

Checking my newsletter folder I realized that I have more copies of PowerPoint presentations (from the Governor's office, the BHE, and others) than space in the folder. That's when I realized it's time to write a newsletter and see if I could summarize my thoughts on recent news stories regarding public higher education in Massachusetts. I hope that members have been getting the email updates. If you have not received them, please call Mary Buckley at extension 6920 and she will add you to the distribution list.

At the end of January Governor Romney announced a list of cuts (called 9c cuts) for this fiscal year (FY'03). State Colleges were cut \$2.8 million; Salem's portion was \$490,000. Information was also released about a proposal to change the statutes governing the Group Insurance Commission to require all state employees to pay 25% of the costs of their health insurance. Currently we pay 15% so the increase would be a 66% increase in the amount we pay for health insurance. Later it was discovered that the proposed legislation contained language indicating the state's portion (75%) would be based on the lowest priced health insurance available, thus costing employees more than 25% if they selected a plan which was not the lowest priced.

On February 26th Governor Romney released House 1, the Governor's proposed budget for FY 04. This proposal projected deep cuts in funding, as well as consolidation to a single line item budget for all public higher education, a tuition retention plan, changes to Chapter 150E (the collective bargaining law), and the transformation of the state pension plan from a deferred benefit plan to a defined contribution plan. It also included elimination of the UMass President's office that has received much play in the newspapers. Also in February the Board of Higher Education released "A Proposal for Strategic Realignment." This included a budget cut of \$150 million for public higher education, and a new position, Secretary of Education, to coordinate all public education K-20. Peter Nessen is currently the Czar-Designate. The proposal also advocated Regional Councils, consolidation of higher-cost, lower enrollment institutions, a new funding structure based on enrollment and performance measures, a gradual decrease in state appropriations for selected campuses with specialized missions (Massachusetts College of Art and Massachusetts Maritime Academy), and support for one distinguished flagship research university in Massachusetts (UMass/Amherst). Salem State will be grouped, for purposes of regionalization, with North Shore Community College and Northern Essex Community College in the Northeast Region.

At the end of March "A Plan for Increasing Efficiencies in the Massachusetts Public Higher Education System" FY 04 was released. Using information from Bain consultants, a financial model for administrative cost savings was developed from "best" demonstrated peer practices in Massachusetts public higher education. I believe the word "best" could be replaced by "cheapest." Using this model it was determined there was a potential savings of \$101 million; \$37 million from community colleges, \$31 million from state colleges, and \$33 million from the University. These savings do not include UMass/Amherst or UMass/Medical. Salem State's portion of this "savings" is \$7,281,977 (a 20% cut). The remaining \$50 million of the \$150 million savings would come from restructuring tuition, fees, and financial aid (I'm not sure what that means).

Other parts of concern in the Governor's proposal are the outside sections. House 1 calls for major changes in our collective bargaining rights. There would be a change in classification with more individuals classified as managers and limiting the areas we could bargain. This could have a major impact on our membership since many of our members perform managerial functions. Again, this is a case where the Governor's office provided no details on what positions would be considered 'management.'

Newspaper articles and legislative hearings have questioned the reorganization savings. It is hard to make the math work with a new layer of

administration (the regional boards), and no detailed description of the cost savings.

Where this lead us...who knows! It looks like there are two general areas; the reorganization and the budget. The Governor will be submitting his reorganization plan to the legislature by May 1 and that body will have sixty

days to year or nah the total reorganization plan. If they do neither the plan becomes law July 1st. The governor's plan may call for control of colleges to be transferred from the local board of trustees to a regional board, some consolidations, state control over campus fees, state appropriations based on enrollment and performance, diminishing of support for specialty schools, and a change in the structure of the UMass system, among other proposals.

Reports have indicated the budget shortfall for FY 04 will be \$3 billion. Legislators are sending signals that they do not believe the Governor's House 1 fully addresses the budget shortfall and the house and senate will work on their own budget proposal over the next month or so.

As the budget is being developed it is imperative that our members have their voices heard. The MSCA board of directors will meet on April 7th to work on strategies and make recommendations to the membership.

In all of this please remember that our colleagues in APA and AFSCME have not received their **bargained** pay raises. When we are talking to our legislators please remind them that these were signed, agreed upon contracts and they should be honored. These members could also be harmed by the changes in Chapter 150E.

For those who would like to review the Bain reports (yes there are two of them), and the other published reports on higher education there is a copy in the Chapter Office for your reading pleasure. With any luck, the above comments will not be obsolete by the time the newsletter is published – things change quickly around the issue of Higher Education.

Day Bargaining

The MSCA day bargaining committee met with members of the Board of Higher Education (BHE) and representatives from the state colleges to bargain distance education and intellectual property rights. This was an attempt to resolve the issue before the commencement of bargaining the successor agreement. We were unable to come to agreement on all the issues, and discussions have stopped. We did reach a tentative agreement on intellectual property, electronic monitoring, college email for part-time faculty, and a classroom observation form to be used by those evaluating a distance education course. We are hoping the employer will reduce these agreements to a Memorandum of Agreement that will be effective when signed. The bargaining team will send out a more detailed explanation to all members.

Meetings will soon be scheduled for bargaining a successor agreement. Many thanks to the large number of Salem members who responded to the 2003 Pre-Bargaining Questionnaire. During April and early May the bargaining team will formulate a proposal and comments received from the surveys will help develop the proposal.

DGCE Bargaining

Contract negotiations will soon begin on a successor agreement. The current agreement expires August 31, 2003. A proposal has been approved MSCA Board of Directors that includes an economic proposal, and some language changes. When bargaining begins more information will follow.

DGCE Issues

The DGCE evaluation reports for the fall 2001, spring 2002, summer 2002, and fall 2002 will be sent to faculty soon. The reports were delayed because of PeopleSoft conversion problems. These problems have been corrected and future evaluations should be delivered in a timely manner.

The proposed summer 2003 pay schedule has been released. All institutes that have finished by May 31st will be paid June 6th. Summer I classes and all institutes starting on or after June 2nd and finished by June 27th

will be paid July 4th. All institutes starting on or after June 30th and finishing by July 25th will be paid August 1st. Finally, all summer II and all remaining institutes will be paid August 29th.

Nominations are open to attend the following:

This year's ***Delegate Assembly*** will be held:

Saturday, April 26th
Fitchburg State College
Fitchburg, MA
24 delegates needed

This year's ***MTA Annual Meeting*** will be held:

Friday & Saturday
May 30th & 31st
Hynes Convention Center
Boston, MA
Estimated 9 delegates needed

Travel expenses will be paid to support attendance. If you are interested in attending either or both of these meetings, please complete and return the attached form to MSCA/Salem Chapter, SB-205B or by calling the Chapter Office at extension 6920 ***by noon, Thursday, April 10th***.

Salem Chapter Meeting Executive Committee Meeting

The following meetings are open to all unit members:

Salem Chapter Meeting
Thursday, May 1st
1:00 p.m.
MLK Room, Ellison Center

Executive Committee Meeting
Thursday, May 1st
2:00 p.m.
Heritage Room, Ellison Center

Nominations for Statewide Activities

I am willing to attend the following:

MSCA Delegate Assembly _____
Saturday, April 26th
Fitchburg State College
Fitchburg, MA

MTA Annual Meeting _____
Friday & Saturday
May 30th & 31st
Hynes Convention Center
Boston, MA

Name (Please print)

Dept.

Please return to Salem Chapter/MSCA, SB-205B no later than
noon, Thursday, April 10th.

Thank you for your participation!