

12/10/2024 [ALLUnit] MSP Bargaining Update

Colleagues,

It's been a busy few weeks for the unions across campus! Thank you to everyone who has participated in our actions. If you have not yet had a chance to do so, please stay tuned for ways to contribute in the coming weeks and months!

CHILDCARE

In early November, MSP brought a dozen members to the bargaining table to testify on the importance -- and lack -- of **high-quality, affordable, on-campus childcare, including infant care**. Supported by dozens of silent witnesses, these members brought personal, wrenching stories to the table. We followed up with a multi-union march to Whitmore, where we delivered our demands to Deputy Chancellor Tilman Wolf. [1] [2] The administration is beginning to move on this: in response to our action, they announced plans to build an expanded childcare facility at University Village. **But we still need their agreement on our proposals for extended hours, infant care, and guaranteed slots for faculty and staff.**

COMPENSATION

Last week, hundreds of union members from across campus rallied outside Whitmore in support of **raising the wages of the lowest-paid members** of each unit. This successful action attracted a lot of media attention! [3] [4] [5] [6]

On Friday, 30 MSP members came to the bargaining table to testify about our most critical concern — the appallingly low salary floors, professional development funds, and promotion increments, most of which haven't seen substantial changes in over a decade. More than 100 members witnessed the testimony, with stories about stymied efforts to obtain replacement computers, searches failing because of low salary offers, and the painful reality that some faculty and librarians cannot afford the rent (or even qualify to rent) anywhere near our campus. UMass is way behind our peers.

Our members also witnessed the intransigence of the administration's team. When asked what they were planning to do about our proposals (which they received last March!), they responded that it was an "unfair question" and that MSP needed to "prioritize" our spending requests. We reject the outrageous assertion that we must pick and choose among our members' urgent needs. This campus has run **hundred-million-dollar surpluses** [7] each year, and the Fair Share Amendment has generated **two billion extra dollars (this year alone!) to spend on public education** and public transportation. Some of these funds can and **must be spent on the people who do the core work of the University!**

We're back at the table on December 20th, where we expect a more meaningful response from the administration's team. We'll resume bargaining early in January, six months after our contract has expired, and **we'll need everyone's help to move the administration and win our priorities!** [8]

- [1] <https://dailycollegian.com/2024/11/union-rally-stroller-parade-rolls-through-campus-for-childcare/>
- [2] <https://www.gazettenet.com/Umass-employees-voice-frustration-with-University-child-care-options-57770363>
- [3] <https://www.amherstindy.org/2024/12/06/the-longer-we-stay-the-less-we-make-umass-unions-protest-low-wages/>
- [4] <https://www.masslive.com/westernmass/2024/12/about-250-protest-low-wages-staffing-levels-at-umass-amherst.html> , <https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&t=pubname%3ASUNB%21Republican%252C%2BThe%2B%2528Sp%20ringfield%252C%2BMA%2529/year%3A2024%212024/mody%3A1206%21December%2B06&action=browse&format=text&docref=news/19D4B2C2A0AFF350>
- [5] <https://www.gazettenet.com/UMass-Amherst-unions-demand-better-wages-fair-contracts-filled-positions-58321277>
- [6] <https://dailycollegian.com/2024/12/umass-union-members-rally-for-a-better-workplace/>
- [7] <https://www.umassp.edu/sites/default/files/documents/Budget/Action%203.%20FY25%20Budget.pdf> slide 73, bottom (“Operating Margin”)
- [8] <https://umassmsp.org/campaigns/contract-bargaining/>