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Perspective

MSCA Newsletter

Patricia V. Markunas, editor

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NEA/MTA/MSCA

Summer 2010

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.

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 (Westfield), Neal DeChillo (Dean, Schools of Human Services, Salem), Sue Dargan (Framingham), MTA Higher Education Director Arthur Pippo, Deputy Chancellor Peter Tsaffaras, BHE chief negotiator Mark Peters.

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 http://www.mass.gov/legis/bills/house/186/ht04pdf/ht04864.pdf>.

Part-time Day, DGCE Faculty Eligible for Unemployment Benefits

Bob Whalen and Donna Sirutis, MTA Conultants

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 and/or DGCE 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"

(DGCE contract, Appendix C).

For part-time day faculty, a similar issue exists. Part-time day faculty may have a course cancelled due to insufficient enrollment. Most part-time day faculty members receive a "contract" semester to semester. Therefore, part-time day faculty would not have a "reasonable assurance" of employment until the semester begins and should be eligible for unemployment compensation.

The MTA has represented many day part-time and DGCE faculty before the Department of Workforce Development's Board of Review, the administrative body that hears unemployment appeals. The Board has consistently ruled that even if the faculty member has been offered one or more courses in a subsequent instructional period, he or she does not have "a reasonable assurance" of employment until the semester actually begins and is, therefore, eligible to receive unemployment compensation for the intervening weeks.

If unemployment compensation is denied, as an MTA member, you are eligible for free legal services to assist with an appeal. This legal service is not available to agency fee payers. Please contact your chapter president (listed on page 4) if you believe that you are eligible for legal services or assistance with your appeal.

Non-Profit Org. U.S. Postage P A I D Permit No. 93 Salem, MA

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 review 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 reviewing 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 observations 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 completion, or a program in the absence of a certificate or letter) per activity 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 requirement to "document" academic advising. A brief narrative about your advising activities (defined broadly if you wish) plus data about your advising loads are sufficient. 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 significance. If you don't use significance to organize this section, use reverse chronological 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 evaluation of a presentation was conducted, include the results.

For work in progress, include **only** the most recent documentation (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, continuing education credits, certificates of attendance, etc. are significant and relevant. 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 courses, 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 organiza-

tion 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 publications, 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 **only** 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 significance, include a copy.

Questionable Quality, Significance and Relevance

General Comment. If the document isn't written about your work or if you 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 academic 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 required by the contract. Letters are most relevant when they document specific service, 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 photocopied 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.

- originals 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 cover and the page that includes your name (highlighted) is sufficient.

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 wouldn'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.

Font Variety. I know that it's a lot of fun to have lots of choices of different fonts. But it is hard to read a document with lots of different fonts. This is true for your syllabiles well. Pick a professional-looking font and stick to it. USING ALL CAPITAL LETTERS TO CONVEY INFORMATION LOOKS LIKE YOU ARE SHOUTING AND MAKES IT HARDER TO READ. USING BOLDFACE ONLY MAKES IT LOOK LIKE YOU ARE SHOUTING LOUDER. UNDERLINING A LOT OF TEXT WITH ALL CAPITALS IN BOLDFACE IS NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO READ. Italics are not much better, especially when they are boldfaced and they are worse when underlined AND CAPITALIZED.

Stick to a professional font in your narrative and other documents. Use bold face and italics for headings, subheadings and occasionally for emphasis. Be careful with borders. Avoid underlining. Minimize back-to-back copies.

Table of Contents (TC), Tabs and Dividers. Use a TC based on the materials required in the contract to be submitted. Label the sections of your portfolio in a manner consistent with the TC. Use tabs and dividers that can be printed with labels to describe the material in that section. Avoid post-it type labels, as they can peel off and get lost. Be reasonable with the TC, tabs and dividers: too much detail is as unhelpful as too little. Do not bulk up your portfolio by inserting colored sheets of paper between every document.

Spacing. Your self-evaluation should be double-spaced between paragraphs with appropriate margins. Use headings, subheadings and appropriate cross-references. List items with bullet points rather than stringing them in the text.

Highlighting. Highlight your name in yellow on programs, lists, posters, etc. Avoid pink or green, as they are harder to read and they photocopy as black.

Materials in a Foreign Language. If you include a transcript, an article, a letter of support, etc. in a foreign language, include a translation of it in English.

Staples and Paper Clips. Put that stapler down and back away from it. Don't touch those paper clips. Materials with staples and paper clips bulk up folders and binders, may have to be removed from materials and so may take more time to read. If you're nervous about documents getting out of order, number the pages.

Landscape Documents. Landscape documents should be "punched" on the top of a document that is inserted into the right hand side of a binder and on the bottom of a document that is inserted into the left hand side. The same point applies with landscape insertions into plastic sleeves, but see the point below.

Plastic Sleeves. Plastic sleeves make portfolios heavier, harder to handle and harder to read because of the glare. They result in over-stuffed binders, too. If you have to use plastic sleeves because that's your discipline's culture, buy light-weight, non-glare ones. Under **no** circumstances should multi-page documents be inserted into a single sleeve.

Over-stuffed Binders. If you flip open the binder and the pages extend beyond the spot when the clasps meet, it's over-stuffed. **Don't do this.** Edit your materials and break them up into smaller, easier-to-handle binders.

Nearly-empty Binders. As part of the portfolio arms race to fill up a crate with binders, some candidates put a handful of materials or small bound publications into three-inch binders. **Don't do this.**

Electronic Media and Portfolios. Existing computer technology and the realities of the committee's technical support make reading hundreds of pages in electronic format difficult. The typical computer screen size may not show an entire readable page at once, which makes scrolling through pages and visuals time-consuming and hard to read. The ease of inclusion of electronic materials onto a CD of practically infinite capacity threatens to make the evaluation process more cumbersome, not less.

The Employee Relations Committee has agreed that all evaluation materials, other than those that cannot be submitted in paper form (e.g., video productions, music, dance performances, artwork, etc.) should be submitted in paper form. An electronic copy (i.e., a CD or DVD) of the evaluation materials may be included at the candidate's choosing, but this shall not supplant the expectation that materials that can be submitted in paper form have been so submitted.

TRANSITIONS

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/Bridgewater) 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 anthropology 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 Minnesota and her Ph.D. from Boston University.

Faiman-Silva considers herself to be a cultural anthropology generalist. Her book, Choctaws at the Crossroads: The Political Economy of Class and Culture in the Oklahoma Timber Region (U-Nebraska, 1997) was named as a finalist for the



MSCA president C. J. O'Donnell and MSCA grievance committee chair Sandra Faiman-Silva.

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 Community in Provincetown* (U-Illinois, 2004), analyzed the relationship between gay and straight people in that resort community.

Faiman-Silva has been the MSCA/Bridgewater chapter grievance officer and secretary for many years. She has won several awards from Bridgewater, including the 1999 Jordan D. Fiore 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 organizing a day-long teach-in that raised \$10,500 for relief efforts in Haiti.

A new face on the MSCA Board of Directors will be C. Margot Hennessy, who will represent the

MSCA/Westfield Chapter on the Board. Hennessy is the chair of the ethnic and gender studies department at Westfield State College, where she has taught since 2000. Hennessy came to Westfield after several years at Clark University, where she taught courses on African-American writers, women's autobiography, post-colonial literature and theory, and feminist theory. At Westfield, Hennessy has shepherded the creation of the new department and major of ethnic and gender studies—the first in Massachusetts.

Hennessy has been active in the National Association for Ethnic Studies and has chaired and presented papers on several panels on transformative pedagogy and the politics of creating an ethnic studies department and major. Her scholarly interests include post-colonial literature and theory, Africana studies, queer theory and whiteness studies as anti-racist practice. She is currently editing a peer-reviewed journal special issue exploring the complex and fruitful relationship between the trans-disciplinary 'worlds' of ethnic studies and women and gender studies—theories and practices; curriculums and classrooms. She earned a B.A. from Clark University and her M.A. and Ph.D. from U-Mass Amherst.

New Officers, Staff Members Assume Posts at MTA

Paul Toner (Cambridge) and Timothy Sullivan (Plymouth) won election as the new MTA 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 MSCA Consultant Donna Sirutis has been named to serve as the acting director of the higher education division.

MSCA Perspective

A publication of the Massachusetts State College Association, the faculty and librarian union for the nine state colleges in Massachusetts.

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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, Commissioner Richard Freeland; back row (l to r), MTA consultant Bob Whalen, David Goodof (Salem), Chair Sue Dargan (Framingham), Ken Haar (Westfield), MTA Higher Education Director Arthur Pippo, BHE chief negotiator Mark Peters.