



Affiliated with the MTA and NEA

October 2, 2008

Dear Members of the Board of Higher Education:

We wish to bring to your attention our concerns about state college faculty and librarian negotiations.

Chapter 150E, the Massachusetts public sector collective bargaining statute, states:

*"In the case of employees of the system of public institutions of higher education, the employer shall mean the **board of higher education** or any individual who is designated to represent it and act in its interest in dealing with employees, except that the employer of employees of the University of Massachusetts shall be the board of the university...."*

"The employer and the exclusive representative shall meet at reasonable times, including meetings in advance of the employer's budget-making process and shall negotiate in good faith with respect to wages, hours, standards of productivity and performance, and any other terms and conditions of employment...."

February 4, 2008: We began negotiations for a successor.

Spring 2008: The MSCA repeatedly asked the Board for an economic proposal; the Board made none.

Summer 2008: The MSCA continued to ask the Board for an economic proposal; the Board made none.

June 30, 2008: **Our contract expired.**

August 4, 2008: The MSCA filed an unfair labor practice charge in response to the Board's refusal to bargain over pay.

September 29, 2008: The Board put an economic offer on the table.

January 1, 2009: The 2.5% raise the Board proposes would take effect on this date, rather than July 1, 2008, and comes with a caveat: if we do not reach agreement by this date, the raises would not be effective until the date an agreement is reached.

The Board's conduct represents a failure to bargain in good faith. Months of delay in making an economic offer, a six-month salary freeze, and a threat to withhold an increase until settlement are bad faith. This is not advocacy for the colleges. Furthermore, these actions do not foster a supportive and collegial relationship with the faculty and librarians who make our state colleges the valuable assets they are for the Commonwealth.

Here is the context:

February 2008: The Board accepted the Sibson study that showed state college professors' salaries to be 13% below the average of those at peer institutions and 21% below the 75th percentile.

June 2008: FY 2008 ended with a surplus for the Commonwealth.

July 2008: Boston area cost of living increase—6.3% over July 2007.

August 2008: Northeast cost of living increase—5.5% over August 2007.

We ask that you –

- look for ways to address the six-month salary freeze;
- drop the “no-retro” threat; and
- explore how we can begin to address our disadvantage in the academic employment market.

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MSCA President

Daniel Shartin
MSCA Day Bargaining Committee Chair