WE DID IT!!!

Contract Funding Secured: 85/15 Insurance Premiums Preserved

The M Massachusetts legislature, in unanimous roll call votes in both houses, passed the M SCA contract funding bill (H 4785) in formal session on December 5th. The legislative action capped several months of increasing intense lobbying activity to insure the bill’s passage. The bill will be sent to A citing Governor Jane Swift, who has pledged in writing to sign the bill.

A letter the governor’s action, the funds must be appropriated and sent to the campuses for payment to the membership. It is expected that pay increases and retroactive monies will be paid out six to eight weeks after the appropriation has been made.

State Employee Health Insurance Premiums

A another victory for the M SCA membership was the preservation of the current level of state employee health insurance premium contributions. Set by the Legislature at 85% paid by the state and 15% paid by the employee, an expected gubernatorial veto to change the contributions to 75% paid by the state and 25% paid by the employee did not materialize.

The governor’s support of the current level of contributions stands in sharp contrast to her two predecessors. We annually vetoed the Legislature’s recommendation on this issue, only to have the vetoes overridden.

Early Retirement Incentive Program (H4767)

To avoid substantial state employee layoffs, the governor has submitted a bill to establish an Early Retirement Incentive Program for state employees, including those in public higher education. The proposal would grant a combination of five years of service and/or chronological age to be added to the employee’s retirement status. A maximum of 6,700 state employees could receive this benefit, which has certain other eligibility restrictions. Local chapter presidents have a copy of the bill.

Members who are interested in passage of this program should contact their local legislators. Updates will be posted on the M SCA website.

MEC Review Authorized

The M Massachusetts Education Data and Certification Test (M E C T) was implemented to disastrous results in 1997. M TA filed legislation each session for an independent, scientific review of the validity and reliability of the M E C T as a test for teacher certification. The Legislature adopted the legislation in each session, only to have it vetoed by the governor.

The bill calling for the independent review of the M E C T was incorporated as part of this year’s budget passed by the Legislature. Governor Swift, in another break with her predecessors, did not veto this line item, and the scientific review will go forward.

Public Higher Education Funds Cut

In the wake of the recession and dramatic revenue shortfalls, the final FY 2002 budget for public higher education was cut substantially. Large cuts were also made in accounts for student scholarships and library material acquisitions. A withdrawal for higher education are expected for the FY 2003 budget, to be developed by the Governor and sent to the Legislature in early January. A we go to press, final FY 2002 figures are not available, but should be posted on the M SCA website for members’ review.

President’s Message

Patricia V. Markunas

It should not have been this hard to secure the funding of a collective bargaining agreement negotiated in good faith by both parties. But this is M Massachusetts, and the year is 2001. A not this is the story.

Last winter, during legislative hearings, I was assured, publicly and repeatedly, by representatives and senators on the House Ways and Means Committee, the joint Committee on Public Service, and the Joint Committee on Education that, once our negotiations were concluded, the Legislature would follow through on funding the agreement.

On March 26th, after three years of contentious negotiations with the M SCA Bargaining Committee, reached tentative agreement with the Board of Higher Education for a new contract. The memorandum of agreement was finalized and initialed by the M SCA membership on May 4th; and the Acting Governor, from her hospital bed, signed the agreement herself and sent the funding legislation as a supplemental to the FY 2002 budget to the Legislature on May 10th.

On September 25th, Secretary of Administration and Finance Stephen Crosby announced the beginnings of major budget cuts for the current budget year, and stated that state agencies would have to “absorb” their collective bargaining costs into existing appropriations. A fine mess we’re in, and I am at the State House that day, working on the Domestic Partnership Bill. We were able to meet with dozens of senators and representatives to begin the lobbying process to counter the administration’s strategy of dealing with the shockwaves from the state’s economy.

On October 2nd, Board of Higher Education Chairperson Stephen Tocco announced that “there would not be any unfunded contracts on [his] watch” and pledged his support to insure funding. On October 5th, the M SCA Board of Directors unanimously adopted a legislative strategy to get the contract funded and to protect the current breakdown of contributions to state employee health insurance premiums. M SCA officers and chapter presidents; state college presidents and administrators; the MTA; Massachusetts governmental relations staff; and the Executive Director, and the BHE Chairperson and chancellor met with the Senate President, the House Speaker, the Governor, and legislative rank and file to press for the contract’s funding.

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The M SCA membership poured enormous effort into letter-writing, email messages and meetings with their local reps and senators. A postcard campaign involving all 92,000 members of M TA was initiated to support the funding of all the higher education contracts. Thousands of postcards were sent to the Governor, the Speaker, the H o u s e and the Senate. Throughout October and November, there were numerous reports that the funding would be taken up, reports only to be reversed within hours. In the days before Thanksgiving, Governor, the Speaker and the Legislature pledged to sign all collective bargaining agreements sent to them. The entire experience demonstrates, once again, the power of collective action, the importance of coalition building and the need to work much closer with other labor unions, and the need to work harder to identify information gaps and offers exercises for the writer to take one more look at the work. Ballenger believes that students too often view revisions as the perfecting the mechanics of writing, rather than strengthening the content, logic, and writer’s voice.

Research writers will find the three appendices to be useful. A appendix includes a sample research essay written in this format. An appendix describes APA style, and includes a sample. Of particular use in both appendices are the sample citations provided for each style, including information on how to cite Internet and software sources. Unfortunately, Ballenger did not update his third edition with the newest (fifth) edition of the APA style. A appendix refers specifically to researching and writing papers on literary topics.

The Curious Researcher is an effective guide, not only for students, but for faculty as well. It is more than a “cookbook” for writing. For students, Ballenger’s book is a user-friendly tool that makes the research essay a manageable process and a much more positive, inquisitive experience. As an instructor, I have found several sections to be valuable for designing my research assignments and evaluating student writing. Students appreciate the guidance from various exercises that I have incorporated into my courses. Because of the positive results I have experienced, I recommend this book to faculty who are writing, assigning, reading, or evaluating research essays.
Mass Art Professor Brings Students to Navajo Reservation to Study Native American Art & Paint Murals

Professor Margaret Turner teaches Native American Art and Culture among her courses in Mass Art and African arts and cultures in the Department of Critical Studies at the Massachusetts College of Art. Shortly after completing a sabbatical semester at Arizona State University in Spring 1999, Turner was approached by Mandy Nierenberg, a sociology professor at the University of Chicago, who was interested in Native American culture. Nierenberg and Turner developed a reciprocal relationship that benefits all involved. Turner gave a presentation at the annual National Conference on Ethnic Education in October, and Nierenberg reported on the March, 2001 trip with the headline, "Mass Art students help design Navajo mural." In 2010, she was invited to present her work at the National Conference on Critical Studies at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design.

In a reciprocal relationship that benefits all involved, Turner and Nierenberg have collaborated on a project to bring students to the area they are studying. "This is every college professor's dream," Turner says. "It is especially thrilling for me, personally, to actually bring students to the area they are studying." As Nierenberg explained in a presentation she and Turner gave at the annual National Conference on Ethnic Education in October, 2001, Turner's students helped to design and paint two murals during visits made during spring break in 2000 and 2001. The murals were painted by the students in collaboration with children and staff at the Boys and Girls Club of Shiprock, New Mexico. Turner and Nierenberg have worked with Native American art and culture in their service-learning projects for over two decades. Turner, who is a specialist in Native American art and culture, has been instrumental in the development of a service-learning experience for Mass Art students in the Southwest. Now organizing their third trip to the Boys and Girls Club in Shiprock, New Mexico, Turner and Nierenberg have made significant contributions to Native American culture and education. Their work has been widely recognized, and they have been invited to share their experiences at conferences and workshops across the country.

**Bridgewater Faculty Lead Fundraising Efforts for Gay-Lesbian Scholarship**

"The response from all over the country has been amazing," said Professors Susan A. Holton (Department of Communication Studies and Theatre Arts) and Hal Tremblay (Director of the Safe College Scholarship at Bridgewater State College). "The scholarship, designed to provide emergency assistance to gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender (GLBT) students who are ostracized from their families because of their sexual orientation, will make its first awards this coming spring." The scholarship is the result of the work of Bridgewater's Safe College Task Force, a committee made up of faculty, administrators, and students, whose charge is to encourage the creation of a more positive campus climate for GLBT students. The task force includes Dr. Bob Holton, a director of Outreach Education in the Counseling Center, who co-chairs the Safe College Task Force with Dr. Holton, reports that "every year, stories are told of students whose parents or relatives have been denied them financial and emotional support because of the sexual orientation. H is experience counseling these students led the Task Force to consider what it could do to help students in crisis. The Task Force met with the director of institutional advancement and learned that they would need $10,000 to set up an endowed scholarship. Dr. Holton contacted the U.S. based folk singer Luce Blue Tremblay, with whom she corresponded previously, and Tremblay agreed to help raise seed money for the scholarship. Tremblay donated the proceeds of two concerts, one at the Arlington Street Church in Boston in May of 2000 and one in Provincetown in October of 2001. The scholarship is named after Tremblay, and Representative Barney Frank, who represents the town of Bridgewater in Congress, has been a strong advocate for the scholarship. Tremblay and Holton are both active in the GLBT community and have dedicated their lives to fighting for the rights of GLBT individuals. They have worked to raise awareness of the issues facing GLBT students and to provide support and resources to those who need it the most.

**Salem's Writing-Enhanced Courses Cross Disciplines**

The Writings-Across-the-Curriculum (WAC) program at Salem State College is in its eleventh year. Led by Professor Donnalee Rubin, the program focuses on faculty development and seeks to improve writing skills by integrating writing into all disciplines. Writings-Across-the-Curriculum has been a national movement for many years. In 1990, with a background in rhetoric and composition, she began the program with a survey to determine faculty needs. Eleven years later, approximately 47% of the current, full-time faculty at Salem State have participated in formal WAC programs, such as all-day workshops, semester-long discussion groups, and guest presentations. Other professors have consulted with Rubin individually to develop discipline-specific workshops for departments that are reshaping their curriculum.

"The secret to the success of WAC at Salem, says Rubin, is that it is "faculty-driven." The more faculty work with WAC techniques, the more they discover its value "not only for students to write better, but as a powerful tool to help students learn course content." Once faculty adopt WAC techniques, they often lead to "significant changes in pedagogical philosophy and in teaching methods. These changes come slowly, yet they bring with them tremendous rewards." The most recent initiative of the WAC program is the introduction of Writings-Across-the-Curriculum courses. In these courses, instructors assign extensive formal and informal writing, both in class and out, to increase students' understanding of course material as well as to improve their critical thinking and writing skills. Tremblay must contribute at least 50% of the student course grade. Faculty who participate in the program are supported by frequent group discussions and individual consultations. Topics addressed in the faculty development groups include designing more effective assignments, responding to student writing, and establishing clear evaluation criteria.

Rubin explains that it takes time for faculty "to make writing a central part of their courses." She has observed that it can take two to three years for faculty to realize the WAC strategies and feel comfortable with them. "People need to adapt to new ways of working to their own separate disciplines and to their own classroom situations. To help them achieve this, we supply ongoing support, education, and dialogue. In doing so, we underscore one of our program's chief objectives: to perpetuate and strengthen faculty conversations about teaching. As a result, faculty report making considerable changes in their pedagogy, in their syllabi, in their assignments, and in the way they interact with their students. Faculty say, "Professors who have participated in the program feel new enthusiasm for redesigning their courses and report becoming more effective teachers." As the first recipients of WAC aid, Rubin sees new possibilities such as linking courses and more widespread and more clearly defined writing requirements in all disciplines. She notes that "working with such dedicated and talented faculty provided an incentive to expand and to strengthen the program even further."
IN THE ASSOCIATION

Important Tax Information for DGCE Faculty Contributing to Deferred Compensation Programs

Under Massachusetts law, individuals working for the Commonwealth who are not members of the state retirement system are required to participate in a deferred compensation plan. This includes many of our faculty teaching in the state college divisions of Liberal Arts and Continuing Education. As a result, many DGCE faculty have 7.5% of their DGCE salary each semester deducted toward such a deferred compensation plan.

Recently, a DGCE member contacted the MSCA with concerns because the IRS had not allowed a deduction for his contribution to an IRA plan. Under the IRS Code, an individual may deduct up to $2,000 of their contributions to an IRA for 2002 (2002-2007 amount will be $3,000; for 2008-2009 it will be $4,000; and after 2008 it will rise to $5,000; IRS Code section 219). However, this deduction is limited for individuals who are “active participants in certain pension plans,” which includes plans established by an agency or instrumentality of the state (IRS Code 219g(5)(A)(ii)).

DGCE faculty members paying into the deferred compensation plan, however, are not subject to this limitation. See DGCE employment. The IRS Code carves out a specific exception to the “active participant rule” for contributors to deferred compensation plans. Contributors to such plans are not considered active participants in a pension plan and, therefore, are entitled to take a deduction (up to $2,000 in 2001) for their contributions to an IRA.

DGCE faculty should keep this in mind as they prepare their taxes or when they meet with their tax advisor.

NEA/MTA/MSCA Spring Elections

MSCA

The M SCA 2002 Officer Election season has officially begun. Candidates will be elected to all four positions: President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Prospective candidates should request nomination papers via registered mail.

Foley, MTA Division of Governance, at 617-878-8217, or dfoley@massteacher.org.

NEA/MTA/MSCA Spring Elections

NEA Directors and Alternate NEA Directors

There will be two vacant NEA Director seats and five vacant NEA Alternate Director seats, all with a term of three years, from September 2002 to August 2005. Nomination papers for these offices may be requested:

- O fice of the Executive Director-Treasurer, Massachusetts Teachers Association, 20 A Shuberton Place, Boston, MA 02108.

Papers must be filed no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 11, 2002. The election will be held by direct mail ballot to the entire membership in March and April 2002. For further information contact Diane Foley, MTA Division of Governance, at 617-878-8217, or dfoley@massteacher.org.

NEA Representative Assembly

Nominations are now open for statewide and regional delegates from Massachusetts to the 2002 NEA Representative Assembly to be held in Dallas, Texas, in early July. The nomination period will close at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 11, 2002. Inquiries concerning the procedures for the nomination and election of NEA delegates may be addressed to Diane Foley, MTA Division of Governance, at 617-878-8217, or dfoley@massteacher.org.

Kelly Appointed to BHE

Katherine Kelly, longtime president of the M assesschusetts Teachers Federation, has been appointed by A cting Governor Jane Swift to serve as the representative of organized labor on the M assesschusetts Board of Higher Education. Kelly represents the M FT in the coalition of public employee unions. She is pictured above with Patricia M arkunas, M SCA President.

MCLA Petition Drive Gets State House Attention

On Friday, November 10, James M oriarty, In professor of B usiness Administration and Economics at the M assachusetts College of Liberal Arts, delivered petition papers with 400 names to the offices of A cting Governor Swift, Senate President Birmingham and Speaker of the House Pinnerman. The petitions read as follows:

We, the undersigned members of the M assachusetts C ollege of Liberal Arts community, support the complete and ongoing funding of the 2001-2003 collective bargaining agreement between the M assachusetts State College Association and the Board of Higher Education (HB 4148) as well as the funding for the agreements with the Association of Professional A dministrators and with the A merican Federation of State, C ounty and M unicipal E mployees. We urge that monies to fund the costs of these contracts be added to the maintenance budgets for the state colleges, and not absorbed by the colleges' existing budgets, for this and the next fiscal year.

Thanks to all who signed the petitions and helped on this drive. Let us continue to lobby for the funding measures and budgets that will allow us to provide all citizens of Massachusetts with high quality public higher education.

— M ynard Seider, President, MCLA Faculty Association

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December 2001

...The Talk of The Town

I imagine our surprise when none other than James M. Carlin arrived fashionably late to D eaner’s Board of Higher Education meeting. M TA and MSCA members could hardly believe our eyes when Carlin circled around to the back of the room and parked himself in the dead center of the middle aisle, where BHE Chairman Tocco could not avoid seeing him. I was flattered by his members and board members who, apparently, missed his abrasive personality and corrosive leadership.

If on earth he was doing there? M ad he missed the farewell ceremony for T amara D avis, one of his biggest supporters on the BHE? W hat he up about our contract settlement, with its tenure provisions and just cause protections? M ad he hoped for another blurp in the Boston Globes “C ampus Insider,” trash state college faculty and students? O r was he just killing time, relating to his post on a September 11th flight to his winter retreat in Florida?

W hatever the reason, Chairman Tocco, a veteran of political machinations at M asport, was having none of it. M ore discussion of the public higher education budgetary meltdown was held, the report on the academic review of criminal justice programs was postponed, and consideration of increases in residence hall fees was tabled. At seventy minutes, it was the quickest BHE meeting we have attended since the days when we used to storm out to protest the lack of progress at the bargaining table.

Carlin never hid a chance to speak. A little bird told us in the elevator that Carlin Senior is not satisfied with Carlin Junior’s ability to advocate for low tuition, fees and dormitory prices on behalf of the Commonwealth’s students. H ow sad. O ur impression is that Carlin Junior has done a respectable job in assessing and advancing the students’ viewpoint for BHE members, without denigrating the college faculty or administrivia in the process.

Ne ver shall we mind. Carlin’s presence at the meeting, however brief, reminded us what a wonderful target he was, and how subdued things have been with a BHE Chairman and chancellor who are not hell-bent on destroying the state college system. We may even be tempted to refer to Carlin’s reign as the “good old days,” except they, most decidedly, were not.