

12-19-2025 All Unit: Faculty Governance, Merit and Tenure

Colleagues,

As the semester comes to a close, we write with brief updates about our ongoing work protecting faculty governance and contractual rights.

Merit Allocations

DPCs (including the Library Personnel Committee) allocated “Pool A” merit awards according to the MSP contract, their departmental bylaws, and past practice. The administration chose to remand for reconsideration the allocations in more than 15 departments, stating that the award amounts were “insignificantly different” among individuals. The MSP contract says only that merit pay must be allocated based on members’ assigned duties, and not “across-the-board.”

Then, the administration threatened not to process these departments’ merit pay until “compliant allocations” are made. This violates the MSP contract, which does not allow the administration to withhold merit pay that DPCs distribute.

DPCs are essential to faculty and librarian governance on our campus, and they are to make decisions without interference from the administration. The administrations’ threats are an unacceptable intrusion into faculty governance. MSP has filed a grievance and a legal charge with the Massachusetts Department of Labor Relations, and we have prepared further charges if we cannot settle the dispute.

Tenure Denial

For the first time in a decade, the Provost has rejected a faculty member’s tenure case that was uniformly positive at the DPC, Chair, CPC, and Dean level, and that clearly met the standards for tenure in the Red Book (Trustee policy). The MSP contract is clear that the faculty have primary responsibility in tenure decisions; the administration may make a recommendation contrary to the faculty “only in exceptional circumstances,” which do not exist in this case.

On December 11th, 40 MSP members from across campus participated in the initial grievance hearing, in solidarity with our colleague but even more important, to defend the principles of shared governance and faculty primacy in academic matters.

Prohibited Practices

These are just the latest examples of overreach by an administration seemingly intent on eroding the rights of faculty [and staff](#). Last week, MSP filed an additional charge with the state labor board because the administration suggested they could decrease merit pay for MSP members who chose to submit the negotiated “alternative” AFR/ALR rather than the long-form, which is a violation of Massachusetts law.

As always, we aim to resolve issues informally, but MSP will press ahead in these matters until we reach a resolution. In the meantime, we wish you easy grading, happy holidays, and a restful break.

In solidarity,

Jacque Kurland and Marc Liberatore