Contract Amendments Ratified
Funding Included in Supplemental Budget Bill

C. J. O’Donnell, MSCA President

On June 10 I reported that the MSCA Board of Directors had voted to enter discussions with the Board of Higher Education regarding financial concessions to the 2009-2012 contract after Gov. Patrick had made a second request for concessions and House Speaker DeLeo would not commit the House to fund the existing higher education contracts. With certain preconditions agreed to by the BHE, the MSCA Bargaining Committee met with management on June 17. By the end of the day MSCA had made a final proposal that was rejected by the BHE and we broke off negotiations. On June 21 the BHE let us know that they were changing their position and accepting our last offer from June 17. The Bargaining Committee accepted the tentative agreement and the MSCA Board of Directors recommended its ratification to the membership.

The ratification vote was held on the campuses on July 6 and 7. The amendments to the 2009-2012 day agreement were ratified by the membership by the following vote: 377 yes, 24 no, one blank ballot and one challenged ballot. The governor submitted a supplemental funding request that includes the MSCA contract, along with all other higher education contracts ratified recently, on July 9. As we go to press, favorable legislative action is expected.

The major amendment approved by the membership postpones every across-the-board salary increase to the last day of the fiscal year (June 30, 2010, June 30, 2011 and June 30, 2012). Salary increases will be accelerated by three or six months if certain state revenue thresholds are met. Details are available on the MSCA website (www.mscaunion.org).

I would like to thank the more than 400 members who came to campus to vote on the two days following the Independence Day holiday. I know it was far from a convenient time for most of us. However, the MSCA Board believed that a ratification vote, conducted quickly but in compliance with Massachusetts regulations, was necessary.

Your participation in ratification and your support for the efforts of the MSCA Bargaining Committee and the MSCA Board of Directors on your behalf are very much appreciated.

Part-time Day, DGCE Faculty Eligible for Unemployment Benefits

Bob Whalen and Donna Sirutis, MTA Consultants

Faculty who teach part-time in the day bargaining unit and/or in the Division of Graduate and Continuing Education may be eligible for unemployment compensation for the weeks between two successive academic semesters or instructional periods. Eligibility applies to faculty whose only employment is as a part-time day faculty member and who meet the threshold requirements entitling them to unemployment compensation under the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 151A.

In most instances, unemployment compensation is not available to full-time educators (K-12 or higher education) between instructional periods due to a specific exemption in the law. The rationale for this exemption is that these employees have a contract or “a reasonable assurance” of employment in the following academic year or term. This exemption, however, does not apply in the unique circumstances faced by part-time day and DGCE faculty.

For DGCE faculty, the collective bargaining agreement specifically defines the term of each appointment to be “for no more than one (1) instructional period” (DGCE contract, Article VI(C)). Moreover, the contractual “Letter of Appointment” states that the “course may be cancelled… if enrollment is insufficient.”

University Status Bill to be Signed July 28

Gov. Deval Patrick has scheduled July 28 for the signing of the bill to establish the nine state colleges as the state university system. The change will take effect on Oct. 26. Bridgewater, Fitchburg, Framingham, Salem, Westfield and Worcester will change their names to “State University.” The remaining three colleges will retain their current names and will be part of the state university system.

MSCA/MTA/NEA will continue to represent the two existing faculty librarian bargaining units. The September issue of the MSCA Perspective will cover this historic transition in detail. The bill is posted at <https://www.mass.gov/legis/bills/house/186/ht04pdf/ht04864.pdf>.

Day Contract Signed April 6 in Boston

Representatives of MSCA and management participate in the signing of the day unit contract front (l to r), MSCA President C. J. O’Donnell, Commissioner Richard Freeland, back (l to r), MTA consultant Donna Sirutis, Cheryl Stanley (Worcester), Neal DeChillo (Dean, Schools of Human Services, Salem), Sue Dargan (Framingham), MTA Higher Education Director Arthur Pippa, Deputy Chancellor Pete Taffarns, BHE chief negotiator Mark Peters.

Tentative agreement for both the day and the part-time day faculty units was a condition of the BHE’s agreement to enter into collective bargaining with the MSCA.

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Arthur Pippo

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If You Need a Luggage Carrier to Submit Your Portfolio to Academic Affairs, It’s Too Big!

A Guide to the Selection and Organization of Evaluation Materials
Patricia V. Markunas, Editor

I served as chair of the 2009-10 Salem State committee on tenure, which evaluated a record number of faculty members — 21. Every candidate received a positive recommendation for tenure from the committee. Speaking personally, I was impressed and humbled by the quality of the work of the faculty we reviewed, regardless of department or length of higher education service.

That said, the volume of material provided by the candidates threatened to overwhelm the process by making it nearly impossible to do an appropriate re-view of each portfolio. In no instance did the volume or complexity of material enhance a candidate’s chances for tenure or deter the committee from review-ing all materials. However, portfolios stuffed with irrelevant and non-significant material detracted from the overall quality of a candidate’s record and occasionally caused us to question their judgment.

As we approach the change in the contractual tenure probation period from five to six years, it is time to stop the portfolio arms race among candidates concerning the size and weight of their materials. The quality of work, not the quantity of documents, is what counts in the tenure and promotion evaluation process.

Candidates thanked us for our time and energy in reviewing their materials and meeting with them. Candidates for future personnel actions could express respect and appreciation for the work of evaluators by presenting evaluation materials of “quality, significance and relevance” (Article VIII) that can be read easily and handled efficiently. These recommendations are offered in that spirit.

General Principles of Organization for Evaluation

• Required goes before optional.
• Greater significance goes before lesser significance.
• Recent goes before past (reverse chronological order).

Organization of Evaluation Materials

General Comment: Use the outline of required contractual criteria and materials in Article VIII (Sections A.1 and D.1 for faculty and Sections A.3 and D.3 for librarians) as your organization guide.

Teaching Effectiveness. The best organizational scheme I saw for the section on teaching effectiveness was based on individual courses, with a subsection devoted to each course taught during the review period. If you taught the same course in different formats (e.g., online, hybrid), consider treating each format as a separate course.

The courses taught during the review period should be listed at the beginning of this section. A single syllabus, plus a sample of course materials, classroom ob-servations and SIR-II results for each course, is an excellent way to organize the required materials and convey effectiveness.

If your teaching effectiveness has been criticized or suggestions have been made to improve it, be sure to address these points within the context of the specific course(s). Include documentation of changes you made to the course(s), the syllabus or your teaching to address criticisms or suggestions.

Include documentation of activities that you undertook to improve teaching effectiveness. A single document (e.g., certificate of completion, letter of comple-tion, or a program in the absence of a certificate or letter) per course is sufficient. If you use your own student evaluations in addition to SIR-II, include a summary of the results and explain how you used them to improve your teaching.

A few well-written, detailed, signed letters of support from students could be significant to document teaching effectiveness.

Academic Advising. Contrary to popular opinion, there is no contractual re-requirement to “document” academic advising. A brief narrative about your advising activities (defined broadly if you wish) plus data about your advising loads are suffi-cient. If you have done something unique or creative with advising, include that.

Continuing Scholarship and Other Professional Activities. The most significant material should be first, with remaining material in decreasing order of signif-icance. If you don’t use significance to organize this section, use reverse chronologi-cal order. List the relevant projects in order at the beginning of each subsection.

For completed work, include only the finished product as documentation. Limit communications to those sent after the project has been completed by conference organizers, organizational officers, editors, committee chairs, etc. If a formal evalu-a-tion of a presentation was conducted, include the results.

For work in progress, include only the most recent documents (proposal or draft), the current status of the project and a timeline for completion of the project.

For conferences that you attended, documentation of sessions attended, con-tinuing education credits, certificates of attendance, etc. are significant and rel-evant. Lacking these, include a single registration document for the conference.

For those working on a terminal degree, include your most recent transcript, a brief description of completed course work, remaining coursework, the timeline for completion of the dissertation/thesis and a projected graduation date.

For committee/organizational assignments, include a letter of appreciation after the term of service has been completed from the committee chair, the organization president, or someone of comparable status. If you produced something of significance, include a copy.

If you are an editor or a member of an editorial board for a series of publica-tions, include one copy of the most recent issue.

Awards from the college or outside organizations are significant and relevant. Document the award’s criteria and process and what you did to win it. Letters or documents from individuals outside the college for activities in the larger community or professional organizations are significant and relevant.

Alternative Assignments. Include a list of these assignments, along with the semester(s) and the credit hours that apply, at the beginning of this section. Include your report on completion of the assignment (if applicable) and the formal evaluation of the assignment once completed. If there was a work product of signif-icance, include a copy.

Questionable Quality, Significance and Relevance

General Comment. If the document isn’t written about your work or if it didn’t create it, why would you include it in your evaluation materials?

Doing Your Job. You are not required to document that you do your job. The documents below may relate to Workload, Scheduling and Course Assignments (Article XII), not Evaluation (Article VIII). If documents do not relate to a specific evaluation criterion for you, they are of questionable “quality, significance or relevance.” Do not include:

• the schedule from your office door, weekly office hours and schedules for aca-demic advising appointments, whether blank or filled in.
• weekly or monthly schedules of appointments and meetings, including search committee materials.
• workload documents from the administration.
• lists, notices, agenda or minutes of meetings that you have attended.
• invitations to or programs from convocation, commencement or other college or social activities that you have attended.
• reappointment letters from the president or the board of trustees.
• proposals for the use of MSCA professional development monies.
• copies of letters of recommendation written for students or others.
• internal communications about committee or departmental work, including email threads discussing issues or meeting mechanics.
• drafts of work for which the final version has been completed.
• brief thank you messages for cooperating with routine requests for information from colleagues and administrators.

Letters of Support. Contrary to popular opinion, letters of support are not re-quired by the contract. Letters are most relevant when they document specific ser-vices, presentations and other activities that may not have a concrete work product. General letters of support from colleagues, friends and administrators for your promotion or tenure do not add much quality to your portfolio. If you can’t resist including general letters of support, put them at the end of the portfolio.

DGCE Student Evaluations. You are not required to include DGCE evaluations in your day unit evaluation materials. There could be negative consequences to doing so. Only graduate courses taught as part of your day unit workload are required to be included in evaluation materials.

Student Evaluation Printouts. Do not include a separate photocopy page of the “Interpreting SIR-II Results” (page 4) with every SIR-II report you have.

Course Documents. The following documents may add bulk to your portfolio but they may not add quality or significance. Do not include:

• multiple copies of the same syllabus for courses you taught repeatedly.
• multiple copies of exams and quizzes drawn from the publisher’s test banks.
• articles written by other people about teaching effectiveness or other pedagogical techniques.
• copies of student papers and other student work.
• multiple copies of PowerPoint presentations used in lecture.

Other Materials Supporting Teaching Effectiveness. The following documents may add bulk to your portfolio but they may not add quality or significance:

• hand-written notes or brief emails from students (“I just loved your course”).
• anonymous or unsigned letters from students.
• original or copies of self-administered student evaluations.
• routine email correspondence (e.g., application, notice of acceptance, scheduling issues) about participation in workshops to improve teaching.

Student-generated Work. Course assignments submitted to faculty members belong to the students who did them, not to us. I don’t think we have a right to cherry-pick student-generated work to use for personal reasons, even if the student’s name is removed.

At the very least, the student’s written permission should be included whenever you use their work as part of your portfolio and the student should decide whether his/her name should be included.

Academic Advising. Appointment schedules and workload documents may not add quality or significance to your portfolio. Hand-written notes and brief emails (“Thanks for helping me with my schedule”) may not, either.

Continuing Scholarship and Other Professional Activities. Completed publications, presentations, pedagogy, curriculum contributions, participation in organizations, research, artistic creation, work towards a terminal degree and other continuing scholarship/professional activities provide in themselves the best documentation for work of quality, significance and relevance. You only diminish the quality of your portfolio by including routine correspondence about these activities, including these examples. Do not include:

• documents/emails about the initial submission or acceptance of any activity or project that has been completed.
• draft copies of work that has been completed.
• all scheduling issues; conference registration information or confirmation; and travel arrangements, including travel vouchers, flight arrangements, hotel reservations and the like.
• resumes or publications by collaborators.
• brief emails from friends (“Your presentation was great!”).
• consultations among participants/authors as part of the application, writing or creative process.
• inclusion of an entire conference program booklet, when a copy of the committee’s meeting schedule and/or minutes.

For completed committee assignments, routine correspondence only diminishes the quality of your portfolio. Do not include:

• your nomination to a committee to which you were appointed.
• committee appointment correspondence or lists from either your chapter or the college president.
• copies of the committee’s meeting schedule and/or minutes.
• multiple copies of publications for which you served as editor or member of an editorial board.
• copies of announcements or samples of other people’s work selected by a committee on which you served or work that you judged as part of a contest.

For public service, including work at the State House or Capitol Hill, background information, such as lists of legislators, State House or Capitol maps, and lists of local restaurants, diminishes the quality of your portfolio.

Alternative Assignments. Inclusion of routine correspondence diminishes the quality of your documentation of a completed alternative assignment. Do not include:

• your application or nomination for the alternative assignment.
• the correspondence granting the assignment or changes in your teaching schedule as a result.
• workload documentation from the administration about the assignment.
• vouchers, travel arrangements and the like about the assignment.
• correspondence about appointment as permanent or temporary chair.

Confidential/Sensitive Material. As part of the portfolio arms race, some candidates included internal communications from search committees, including interview schedules and rejection letters with people’s names on them. I was uncomfortable reading the names of unsuccessful candidates for positions. A letter of appreciation from your chair for your service is sufficient.

Personal Information. Think carefully before providing information about your personal life that is not relevant to your discipline or your application: family responsibilities, religious activities, visa status and involvement in partisan politics. Providing a list of financial contributions to the college or other organizations is in bad taste and raises ethical issues.

Making Materials Easy to Read and Handle

General Comment. If you set requirements for student-generated papers, why don’t you use the same requirements for your tenure/promotion portfolio?

Proofreading. Proofread your portfolio. Better yet, have someone else proofread it. Fix typographical errors and spell names correctly. Make sure all letters and evaluations are signed. Make sure your name appears on signed certificates that document professional development or continuing education credits.

Redundant Materials. Avoid multiple copies of the same information. Don’t break up and repeat your self-evaluation in each binder you may submit. Don’t repeat your report on a completed alternative assignment verbatim in your self-evaluation. Don’t use the same work product in multiple places in your portfolio.

Font Size. It’s really hard to read text in fonts that are less than 12 point.

Font Color. Using colored print in your narrative makes it harder to read.
DGCE Contract Signed April 6 in Boston

Representatives of MSCA and management at the signing of the DGCE contract: front row (l to r), MSCA President C. J. O’Donnell, President; Margaret Vaughan (MSCA/Salem), Vice President; Sue Dargan (Worcester), Secretary; Lee Weissinger (Lowell), Treasurer; back row (l to r), MTA consultant Bob Whalen, David Goodlett (Salem), Amy Everitt (Boston), MTA Consultant; Whitman, Sue Dargan (Worcester), Donna Sentzi (Westfield), MTA Consultant; New Officers, Staff Members Assume Posts at MTA

New Leadership Takes Office in MSCA, MTA
Patricia Markunas, Editor

New Grievance Officer, Board Member Join MSCA Leadership

Following the resignation of MSCA grievance committee chair Margaret Vaughan (MSCA/Salem) on April 9, Sandra Faiman-Silva (MSCA/Bridge watre) was elected as grievance committee chair on April 16 to complete the term of office ending Oct. 1, 2010. Faiman-Silva is professor and chair of the anthrop-ology department at Bridgewater State College, where she has taught since 1985. Faiman-Silva received her B.A. from U-Mass Amherst, her M.A. from the University of Minneapolis and her Ph.D. from Boston University. Faiman-Silva considers herself to be a cultural anthropology generalist. Her book, Ochrestour at the Crossroads: The Political Economy of Class and Culture in the Oklah-oma Timber Re-gis-t (U-Nebraska, 1997) was named as a finalist for the 1997 C. Wright Mills Award by the Society for the Study of Social Problems. Her most recent book, The Courage to Connect: Sexuality, Citizenship, and Commu-nity in Provincetown (U-Illinois, 2004), analyzed the relationship between gay and straight people in that resort community. Faiman-Silva has been the MSCA/Bridge watre chapter grievance officer and secretary for many years. She has won several awards from Bridgewater, including the 1999 Jordan D. Ploore Research Prize in World Justice for her work on Provincetown, the BSC Class of 1950 Distinguished Research Award in 2003, the BSC Faculty Lifetime Research Award in 2009, and an Innovative Service Award in 2010 for her work on the Nine State Colleges librarian union for the nine state colleges in Massachusetts.

MSCA Perspective
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MSCA Perspectives

A new face on the MSCA Board of Directors

New Officers, Staff Members Assume Posts at MTA
Paul Toner (Cambridge) and Timothy Sullivan (Plymouth) were elected as the new president and vice president, respectively, at the 2010 MTA Annual Meeting, held May 7 and 8 in Boston. At the same meeting, Max Page (U-Mass Amherst) won election to represent Region H (higher education) on the MTA Executive Committee. All three will serve a two-year term beginning July 15, 2010.

Shortly before the Annual Meeting, MTA executive director-treasurer David Borer announced his resignation to return to the Washington, DC area. MTA general counsel Ann Clarke has been appointed to fill this vacancy on a permanent basis. MTA Attorney Lee Weissinger has been appointed to serve as acting general counsel.

Arthur Pippo (pictured below), director of the MTA division of higher education, has taken a new position as the executive director of NEA-New Hampshire. Long-time MTA Consultant Donna Sentzi has been named to serve as the acting director of the higher education division.

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