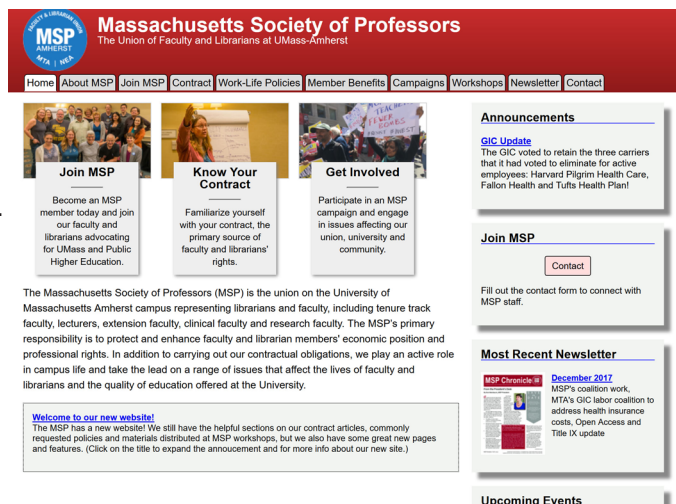


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## The New MSP Website: [umassmsp.org](http://umassmsp.org)

MSP has a new website! Be sure to check out these pages and features at [umassmsp.org](http://umassmsp.org):

- [Work-Life Policies](#): Learn detailed information on each policy including contract language, forms and step-by-step instructions.
- [Join](#): Hear what your colleagues are saying about MSP, get information on how to join, and learn about union victories.
- [Campaigns](#): See what MSP is working on and how you can get involved.
- [Contract](#): Find contract language on specific programs and provisions of interest.
- [Workshops](#): Review information distributed at MSP's workshops.
- [Announcements](#): Read upcoming announcements, information we want to share, and pressing news on the home page and side bar.
- **Social Media**: Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Flickr](#), [Vimeo](#) and [Instagram](#) which you can link to from the bottom of our website.



(Contract Bargaining Update continued)

the bargaining table for the past two contracts. Our primary interest is to obtain equitable pay for equivalent work (i.e., a course is a course no matter the mode of instruction) as well as to protect the intellectual property interests of online course developers. For faculty who teach CPE or online courses, the administration is demanding that we forfeit our existing rights to intellectual property when we develop new courses for additional compensation. Administrators would like to have access to "a course in a can" that could be taught by anyone, anywhere.

**Salary Increases** The administration proposed a one percent raise in the first year, and a possible additional one percent if the state meets an arbitrary revenue target. In each of the following two years, we would lose six months of our raise by getting increases in January rather than July, so we would get less than 2 percent per year. These

are lower than raises offered to other state employees. Furthermore, MSP has long held that merit raises are only appropriate after everyone has received an across-the-board raise that meets the cost of living. Inflation is projected to be at least 2.5 percent per year over the next three years, so the first 2.5 percent should be across-the-board, and any merit raises should be above that basic level. The administration wants a large percentage of our puny raises to go toward merit pay, which we find unacceptable and unfair. Finally, MSP has argued that salary floors should increase significantly, especially for non-tenure-track faculty; the administration offered very small increases. We asked for increases in the promotion increases for Associate and Full Professor – those increments have not increased in nine years. The administration offered only a \$500 increase in promotional bumps.

**Other Items** We also have been negotiating bridge funding for research faculty members who temporarily lose external funding, a solution to the

health insurance gap period for new hires, revamping the computer replacement program, and some proposals from the administration to cap sick leave and modify contract language.

After surveying our members on a wide range of issues last fall, attending department meetings, and having open forums about bargaining issues that attracted over 100 members, MSP narrowed our focus to the top priorities that mattered most to the greatest number of people. None of the MSP's demands are extraordinary or expensive or difficult to achieve.

The MSP Executive Committee, Board, and Bargaining Team are planning actions that will communicate to the administration how important these issues are to faculty and librarians, our members. We need your help. Please contact us ([mvp@umass.edu](mailto:mvp@umass.edu)) if you care about any of the issues on the bargaining table, and if you'd be willing to come to a mass meeting to win a better contract. ■



# The Changing Face of Online Instruction

By Dave Gross, Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology and MSP Treasurer

Nearly all of the courses taught at the university use some form of online material, be it a Moodle page, class videos, or web content. A subset of courses are offered through Continuing and Professional Education (CPE), and many but not all, CPE courses are fully online with no face-to-face instructional components. CPE courses by and large generate money for the university from per-credit charges to students above and beyond the tuition that they pay for “regular” courses.

The Provost, on January 16 of this year, announced that CPE will be replaced by a new structure, the Online Education Group (OEG), that will integrate the university’s online, revenue-generating offerings into the current face-to-face offerings of departments and programs. The goal of OEG is to provide a centralized service for support and creation of online courses while also facilitating a greater inclusion of online courses into the “regular” curriculum.

How this new online course structure will impact MSP members is not clear. With CPE instruction, it has been clear from our contract that CPE courses taught by MSP members are paid at or above a specified minimum, that MSP members own their course content, and that MSP members are to be offered CPE courses before the courses are offered to

non-members. The contract language is specific for CPE, and thus the contract will need to be modified as CPE is phased out.

The contract bargaining team has made CPE language in the contract a high priority, and thus it is reasonable to expect that contract language around online courses and OEG may change in the new contract. Given that OEG aims to insert more online content into the regular curriculum, it seems reasonable that online instructors should be given the same rights and protections as face-to-face instructors. Among those would be comparable pay for teaching a course, inclusion in the MSP bargaining unit (with its contractual protections), and full membership in the UMass faculty.

Stay focused on this new program and the ways that it will impact instruction on our campus. The MSP may need you to participate in appropriate actions as MSP seeks to secure contract language that will protect our members. ■



Attendees at the Fall MSP General Assembly in December wrote holiday cards to Mark Preble in the UMass President’s office asking him about our raises and wishing him a happy holiday.



Lisa Henderson at the Fall MSP General Assembly says “onward to victory!”

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