

Legislation Signed to Change State Colleges to Universities

Legal Change Takes Effect Oct. 26

Pat Markunas, editor

On July 28, Gov. Deval Patrick signed legislation to change the state colleges in Massachusetts to state universities. The change will take full force and effect on Oct. 26, after the traditional 90-day period for non-emergency legislation to become law.

The signing ceremony took place in front of the Grand Staircase at the State House in Boston, attended by hundreds of state college faculty, administrators, staff, students, trustees, alumni and supporters from the Legislature and local communities.

Congratulatory speeches were given by the presidents from Bridgewater and Salem State Universities, the chairman of the Board of Higher Education, the SGA president from Fitchburg State University and several legislators who provided key support for sponsorship and passage of this historic legislation. Gov. Patrick was the final speaker before the signing ceremony, commending all concerned for the hard work and dedication needed to enact this change. “You’ve earned it,” he said unequivocally.

The legislation amends Ch. 32A of the General Laws, changing the names of six colleges to state universities and creating a state university system

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Sarah Nathan, MTA

On July 28, Gov. Deval Patrick signed legislation renaming the state colleges as the state university system. From left to right: Sen. Frederick Berry (D-Salem); Rep. David Flynn (D-Bridgewater) behind Sen. Berry; Charles Desmond, chair of the Board of Higher Education; Dana Mohler-Faria, president of Bridgewater State University; Timothy Flanagan, president of Framingham State University; Rep. Peter Koutoujian (D-Waltham); Janelle Ashley, president of Worcester State University; Robert Antonucci, president of Fitchburg State University; Patricia Meservey, president of Salem State University; Kay Sloan, president of Massachusetts College of Art & Design; and Eric Gregoire, president of SGA at Fitchburg State University.

An Open Letter to MTA Members

The extremist anti-tax forces are once again intent on dismantling public schools and other vital services brick by brick. This fall, their ballot initiative – Question 3 – would cut the sales tax to 3 percent, wiping out \$2.5 billion from state revenues. This cut would come at the same time federal stimulus dollars are expected to run out, resulting in a major budget crisis. If Question 3 is implemented, massive cuts in services will be made on top of those already enacted over the past two years due to the recession.

The nonpartisan Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation described the impact in a report released on Sept. 22 titled *Question 3: Heading Over the Cliff*. “It is not an exaggeration to say that the resulting massive spending cuts would eliminate or erode a wide range of services – from education and public safety to health care and human services – that for decades the citizens of Massachusetts have counted on the government to provide,” the report said.

That’s fine by Carla Howell, founder of the Center for Small Government, who is behind Question 3. She doesn’t even believe that the public should fund public education at all – instead, parents with kids in schools should foot the bill. Here’s one of her proposals: “Every homeowner who does NOT put a student into the local public schools gets a 100% tax credit for the part of property taxes that pays for public schools. \$3,000 back each year. Each homeowner is free to choose. Use the public schools and pay the tax. Or don’t use the public schools and don’t pay the tax.”

Despite her radical positions, Howell has managed to qualify extreme tax-cutting measures for the ballot three times. In 2008 and 2002, her proposals to eliminate the income tax were defeated. The margin of defeat in 2008 grew to 70-30, in large part due to opposition from the MTA. This year, however, Howell’s plan to

Vote No **3** Question **3**.com

cut the sales tax more than in half has strong support in the polls from recession-weary voters who have not yet learned what the consequences would be.

The good news is that many voters turn against this proposal when they are informed that it would:

- seriously damage public schools, public higher education and other valued services.
- hurt the quality of life in our communities.
- put huge pressure on cities and towns to increase property taxes.

The challenge is getting the word out to our members – and from there to the larger community. This article is a start, providing you with many well-sourced facts. Facts are your ammunition, but ammunition doesn’t win battles – people do. Once you learn the facts, we hope you will be as outraged as we are and will spread the word about Question 3 while also talking to friends, family members and colleagues about the importance of re-electing Deval Patrick as governor and Tim Murray as lieutenant governor.

Please contact your local association or chapter leader to learn more about how you and your affiliate can be part of this important campaign.

Paul Toner, MTA President

Timothy Sullivan, MTA Vice President

2010-2012 MSCA Committees Appointed, Chairs Elected

At its meeting of Oct. 1, the MSCA Board of Directors appointed MSCA members from each chapter to serve on MSCA's standing committees. The appointments are shown in the box below. The MSCA president, C. J. O'Donnell, serves as an ex-officio member of every MSCA committee.

In accordance with the MSCA constitution, each committee elects its own chair. The MSCA Board established a nomination process for these elections, which were held on Oct. 8 at Worcester State University. The names of chairs appear in italics.

Vacancies exist on some committees. If you are interested in serving on an MSCA committee that has a vacancy for your chapter, please contact your chapter president (listed on page 4). Committee information can be found in the MSCA constitution, posted on the MSCA website; use the "About the MSCA" link.

All MSCA members in good standing — including full-time, part-time and DGCE members — are eligible to participate in MSCA governance. Appreciation goes to these members for their willingness to represent their colleagues.

Committees Chapter	AA/EO/ DIV	Credentials	Day Bargaining	Day Bargaining Alternate	DGCE Bargaining	DGCE Bargaining Alternate	Elections	Grievance	Legislation	Librarians
Bridgewater		Jean Stonehouse	Glenn Pavlicek	Jean Stonehouse	Glenn Pavlicek	Jean Stonehouse		<i>Sandra Faiman-Silva</i>	John Maslanka	
Fitchburg		Ann Mrvica								
Framingham		Susan Dargan	Susan Dargan	Robert Donohue	<i>Susan Dargan</i>	Robert Donohue		Robert Donohue	Millie Gonzalez	Millie Gonzalez
Mass. Art and Design			Sam Schlosberg	Nancy Cusack	Ben Ryterband	Sam Schlosberg		David Nolta		Richard McElroy
MCLA								Dana Rapp		
Mass. Maritime	Linda Letourneau	Arthur Aldrich	Joseph Murphy	Gerald Concannon	Gerald Concannon	Arthur Aldrich	Amanda Woods	Joseph Murphy	Gerald Concannon	
Salem	Sophie Evett	Greg Carroll	Amy Everitt	Caitlin Corbett	David Goodof	Paul McGee		Caitlin Corbett		<i>Nancy George</i>
Westfield	<i>Christina Swaidan</i>		Gary Merlo		Andrew Bonacci	Gary Merlo		Gregg Neikirk	<i>Ken Haar</i>	Brian Hubbard
Worcester			<i>Dan Shartin</i>	Anne Falke	Anne Falke			Penny Martin		

Massachusetts Coalition for Our Communities The Truth about Question 3

Q: What is Question 3?

It is an initiative petition that will be on the Nov. 2 ballot that would cut the sales tax from 6.25 percent to 3 percent, costing the state \$2.5 billion a year in revenues. If passed, the law would take effect on January 1, 2011.

Q: Who is behind it?

Carla Howell and Michael Cloud, co-founders of the Center for Small Government, are the chief supporters. They also sponsored ballot questions to eliminate the income tax in 2008 and 2002. Those were both defeated. And Howell ran for governor on the Libertarian Party Ticket in 2002.

Q: Who is opposed to it?

The MTA is part of a growing coalition of labor, civic, nonprofit, religious and business organizations that are strongly opposed to this proposal. These groups have formed an organization called the Massachusetts Coalition for our Communities to inform the voters how destructive this proposal would be and to urge them to vote "no."

A list of supporting organizations and individuals will be maintained and updated on the coalition website, www.votenoquestion3.com.

Q: Why is the MTA opposed to Question 3?

The initiative would be devastating to public schools, public higher education and the quality of life in our communities. It would put huge pressure on municipalities to increase property taxes.

Q: How big would the loss of revenues be?

In fiscal year 2011, the revenue loss is projected at around \$1 billion because the initiative would take effect on Jan. 1, 2011, halfway through the fiscal year. In subsequent years, the loss would be \$2.5 billion. But that's not all. The recent Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation report documents that the revenue loss would come at a terrible time — just as the federal stimulus dollars run out, leaving us with a big budget gap even without a tax cut.

According to the MTF report, if Question 3 passes, state leaders will "face a \$4.5 billion shortfall in the fiscal 2012 budget — an already existing structural deficit of at least \$2 billion plus \$2.5 billion of reduced tax revenues by cutting the sales tax from 6.25 percent to 3 percent."

The report release goes on to note, "Because almost half of the state's \$32 billion budget is spending that is

legally required, the \$4.5 billion in reductions must be spread over the remaining \$16.9 billion of 'discretionary' spending, which would require across-the-board cuts of 28.4 percent."

Q: What impact would the repeal have on public higher education?

A devastating one. State funding for public higher education was cut deeply earlier in this decade and has never been fully restored. Today, state spending on higher education is \$621 million lower than in the peak year of 2001 when adjusted for inflation.¹

A recent study showed that cuts in per-student expenditures in our higher education system from 2004 to 2009 were deeper than in all but four other states, and they occurred while enrollment was surging. According to Board of Higher Education Chairman Richard Freeland, higher student fees had addressed roughly half of these cuts, with the remainder handled by replacing full-time faculty with adjunct faculty and reducing support staff.²

The Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation noted in its Question 3 report release, "For the 270,000 students attending the University of Massachusetts and the 24 state and community colleges, the cuts in higher education would result in sharp increases in tuition and fees, as well as fewer course offerings, reduced faculty time" and other impacts.

Since three-quarters of state and community college students continue to live and work in Massachusetts after graduating, harming our public higher education system has a long-term negative impact on our economy.³

Q: How would communities be affected?

Services provided by the state and local governments would be hurt. Health care, human services, environmental protection, public health programs, services for the elderly and the disabled, police and fire protection, anti-gang initiatives, youth jobs programs, the court system, park maintenance, libraries, community revitalization projects, community mental health services — these and many other important services would almost certainly be targeted for reductions.

Again, the MTF report documents the severity of the problem, concluding that "the cuts in local aid would result in thousands of layoffs of municipal employees, chiefly teachers, police and fire, decimating the core services of education and public safety and falling most severely on cities and poorer communities that depend so heavily on state aid."

Q: How would Question 3 affect the economy?

Jim Klocke of the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce explained why his organization opposes Question 3. "We've got a very fragile economy," Klocke said. "After all we've been through with the giant revenue drops, going in and doing further cuts would not be a good move."⁴

Q: Are there any other questions on the ballot that would cut taxes?

Yes. Question 1 would eliminate the tax on alcohol. It is opposed by The Committee Against Repeal of Alcohol Tax, a coalition of over 130 Massachusetts-based behavioral health care and public health organizations.

Repeal of this tax will result in the loss of over \$100 million of state revenue that is currently dedicated to providing needed prevention and treatment services through the Department of Public Health. For more information, go to www.noon1ma.com/.

Q: But isn't Massachusetts a high-tax state?

No. Despite the outdated claim that our state is "Taxachusetts," Massachusetts ranks 31st out of the 50 states in the percentage of personal income paid in all state and local taxes combined.⁵

In addition, the percentage of their personal income that Massachusetts residents pay in state and local taxes has gone down substantially in the past two decades.⁶

Q: Where do the candidates for governor stand on Question 3?

The three major gubernatorial candidates, Deval Patrick, Tim Cahill and Charlie Baker, all oppose Question 3, recognizing it would destabilize the budget, public services and the economy in the midst of a fragile recovery. Unfortunately, Cahill and Baker do support other significant tax cuts that would cost nearly as much as Question 3 and have a similarly destabilizing effect.

Q: What can I do to help defeat Question 3?

To find out about how you can help defeat Question 3 and elect pro-education candidates, please visit the members' area of the MTA Web site, www.massteacher.org. You will need your password or member ID number to log in to the site.

(Endnotes)

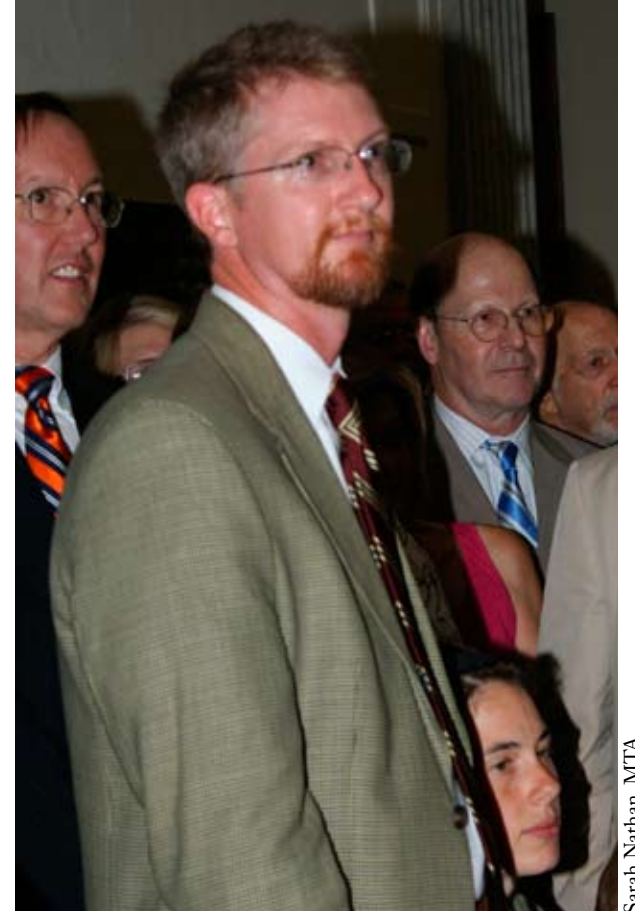
1. Computed from data from Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center Budget Browser, www.mass.gov, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, and Moody's analytics. ARRA state fiscal stabilization funds are included.
2. "Freeland: State 'Mortgaging the future' with Higher Education Cuts," State House News Service, Sept. 8, 2010.
3. Massachusetts Public Higher Education: A Shrewd Investment with Significant Returns, by Coelen, Stephen P.; Berger, Joseph B.; Forest, Rebecca L., all of University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and Smith, Elaine, of the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, January 2002.
4. "Unions raise \$1.3m to fight ballot drive to cut sales tax," The Boston Globe, Sept. 21, 2010.
5. Computed from U.S. Census Bureau data: <http://www.census.gov/govs/estimate/index.html>.
6. Computed from U.S. Census Bureau data: <http://www.census.gov/govs/estimate/index.html>.

MSCA Members Attend University Status Signing Ceremony, July 28



Sarah Nathan, MTA

MSCA members on the Grand Staircase: (first row, left to right) Rick McDermott, APA president; Anne Falke, chapter president, MSCA/Worcester State University; Jean Stonehouse, chapter president, MSCA/Bridgewater State University; Rebecca Metcalfe, mathematics professor, Bridgewater State University; Kathy Skrabut, nursing professor, Salem State University; Sandy Faiman-Silva, MSCA Grievance Officer, Bridgewater State University; (second row, left to right) C. J. O'Donnell, MSCA president; Joe Ebiware, MSCA/MCLA; Jay McHale, former MSCA secretary, Salem State University; (last row, left to right) Ron Colbert, MSCA/Fitchburg State University; Sean Goodlett, chapter president, MSCA/Fitchburg State University; Nancy George, MSCA secretary; Li Li, history professor, Salem State University



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Sean Goodlett, chapter president, MSCA/Fitchburg State University



Sarah Nathan, MTA

Ron Colbert, MSCA representative to the MTA Board of Directors, with Kay Roberts, retired MTA president



Sarah Nathan, MTA

Pat Markunas, MSCA Perspective editor, and Kimberley Driscoll, mayor of the City of Salem and a 1989 graduate of Salem State University

Universities *Continued from page 1*

composed of all nine institutions. Little else changes as a result. The statutory employer remains the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. The local Boards of Trustees retain their statutory authority. All bargaining units at the state universities continue, as do all collective bargaining agreements in effect. Degree-granting authority does not change; doctoral programs must continue to be developed and offered in conjunction with the University of Massachusetts system.

This change is the latest step in the 170-year history of the state colleges, which began as normal schools and technical institutes in the 19th century, changed to teachers' colleges in the early 20th century and became the state college system with the passage of the Willis-Harrington Act of 1965.

MSCA was first organized in late 1977, composed of full-time faculty and librarians, plus part-time faculty at Mass College of Art. The remaining part-time day program faculty were added to the original bargaining unit in 1987, when MSCA's DGCE unit was organized.

Talk of university status probably began in the 1960s, as Willis-Harrington was being debated and many states converted teachers' colleges to state colleges and universities. Massachusetts is one of the last states to effect this change to its original normal school system.

New Name for MSCA?

With the change of the state colleges to state universities, consideration is being given to changing the name of our association, currently the Massachusetts State College Association (MSCA), Inc. Any change would involve changing the MSCA's constitution as well the incorporation papers.

Suggestions for a new name for MSCA should be sent to MSCA president C. J. O'Donnell at the office listed on page 4.



Sarah Nathan, MTA

Nancy George, MSCA Secretary, with James Kefalas, AFSCME steward, both from Salem State University

“How Long Do We Have to Keep Stuff?”

Suggestions for Faculty on Document Retention and Destruction

Pat Markunas, editor

As was true of last month's column on portfolios, this column is my opinion only and does not represent official MSCA or university policy.

One way to approach the issue of how long to keep stuff is to ask some key questions.

“How important is this stuff to what we do?”

“Who else has this stuff and do they keep it permanently?”

“How hard would it be to get this stuff if I don't keep it?”

“Could a problem come up later that would require this stuff to solve it?”

“Is this stuff unique or confidential?”

“Can I send this stuff someplace else?”

A lot of the stuff we generate is part of a multi-step process to a specific end. Once the end has been achieved and the period of time to challenge or correct it has passed, the stuff generated along the way usually can be discarded or deleted.

Hoarding stuff is as bad as throwing everything away. If you are in a position of leadership that will pass on to someone else, plan that transition from day one. This means saving important, well-organized stuff for your successor, not dumping overflowing file cabinets on them or leaving empty cabinets.

Electronic stuff may be preferable to paper stuff in a lot of ways, but relying only on electronic versions of stuff has its downsides. Cost and sustainability issues are more complicated than first meets the eye, whether on paper or screen. Passing on electronic stuff can be complicated. Think carefully about this.

Your Gradebook

The most important thing that faculty do is give grades. Your gradebook is yours alone – no one else has a copy and it could be critical to resolving an issue with a student years in the future. It is important, unique and confidential.

I recommend that faculty keep gradebooks in a hard copy format for at least 10 years or, more conservatively, 20 years. Do not rely on electronic files; print paper copies. Store them in a metal filing cabinet, not on your bookshelf, in case of fire.

However, once grade rosters or grade changes have been processed and recorded by the registrar, any paperwork generated should be shredded ASAP.

Student-generated Stuff

Stuff that students submit for evaluation usually belongs to them, not us. We are not responsible for storing students' exams, term papers, projects, etc. forever. We have plenty of stuff of our own.

Salem State University's policy is that faculty are required to keep graded materials only until the end of the semester following the one in which the grades were issued. This means May 31 for grades issued the previous fall and winter session, and mid-January for grades issued the previous spring and summer session. Check with the vice president for academic affairs about the policy on your campus.

I recommend that you announce the policy to students in your syllabus and, once the campus deadline has passed, you throw out all of this stuff. It feels great to clear off that bookshelf or the top of your filing cabinet, so do it! A few exceptions may exist.

You might want to hang onto stuff for those students with whom you had problems or for whom you issued a grade of Incomplete and you suspect that the student might return some day. Keep a copy of the relevant syllabus with this stuff (see below). Keeping photocopies of graded work returned to these students might be advisable.

I keep copies of capstone projects (senior theses, directed study papers, internship reports and the like) for several years. Your department or university might have a policy related to this kind of stuff. At Salem State, senior theses required in the Honors Program are archival documents and are stored in the library.

Course Syllabi

Your syllabus is a legally binding document that constitutes your contract with your students about the conduct of your course and the way in which you will assign grades.

What? No one ever told you that? Well, it's true. Your syllabus is second only to your gradebook in importance.

However, your syllabus is not confidential and copies are plentiful and easily saved. Keeping your own syllabi or having a departmental file of them for five or 10 years is probably a good idea.

Committee Stuff

No tree is safe while we have committees. Yes, we can post all of that stuff on websites and distribute it electronically, but most of it gets printed at some point and then we have to do something with it. Even virtual files take up virtual space, and they have to be sorted and deleted by a non-virtual human being who has to spend real time doing it.

In most cases, once the issue or recommendation or project or whatever it is, is finished and has been incorporated into the appropriate governing document, the stuff generated during the process can be discarded or deleted. Even approved committee minutes have a shorter shelf life than most people think (a year or two at best). Saving the agenda for any meeting with approved minutes is a waste of paper, space and electrons.

For example, curriculum committee stuff should be kept until it is published in the university catalog and checked for accuracy by the department or committee chair. Then throw it away. Throw all of it away. Do not punch it and put it in binders. Do not file it in file cabinets. Same goes for academic policies, procedures and the like.

Drafts, corrected copies, personal notes and other trivial stuff should be discarded or deleted as soon as the final copy is produced and checked for accuracy. Drafts should always be marked as drafts. Final copies should always be dated and the pages numbered consecutively if possible.

Search committee stuff is sensitive, often confidential and important from a legal standpoint. I see no reason to keep stuff from a successfully completed search.

When in doubt, consult your HR director and follow that advice. In any case, search committee members are not the people responsible to keep this stuff.

Do not, under any circumstances, discuss the merits of job candidates on email, even if you use candidate numbers. This is exactly the kind of stuff you do not want to generate, as it is discoverable in lawsuits and always embarrassing even if not actionable.

Only approved minutes of department meetings should be saved in some official and public way, usually by the department chair. It wouldn't hurt for faculty to help the chair(s) by keeping back-up copies.

Personnel Decision Stuff

Keep this stuff. All of it. For your entire career. Same goes for official transcripts for all degrees, your thesis and your dissertation. Use a metal file cabinet with a lock.

Lecture Notes and Other Teaching Stuff

This category is your call. Over 35 years, I have never thrown away lecture notes for any course I have taught, and I have benefitted from this decision many times.

Research and Scholarship Stuff

This is your call, too. It might be an academic urban legend, but I think the rule of thumb for keeping research data, including dissertation research data, is seven years. Your professional association might be a better source on this point than I.

So throw those punch cards away. All of the punch card readers are in museums now, alongside floppy disks and last year's hot computer technology.

MSCA Perspective

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