

“Merit” Pay

Unit members were notified recently that they were considered “meritorious” and how much “merit” they were to receive. At Salem there were three levels of “merit”:

32 members (10%) received \$1,500.00

65 members (20%) received \$1,200.01

135 members (43%) received \$ 749.87

85 members (27%) received \$ 0.00

This year’s pool was 1.25% of the statewide payroll.

The “merit” pay provision of this contract was proposed by management and opposed by your bargaining team. We felt that subjective merit never works; it’s never enough to motivate and it only irritates the employees. All through bargaining we attempted to get this pool of money added to the rank adjustment. We did negotiate a cap each year, the provision that this money would be off-base, and that all the money would be distributed.

Also be aware that on October 1, 2002, another merit pool bonus of 1.75% off-base, with a cap of \$2,500 per member will be distributed.

The Chapter Office has a list of each recipient, the amount of each award, and the reason for it. Any member who would like to see it may stop in during normal office hours.

Pay Raise

The money finally arrived! As I’m sure most of you noticed the retroactive base increases due on January 1, 2001 and September 30, 2001, rank adjustments, the 2.5% signing bonus for post-tenure review and “merit” monies arrived in your last pay check. One catch, the HR/CMS system calculated the federal withholding amount as if we would receive the same pay every two weeks. That would be nice but I don’t think it will happen - although with HR/CMS one is never sure. For many of us this was the first and probably last time our withholdings were calculated using the highest federal tax bracket. This was not supposed to happen. We were assured that the HR/CMS system could handle the withholdings at a more realistic rate. Discussions will be held to see if a remedy can be awarded. For now please realize that your federal withholding, as a percentage of your income, is higher than in past years. The retirement withholding looks correct with no monies withheld for the off-base pay.

There is a spreadsheet available on the Salem State MSCA webpage at www.mscaunion.org/~salem that helps in calculating your retroactive payments and, going forward, what your base pay should be. This webpage can also be accessed from Salem State’s homepage as well. An explanation of your pay is also coming from the Academic Affairs office.

For those unit members who received a minimum (Article XIII-A) adjustment in October 2001 there is a retroactive component that will be paid with the pay advice on March 15th. A good thing about the payment being this week is that the system will not calculate withholdings using the highest tax rate (we hope).

Special Salem Chapter Meeting

For the purpose of receiving nominations from the floor for this year's chapter election, there will be a special Salem Chapter Meeting held **Monday, March 18th at 1:00 p.m. in the MLK Room, Ellison Center.**

Nominations will be accepted from the floor for Salem Chapter Officers, Salem MSCA Director, Executive Committee members, MSCA Delegate Assembly (25 seats) and the MTA Annual Meeting (9 estimated seats).

A light lunch will be served. There will be an Executive Committee Meeting immediately following the special Salem Chapter Meeting.

State House Day – April 2, 2002

On Tuesday, April 2nd, there will be a State College Advocacy Day at the Massachusetts State House. College presidents, faculty/librarians, students, alumni

parents, and friends of public higher education will bring our message that public higher education is an investment not a cost to the Commonwealth.

A table will be set up in the Hall of Flags from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. for unit members to sign in and receive information packages. Teams of administrators, MSCA members and students from each college will visit with representatives and senators who represent the districts where the colleges are located. At 1:00 p.m. we will all gather to compare notes and have refreshments.

All interested unit members are encouraged to attend. Picture identification is required to get into the State House. In the Chapter Office there are copies of a report titled *Massachusetts Public Higher Education: a Shrewd Investment with Significant Returns* put out by UMass/Amherst (referred to as the MISER report). It's an excellent report and would be good reading before the statehouse visit. Please call me at extension 6366 if you need more information.

MCAS Scores on High School Transcripts

At the last MSCA Board of Directors meeting, the board voted to oppose a proposal by the Board of Education to put MCAS scores on high school transcripts.

Dental Coverage

Effective April 1st, Delta Dental will be replaced by Metlife as our dental carrier. The service will remain the same but the total cost will decrease, easing a potential problem with funding our dental care coverage. There should be a mailing to each unit member's home detailing the change.

Medical Insurance for Part-time Unit Members

Representatives from the BHE have assured us that there will be a meeting with representatives of the Group Insurance Commission (GIC) to deal with the eligibility of part-time faculty to obtain GIC insurance. To date the meeting has not been set. We were also promised that a letter would be sent to unit members explaining the problems involved in securing this benefit; again there has been no action from the employer. We will keep you informed.

Committee Vacancies

Capital Campaign Committee - New committee

Unit members are needed to join this fundraising committee. No limit on number of unit members.

Bachelor of General Studies Committee -

One (1) unit member is needed, Greg Thaller has resigned from this committee.

If you are interested in serving on either committee, please contact the Salem Chapter Office at extension 6366 by Monday, March 25th.

Message from MSCA President, Patricia Markunas...

Dear MSCA Members:

At the March 8th Board of Directors meeting, the Board voted to sponsor a gubernatorial candidates forum on higher education issues, to be held on the afternoon of this year's MSCA Delegate Assembly.

The Assembly will be held on Saturday, April 27th, at Worcester State College. The business meeting will be held from 10:00 am to noon; lunch from noon to 1:30; and the forum from 1:30 to 3:00 pm.

Delegates will be able to submit questions for use at the forum, which will be strictly non-partisan in format.

At this time, six of the eight declared gubernatorial candidates have committed to or expressed an interest in participation in the forum. Candidates have been invited to attend lunch with the delegates as well.

This promises to be an exciting and unique event for the MSCA. On behalf of the Board, I encourage all members to consider participation in this year's Assembly. If you are interested, you must be elected as a delegate or alternate from your chapter for the Assembly.

For information about the election procedures on your campus, please contact your local chapter president or my office. Thank you.

Pat Markunas
MSCA President