



It's Official!

Representatives of MSCA, the Council of Presidents and the Board of Higher Education gathered at the BHE offices in Boston on Oct. 10 to sign the recently ratified day unit contract extension. Pictured above are (seated) BHE Chairman Frederick W. Clark Jr., and MSCA President Patricia V. Markunas; (standing, l-r) Stephen Kearney, Massachusetts Maritime Academy director of human resources; Kenneth Lemanski, COP executive director; Peter Tsaffaras, BHE director of employee relations; Arthur Pippo, MTA Division of Higher

Education director; BHE Chancellor Patricia Plummer; MTA Vice President Paul F. Toner; Mark Peters, COP counsel; MTA Executive Director-Treasurer Edward P. Sullivan; MTA President Anne Wass; COP Chairperson Robert Antonucci; Cheryl Stanley, MSCA/Westfield State College; MTA Consultant Donna Sirutis; MSCA Vice President C. J. O'Donnell; and Ann Mrvica, MSCA/Fitchburg State College.

QVO STATVS?

University Status Option Offers More Questions Than Answers

Patricia V. Markunas, MSCA president

The management of several state colleges is aggressively pursuing university status. Besides the right to call a state college a "state university," what does this mean? Bridgewater State College and Salem State College have produced white papers making a case for becoming state universities. These can be accessed through the MSCA Web site at <www.mscaunion.org>. Neither paper answers questions of vital importance to the professional lives of state college faculty and librarians.

One member of Bridgewater State College's University Task Force was Frederick W. Clark Jr., who was appointed chairman of the Board of Higher Education in August. Clark authored the financial section of Bridgewater's white paper, which was made public in May 2007. While the BHE

has not yet taken an official position on university status, Clark was guardedly supportive of the idea in MSCA's interview with him last month. "On a personal level," he said, "I think it's absolutely the right strategy for the state colleges to explore."

The legislature's Joint Committee on Higher Education is currently considering House Bill 1185, the so-called "University Status Bill" (reprinted on pg. 3). The MSCA Board of Directors has insisted on, and been assured that, language mandating a continuation of the current system of union representation will be included in the legislation. However, the bill is still in committee and no amendments have been made to it. The MSCA has also made it clear that should any state college achieve

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Officer Nominations Open Nov. 1

Members considering running for an MSCA statewide office for the 2008-2010 term can request nomination papers on or after Nov. 1, 2007. Next spring, candidates will be elected to two-year terms for all four MSCA offices: president, vice president, treasurer and secretary.

To obtain nomination papers, as explained in the MSCA Constitution, Article IV, send a request by certified mail to:

**Deb Foss
MSCA Nominations &
Elections Supervisor
Mass. College of Liberal Arts
Advising Services, Bowman 32
375 Church Street
North Adams, MA 01247-4100**

To be eligible to appear on the MSCA election ballot as a certified candidate, members must return signed nomination papers —

including at least 40 signatures from MSCA members in good standing with no more than 15 counted from any single chapter (campus) — to Deb Foss at the above address. Nomination papers must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Jan. 18, 2008, regardless of postmark. To ensure confirmation of receipt of nomination papers, please send them via certified mail.

Specific information concerning the election of officers can be found in the MSCA Constitution, posted on the MSCA Web site at <www.mscaunion.org>. The 2008 election rules and calendar will be approved by the MSCA Board of Directors on or before Dec. 7, 2007. These documents, once approved, will be available on the MSCA's Web site and published in the *Perspective*.

Questions can be directed to Deb Foss at 413.662.5400 or <dfoss@mcla.edu>.

DID YOU KNOW... Article V: Academic Freedom and Responsibility

Margaret Vaughan, chair
MSCA Grievance Committee



Margaret Vaughan

Did you know... when a grievance is filed with management, one of the most frequently cited articles of our collective bargaining agreement — and one of the most important — is Article V: Academic Freedom and

Responsibility. According to the agreement, “academic freedom is the right of scholars in institutions of higher education freely to study, discuss, investigate, teach, exhibit, perform, and publish.” Moreover, teachers are entitled to “...full freedom in the classroom in discussing his/her subject, most specifically in the selection of his/her classroom materials including selection of texts.”

It should be of no surprise to learn also that such freedom carries certain responsibilities. The second half of Article V explains: “Faculty members and librarians have the responsibility to their colleagues and the college community to preserve intellectual honesty in their teaching and their research,” as well as respect the “free inquiry of his/her associates.” The agreement goes on to say: “The college or university teacher or librarian is a citizen and a member of a learned profession affiliated with an educational institution. When he/she speaks, writes or expresses himself/herself in any other fashion as a citizen, he/she should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but his/her special position in the community imposes special obligations. As a person of learning, affiliated with an education institution, he/she should remember that the public may judge his/her profession and his/her institution by his/her utterances.” Thus, “he/she should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate when he/she is not an institutional spokesman.”

Article V is brief but meaningful. It is the context in which we are able to pursue truth and knowledge in our field of study. Academic freedom and its corollary, academic responsibility, are two principles we must protect.

For a complete review of Article V see pages 57 and 58 of the collective bargaining agreement.

IN SERVICE

Westfield Profs Making the Grade on Task Force

Susan E. Dutch, contributing editor

Two Westfield State College faculty members, **Trudy Knowles** and **Cheryl Stanley**, have been appointed to serve on subcommittees of Governor **Deval Patrick's** Readiness Project.

The purpose of this initiative is to review the future of public education across the commonwealth. Its main focus is on free and universal public education, from pre-K through community college.

Cheryl Stanley, of the education department, is co-chair of the Recruiting and Retaining Educators Subcommittee, which will focus on ways to improve teacher recruitment and retention.

“I am pleased to bring a voice from Western Massachusetts to this subcommittee,” she said. “Being part of a process affecting positive change is exciting. On the committee, as I share my concerns and expertise, I hope to gauge the level of commitment this administration is prepared to invest in education across the commonwealth. I look forward to bringing back my experience to help Westfield State College prepare for these upcoming changes.”



Cheryl Stanley

Trudy Knowles serves on the MCAS and Assessments Subcommittee, which will confront the question of how to improve student assessment by evaluating the current MCAS and suggesting additional measures of academic success.

“I was particularly interested in this committee because of my deep concerns

about the negative impact that the MCAS has had on teaching and learning,” she said. “I look forward to working with this committee and making recommendations to the governor about ways that we can make our assessment more comprehensive. That was the intent of the Education Reform Act of 1993.”

MSCA President **Patricia V. Markunas** is also participating in the Readiness Project; she sits on the UMass & Public Higher Education Subcommittee, which is chaired by Fitchburg State College President **Robert V. Antonucci**.

Over 150 educators, business representatives and practitioners from more than 75 communities across the state comprise the 13 subcommittees of the project.

Each subcommittee will combine its members' knowledge and practical experience to identify strengths and weaknesses in the current educational system. The task of each subcommittee is to provide the Readiness Project Leadership Council with a list of recommended actions, a projection of costs for their implementation, and timelines — with benchmarks — for evaluating success.

Other subcommittees include accountability & assistance, curriculum alignment, early education & care, education & technology, long-term funding, public and private higher education, and the whole child.

For further information about Project Readiness visit <www.mass.gov>.



Trudy Knowles

ONE YEAR AT A TIME

Day Unit Members Ratify One-Year Deal

MSCA day unit members overwhelmingly ratified a one-year contract to run through June 30, 2008, in balloting held Sept. 26 and 27 at all nine campuses.

The deal was approved by 97 percent of the 722 members casting valid ballots, out of approximately 2300 eligible voters. The tally:

Yes: 700 No: 20 Blank: 2

Election officials challenged the validity of 11 other ballots.

Among the provisions of the new deal is a 3.5 percent across-the-board pay increase. This is the same percentage increase received by MTA affiliates representing faculty and staff in the UMass system, who were negotiating with the UMass Board of Trustees concurrently with MSCA. This round marked the first time MSCA and UMass affiliates were in direct communication during negotiations.

Another major element of the agreement was a \$350,000 longevity adjustment pool, implemented to begin addressing salary compression (when longer-standing workers make less in relation to their

newer colleagues of the same rank). Members will get one “share,” worth between \$110 and \$120, added to their base salary, for each decade of full-time state college service; so members with less than 10 years of service will get one share, less than 20 years will get two shares, and so on; 40 or more years of service will garner members the maximum five shares. The union proposed adding the shares to base salaries before the 3.5 percent raise, but management wouldn't agree to this proposal.

According to several members of the negotiating team, funding for all new increases came from the state; none of the money was contributed by any of the nine college administrations.

Apparently, the Council of Presidents was concerned about the Patrick administration cutting funding to the campuses, similar to what the Romney administration did in 2005. Romney's cutback forced the colleges to enact significant spending cuts. Rather than risk a similar belt-tightening, the colleges chose not to contribute additional moneys to the collective bargaining agreement extension.

— Brett M. Rhyne

MSCA Perspective

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www.nea.org

RETIREMENT CONSULTATIONS

MSCA's parent union, the Massachusetts Teachers Association, offers free consultations to retiring members. Individual, confidential consultations are available on designated Saturdays in locations throughout the state. No appointment is necessary; just show up and wait your turn.

Scheduled individual appointments may also be made with an MTA retirement consultant at the Boston MTA office, at 20 Ashburton Place, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

BENEFITS

Signatures Sought to Secure Social Security

Brett M. Rhyne, Perspective editor

MTA Vice President **Paul Toner** is spearheading a move to reclaim millions of dollars in withheld Social Security benefits for K-12 teachers and higher education faculty and librarians, as well as all Massachusetts public employees who receive pensions from the state.

Toner is working with organizers from across the country to collect signatures in support of the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82/S. 206). The act would repeal two pieces of current federal legislation that limit how much Social Security benefit retirees who draw a state pension can collect.

The two pieces of legislation are the Windfall Elimination Provision, which reduces a public employee's earned Social Security from previous employment, and the Government Pension Offset, which basically eliminates a public employee's Social Security benefits from a deceased spouse.

Nationally, 300,000 retirees lose an average of \$3,600 a year due to the GPO, an amount that "can make the difference between self-sufficiency and poverty," according to **Jo Ann Fitzgerald**, an MTA retired members service specialist. Ninety percent of public employees affected by the GPO lose their entire spousal benefit, even though their spouse paid Social Security taxes for many years.

According to Toner, the two bills were passed over a 15-year period from the late 1960s to the early 1980s. In order for their public employees to be affected, states had to submit to the bills' provisions; Massachusetts was one of 15 states to agree. At the time, current state employees were not subject to having their Social Security benefits withheld because they were grandfathered in.

But now, Toner continues, workers who are affected are reaching retirement age, and a move is on to repeal the GPO and WEP. Organizers hope to

collect 100,000 signatures in each of the 15 participating states, for a total of 1.5 million signatures, in an effort to get Congress to move on the issue.

According to Fitzgerald, the legislation has "overwhelming bipartisan support but has been languishing in committee for years."

"When the Republicans controlled the House," Toner says, "legislators were happy to sign a piece of paper [in support of the Social Security Fairness Act]." Now that the Democrats are in charge, he continues, organizers are hoping to get it "pushed to the floor of Congress" and passed.

To sign a petition, Toner suggests members contact their chapter president or e-mail him at <ptoner@massteacher.org>. He points out that anyone can sign, though, and encourages everyone to circulate petitions and collect signatures. To download petitions — as well as stay posted on the latest developments — at <www.massteacher.org>.

"The current state of affairs regarding Social Security, the WEP and the GPO, and its negative impact on our members, cannot stand," Toner says. "We must correct it as soon as possible."



Paul Toner

MTA Executive Director Ed Sullivan Retires

Edward P. Sullivan, who has served as Massachusetts Teachers Association executive director since 1984, announced his retirement earlier this month.

In a letter to MTA President Anne Wass dated Oct. 3, Sullivan, 65, wrote:

"While I am healthy and relatively young, I have decided to spend more time on other parts of my life that are very important to me.

"I am deeply grateful for the tremendous career opportunities that working for the MTA for 34 years has afforded me.

"It has been a tremendous honor and wonderful privilege to advocate on behalf of our members and public education and to have had the opportunity to play a part in helping to build and strengthen this great organization.

"Working with the dedicated, deeply committed and highly talented local and state leaders and MTA staff has been a labor of love and pure professional joy. Thank you."

Sullivan will begin his retirement March 1, 2008. The MTA has not yet started looking for a new executive director.



Edward P. Sullivan

MSCA Board Meetings
Academic Year 2007-2008

Regular meetings of the MSCA Board of Directors begin at 10:00 a.m. and usually adjourn around 3:00 p.m. Meetings are open to all MSCA members in good standing—full-time, part-time and DGCE. Time is set aside on the agenda each month for visiting speakers. If you are an MSCA member and wish to address the Board on an issue of concern, please contact the MSCA President's Office <Pmarkunas@aol.com> to request a place on the agenda or with any other question about Board meetings.

November 2
Fitchburg State College
Hammond Bldg. Alumni A & B

December 7
Framingham State College
Campus Center – 1839 Room

January 11 (if needed)
Framingham State College
Campus Center – 1839 Room

February 1
Framingham State College
Campus Center – 1839 Room

February 29
Framingham State College
Campus Center – 1839 Room

March 28
Framingham State College
Campus Center – 1839 Room

April 25
Salem State College
Agganis Enterprise Center

April 26
Delegate Assembly
Salem State College - Recital Hall

June 6
Mass Maritime
Room TBA

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