



## Interim President's Message - Joanna Gonsalves

Jim Gubbins, our Chapter President, has a sabbatical, so it is my pleasure to serve in his place this semester.

Contract negotiations have stalled; thus, we are continuing work –to–rule in the absence of a new contract. The Executive Committee is not appointing faculty to university advisory committees, taskforces, or special committees, unless such committees are required by law or other regulators.

**New Strategic Plan Implementation:** In December, the BHE approved our campus' new strategic plan. The administration has requested that faculty serve on Strategic Plan/ Business Plan "Goal Groups" (Academic Excellence, Student Success, Inclusive Excellence, and Enrollment Growth). The Board of Trustees has charged these groups to advise on areas for new revenue, as well as program and service cuts. Goal group action items for implementation in FY18 and FY19 are to be developed by March 15th. Concerns have been raised by the executive committee about the decision-making time-line and the fact that the broader plan/ context for the implementation of the new strategic plan hasn't been laid out yet to faculty or staff, other than some remarks at the inauguration.

An all-chapter meeting has been called for February 12th during community time (ECC—Underground) to discuss faculty participation in these Strategic Plan/ Business Plan groups, as well as actions to pressure the Council of Presidents to reach a fair contract.

## Protest Before Inauguration -Rebecca Hains

On January 19, a group of approximately 15 Salem State faculty members and librarians, coordinated by the MSCA-Salem Chapter Executive Committee, protested outside the O'Keefe Center for an hour before SSU President John Keenan's inauguration.

The protest's *raison d'être* was the lack of a contract agreement between the MSCA and the Board of Higher Education, despite negotiations for nearly a year. The location and timing were selected because, as Joanna Gonsalves explained, "Our hope was that our demonstration would invite conversations between campus visitors, including Governor Baker, about the protest's meaning and significance."

In addition to holding brightly-colored 8.5"x11" signs indicating the number of days the Massachusetts State College Association (MSCA) union has been without a contract (which, as of January 19, was 203), protesters also held signs that read "Save Our Health Care" and "Shame on the GIC," to protest the Group Insurance Commission's hasty and secretive vote the day before the inauguration.

During the demonstration, the protesters engaged with curious passers-by, informing them about both the contract and the insurance issues. Salem News and the Salem Evening Gazette reporters conducted brief interviews with several members, resulting in

some coverage from the Salem News, where reporter Paul Leighton noted: “Keenan did not mention the current negotiations with faculty union members. A group of about 15 professors stood outside the O’Keefe Center before the inauguration, holding signs that read ‘203 days,’ indicating how long state university employees have been without a contract.”

In addition to the protest, during the inaugural proceedings, Chapter President James Gubbins offered some remarks on behalf of faculty and librarians, including a statement urging officials and administrators to “support negotiations for a fair contract.”

Unfortunately, a second part of the protest was disrupted by members of the Salem State Police. The Chapter had encouraged a peaceful protest during the inauguration. We suggested that in addition to wearing MSCA t-shirts, buttons, and stickers, unit members could hold signs in a manner that would not disrupt other inauguration attendees but would be visible to members of the inauguration platform party, which included Gov. Baker. This protest was made less effective by SSU police officers, who confiscated many protesters’ signs upon entry into the O’Keefe Center.

Chapter President James Gubbins reported that he was heartened to see quite a few signs from the dais during his own remarks. It is noteworthy, however, that police officers also confiscated signs from one seated MSCA member. For example, philosophy professor William Cornwell reported that a plain-clothes SSU officer approached him during the inauguration to state that such signs were not allowed in the building, and that he would either escort him out of the building or confiscate his sign. When Cornwell asked the officer for the rationale for a policy preventing non-disruptive speech at a public event with elected officials, the officer restated that no signs were allowed. When pressed for further details, the officer also declined to say on whose authority he was acting.

Cornwell states, “I am disturbed that at a university event open to the public, with elected officials among the speakers, the police would approach me in the audience while I was peacefully and non-disruptively exercising my constitutional right to free speech and give me an ultimatum to surrender that right or be ejected from the venue. Confiscating signs undermined Salem State’s central academic

value of freedom of expression and contradicted the message of President Keenan’s inaugural address, where he stated: ‘Our students and faculty come from different backgrounds and have a variety of opinions. We want our campus to continue to debate the difficult issues of the day, to vote in local and national elections, and to tell their stories.’”

Gonsalves and Interim Vice President Juditha Burchsted met with administrators to discuss the situation. They have officially requested that the University Police Chief issue a statement to the community about the rationale for the ban and confiscation and to provide an assurance that freedom of expression by all members of our campus community will be respected and guaranteed at future events on the Salem State University campus. As of today there has been no response from the Salem State Chief of Police.

### **MSCA responds to GIC - Tiffany Chenault**

The Group Insurance Commission (GIC) voted to cut three of the six health care plans, impacting more than 400,000 state employees. The decision was made to save the state 20 million dollars. Tufts Medical, Fallon, Harvard Pilgrim were the ones the GIC eliminated. This vote blindsided thousands of people. Needless to say, the opposition to this vote was extremely strong because of the negative impact on people’s life and health care choices.

Once this announcement was made public our union and other unions started to act and mobilize. MSCA and MTA members urged House and Senate legislatures to express their concerns. January 25th at the Charles Hurley Building was one of many public hearings about this decision. The hearing was standing room only (for those that could get in) with nurses, retirees, teachers, MBTA workers, correction officers, policemen, firefighters and more.

At the hearing several people addressed the issue of GIC shifting the cost to employees, lack of transparency, a need to introduce a bill to change the composition of the GIC board, the erosion of lower pay for state workers and now the erosion of our health benefits. People also voice concerns of lack of choices in health care is detrimental.

On February 1, the GIC changed their vote to reinstate all insurance providers. **We fight, we win!**

### DGCE Notice

DGCE Student SIR IIs were NOT conducted in the fall of 2017 (undergrad sections) due to an error made by Information Technology Services. The Dean of the DGCE will place letters in the personnel files of all fall 2017 CE instructors stating that the lack of student evaluations will not negatively impact rehiring, rank or other personnel decisions. The DGCE Dean is taking steps to ensure this error doesn't occur in the future

### Upcoming Meetings

#### **Chapter Meeting**

Monday, February 12th at 11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.  
Underground, Ellison Center - North Campus

#### **Chapter Meeting & Luncheon**

Thursday, April 19th at 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
Vets Hall, Ellison Center - North Campus

#### **Executive Committee Meetings**

(all held in the Chapter Office)

Wednesday, Feb. 14th at 8:00 a.m.

Monday, March 5th at 9:30 a.m.

Thursday, April 5th at 8:00 a.m.

Monday, May 7th at 8:00 a.m.

### Officers

|                               |                     |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Acting President:</b>      | Joanna Gonsalves    |
| <b>Acting Vice President:</b> | Juditha Burchsted   |
| <b>Acting Treasurer:</b>      | Lisa Chen           |
| <b>Secretary:</b>             | Gretchen Sinnett    |
| <b>MSCA Director:</b>         | Tiffany Chenault    |
| <b>Grievance Officer:</b>     | Anne-Marie Hakstian |

### Executive Committee

#### **Area Representatives**

A: Juditha Burchsted (BIO), James Cullen (GLS)

B: William Cornwell (PHL), Jeff Theis (ENG)

C: Bethany Jay (HIS), Martin Krugman (PSY)

D: Rebecca Hains (COM), David Goodof (MGT)

**At-Large Representatives** Andrew Darien, Paul Kelly, Lorri Krebs, Dan Mulcare, Peter Walker, Ronald MacTaylor

### MSCA Chapter Office

**Office Location:** Sullivan Bldg., Room 202B

**Telephone:** 978-542-6366

Mary Buckley, Chapter Secretary, x6920

[mbuckley@saalemstate.edu](mailto:mbuckley@saalemstate.edu)

Christine Melin, Executive Assistant to Statewide Grievance Chair, [cmelin@saalemstate.edu](mailto:cmelin@saalemstate.edu)

### Grievance Process

Faculty members who believe a violation of the Collective Bargaining Agreement has occurred and wish to discuss a potential grievance, should contact our Grievance Officer, Joanna Gonsalves, for assistance with initiating the process.

**Step I** - is a hearing with the Grievant, Chapter Representative and the Provost

**Step II** - is a hearing with the Grievant, Chapter Representative and the President.

**NOTE:** Step I grievance forms must be submitted within fifteen (15) calendar days from the date of an alleged breach of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (or from the date the grievant learned of the breach.).