

December 6, 2005

Dr. Janelle Ashley
Worcester State College
486 Chandler Street
Worcester, MA 01602

Dear President Ashley,

At its meeting of November 4, 2005 the MSCA Board of Directors unanimously approved the following motion and directed me to send it to you and your colleagues:

The MSCA Board of Directors affirms our long-standing position that state college faculty and librarians deserve to be paid salaries at least comparable to salaries of faculty and librarians at peer institutions; and further, that the Board urges the state college presidents and academic vice presidents to use this principle to maximize post-tenure review moneys and distribute 6% pay raises to all eligible post-tenure review candidates.

In September of last year, the State College Council of Presidents released its 2003-04 Faculty Salary Study with widespread distribution on the campuses and extensive media coverage. A significant finding of the Study was that the gap in salaries between state college faculty and those at peer institutions increased with academic rank. This finding demonstrated that the current state college faculty salary structure penalizes seniority and negates academic credentials.

The release of the Study coincided with the MSCA's statewide demonstration to protest the second year "anniversary" of the last comprehensive pay increase paid to faculty and librarians. These two events combined to generate several days of newspaper articles and front-page photographs, radio coverage, and letters to the editor about the low salaries paid to state college faculty and librarians.

I have reviewed this coverage and subsequent presidential testimony offered before the Senate Task Force on Higher Education, the Board of Higher Education and other groups. I found no ambiguity about the presidents' belief that this issue represented a crisis that threatened the quality of education offered to the students of the state colleges. Several college presidents repeatedly stated that raising faculty salaries was the "number one priority" for their institutions and the state college system as a whole.

As you know, negotiations continued to drag on until, ten days after a large demonstration by MSCA members at Steve Tocco's office in Boston, the employer offered to make significant changes in the composition of management's bargaining team and its strategies and proposals.

In January, Presidents Antonucci and Mohler-Faria were appointed to head the new management team. Combined with pared-down proposals on both sides and an accelerated bargaining schedule, this change enabled the parties to reach a settlement last February.

In the interim, state college faculty and librarian salaries have continued to deteriorate vis-à-vis those of colleagues at peer institutions. During negotiations, the MSCA offered several possible solutions to address the afore-mentioned salary penalties for state college service and credentials. However, these salary problems were not addressed in the final settlement.

If low faculty and librarians salaries were a crisis in September 2004, the crisis can only be worse now. If recruitment and retention of outstanding faculty and librarians were serious problems then, the problem can only be exacerbated now. If addressing the serious findings of the COP Faculty Salary Study was the "number one priority" for certain state college presidents then, now is not the time to make these problems worse.

Post-tenure review, Alternative One, is funded entirely through local campus budgets. The decisions to be made are under the jurisdiction of local campus administrators. It is not a "zero sum" program. There is no limit on the number of maximum awards that can be given to eligible candidates.

This post-tenure review alternative provides an opportunity for the state college presidents and academic vice presidents to demonstrate clearly and unequivocally that they believe that state college faculty and librarians deserve to be paid what faculty and librarians are paid at peer institutions.

This post-tenure review alternative provides an important tool for state college administrators to mitigate the financial penalties that faculty and librarians with extended state college service and at the highest academic ranks have suffered.

This post-tenure review alternative can send a message that state college service **is** valued by our college presidents and vice presidents, mitigating the loss of tenured faculty and librarians who are leaving our institutions and rewarding those who have remained despite multiple years of "zero" pay increases and protracted negotiations -- the very factors that have caused the salaries of state college faculty and librarians to fall so far behind those of their peers.

Now is not the time to be punitive and divisive with faculty and librarians who have not received a pay increase for over three years and who will not make up lost ground with the current agreement even when it is funded.

Now is the time for you to take direct action to address the crisis in state college faculty and librarian salaries and to protect the quality of education for our students.

For the membership,

Patricia V. Markunas
President

Enclosures

History of ATB Salary Increases for the Unit
Salary Tables by Rank and Discipline - COP Salary Study

cc: State College Council of Presidents
Philip M. Dooher, Interim President-Elect, Framingham State College
State College Academic Vice Presidents
Frederick W. Clark, Esq., Executive Officer, Council of Presidents
MSCA Board of Directors
MSCA Faculty and Librarians