



# Perspective

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**September, 2019**

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Dear MSCA faculty and librarians:

We are living through troubled times where unions are [under assault](#) and public higher education faces numerous challenges, from [underfunding](#) to under-enrollment. In response to these crises we are relaunching the *MSCA Perspective* in the form of an email newsletter. *MSCA Perspective* aims to bring us together in solidarity by sharing information on the issues, activism, struggles, and successes of faculty and librarians across the nine state university campuses. We hope that you will join this virtual community, connect with your colleagues across the state and help build a stronger union.

This inaugural issue includes articles on bargaining (past and future), legislative updates, part-time faculty gains, an essay on faculty-student coalitions to combat racism at Framingham State, a short piece on Salem State faculty's struggles with workload and "right-sizing" in the wake of budget deficits, and a picture book of MSCA activism in the last two years. We also have useful information on grievances, personnel action deadlines and the union's Employee Relations Committee. In later issues we hope to include topics such as equivalencies work, labor issues in higher education, perils and promises of online education, and others relevant to our professional lives.

Please support our efforts by reading *MSCA Perspective*. Knowledge is power; help us make MSCA the most powerful union in higher education!

## “The Good, the Bad and the Ugly” of the Last Round of Day Bargaining



CJ O'Donnell, MSCA President, Mass Maritime Academy

As the new academic year begins, I thought it would be good to review the good, the bad and the ugly around bargaining for the last two years, especially as we approach a new bargaining round early next year.

The **GOOD** includes the fact that the team was able to negotiate a change to allow the use of the sick leave bank for birth and adoption, a significant gain for junior members with limited availability of personal sick leave. Another good development is that the day contract was funded this summer, with full-time faculty and librarians receiving their retroactive pay increases on August 9th. The team negotiated an increase for part-time faculty on top of the three 2% across-the-board increases.

The **BAD** is the fact that part-time faculty still have not been paid their retroactive increases since management – despite reminders and information requests from the union – has yet to compute the increases for July 1, 2017, July 1, 2018 and July 1, 2019. The redrafted contract is almost ready, but is waiting for the part-time stipend rate.

The **UGLY**, of course, was the equivalencies fiasco during bargaining where the presidents claimed that they never knew the cost of funding them, and Commissioner Santiago refused to submit the funding request.

What could be even uglier this winter (yes, day bargaining begins this winter) is, in the event that the Supreme Judicial Court rules in the union's favor on the 15% Rule, the presidents respond by trying to remove the 15% rule from the contract. For more information on the 15% rule, [click here](#) and scroll down the page).

For now, I hope you are refreshed and ready for a new academic year, with new students eager to work hard to succeed.

## Legislative Update



**Maria Hegbloom, MSCA Vice President, Bridgewater State University**

As contract negotiations clearly demonstrate, our employment is shaped both by the administrations with whom we work, and the state. This means we must fight for our rights, not only at the bargaining table, but also on Beacon Hill. For this reason, our union puts time and energy into legislative actions that can greatly assist our members, our universities, and our students. [Read more](#) for details about the bills we are advocating for.

## Framingham State's Anti-Racism Rapid Response



**Virginia Rutter, Framingham State University**

In fall 2017, Framingham State was rocked (again) a wave of high profile hate crimes on campus in which individual students were targeted with racist messages. In response, faculty and students came together to speak up against hate. Kelly Matthews, associate professor of English at FSU, founded FSU's Faculty Against Hate, an anti-racism rapid response group, now with as many as 200 faculty, librarians, and staff. She explains, "This is not a committee. It is a grassroots effort." [Read more](#) about Kelly's reasons for founding Faculty Against Hate.

## Day Part-Time Faculty Win



**Irina Seceleanu, Bridgewater State University**

It is no news that part-time faculty in MA, the nation, and world-wide struggle to make ends meet due to lack of health care and other benefits, lower salaries, and job insecurity, to name only a few issues. While access to health care is being addressed at the state level through bills sponsored by the MTA (see the Legislate Update link), we are pleased to inform our members that we made other substantial gains for our day part-time members in the last round of bargaining. [Read more.](#)

## Notes from the MSCA Grievance Chair



**Robert Donohue, MSCA Grievance Chair, Framingham State University**

Imagine this: You *know* that the administration has violated your contractually protected rights. Or, you *suspect* that the administration has violated your contractually protected rights. Or, you *wonder* if the administration has violated your contractually protected rights. What can you do? What should you do? [Read more.](#)

## Bargaining Update



**Amy Everitt, Salem State University**

It's hard to believe, but we will be back at the table for our next round of negotiations at the end of January, 2020. In order to prepare our proposal for management, the bargaining team has developed a timeline for collecting ideas and concerns from members. In the past we have utilized one comprehensive survey to identify issues and develop our proposal. This year the team will be considering information gathered from a variety of formats.

[Read more.](#)

## Looking Back, Looking Forward: A Remarkable Year (or two) of MSCA Activism and Solidarity



**Aruna Krishnamurthy, Fitchburg State University**

The last two years will go down in MSCA's bargaining history as a frustrating experience of delays, disavowals, and disrespect from management to members. However, this difficult experience did bequeath something valuable and uplifting in the form of rank and file activism. Our powerful acts of resistance and the leadership of the chapters too will go down in history as inspiration and example. [Read more.](#)

## What is the Employee Relations Committee (ERC)?



**Donald Bullens, Worcester State University**

The Employee Relations Committee (ERC) is an integral component of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. The CBA is a complicated document and the ERC is one more way to provide clarity and direction to faculty who must interpret it as part of their professional responsibilities. [Read more.](#)

## Hard Times at Salem State University: A Brief Report



**Tiffany Chenault, Salem State University**

Student enrollment and retention woes seem to be plaguing higher education as a whole, and public universities in particular. College closures and downsizing of faculty and staff seem to be the new normal of our times. Many of the nine state universities are in a somewhat precarious situation with low enrollment and retention numbers, coupled with rising fees for students and faculty hiring freezes. Salem State University seems to be on the extremes of this situation. [Read more.](#)

## Personnel Action Deadlines



**Rala Diakite, Fitchburg State University**

As the new academic year begins, I wish you all success in your endeavors of teaching, service and scholarship. In order to assist you with deadlines for the various steps of personnel actions, information, I have condensed all relevant dates and deadlines in one easy-to-read document. [Click here](#) to access this information.