

Resolution for MSCA to Actively Oppose Austerity and to Fight for Federal Relief and Recovery for Public Higher Education

MSCA Delegate Assembly 2020

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WHEREAS, after many years of public higher education (and other public services) in Massachusetts (and beyond) facing austerity policies, frequently framed as ‘doing more with less’ public higher education in Massachusetts (and beyond) has been in an ongoing and escalating crisis; and

WHEREAS, the austerity framework that has framed various budget and hiring decisions have proven to be detrimental to public higher education as a public good and has undermined the working conditions of faculty and staff and the learning conditions of students, particularly historically marginalized students; and

WHEREAS, the present COVID 19 pandemic and attendant economic crisis represents an existential threat to public higher education through significant budget cuts, severe staffing reductions, particularly for part time faculty, potential program retrenchment and campus closures, the undermining of primarily face-to-face instruction and inadequate student support particularly for precarious and marginalized students.; and

WHEREAS, the NEA’s April 9, 2020 call that the next COVID-19 Legislative Package “Provide at least \$175 billion for the Education Stabilization Fund to distribute to states, allocated by formula, for public pre-K through post-secondary education to fill budget gaps caused by declining state revenues due to the COVID-19 national emergency.”; therefore be it

Resolved, That the MSCA Board of Directors, the Bargaining Action Leader, and/or the Organizing and Unity Leader specifically focus their allocated resources and primary attention on engaging and organizing the MSCA membership to push back against the implementation of austerity policies on our campuses and to demand federal funding initiatives. This includes providing support to local chapters to organize initiatives on each campus as well as coordinating initiatives at the statewide level.

Resolved, That the MSCA Board of Directors, the Bargaining Action Leader, and/or the Organizing and Unity Leader also focus their allocated resources and primary attention to develop coalitions with other affiliated public higher education and public education

organizations. These include other elements of public higher education in Massachusetts, including but not limited to the unions at the UMass system and the Community College systems. This outreach should also include non-MSCA and MTA unions in such institutions;

Resolved, That these organizing efforts should focus on pressuring the Council of Presidents, Board of Higher Education, respective Boards of Trustees, community college and university leadership, as well as elected Massachusetts and Federal representatives to:

1. Oppose austerity measures as a ‘resolution’ for the crisis in public higher education which has been intensified by the COVID 19 crisis. In particular this includes opposing the closing of programs and campuses.
2. Push for inclusion of major Federal relief and recovery for public higher education in any forthcoming relief and recovery packages (particularly in light of the fact that Massachusetts - and many other states - are limited by the requirement that they balance their budgets).

Resolved, That these organizing efforts should include but not be limited to the following actions:

1. Dedicate an issue of MSCA Perspective on “Resisting Austerity”
2. Gather personal email addresses for the entire membership to ensure organizing activities can reach all members.
3. Use MSCA resources and administrative and infrastructural support to convene campus town halls to foster community dialogue and organizing against austerity.
4. Use MSCA resources and administrative and infrastructural support to convene a state-wide town hall to foster cross campus dialogue and organizing.
5. Organize members and chapters to work with the MTA and NEA to push Congress to fund public higher education.
6. Provide regular updates to the full membership via existing MSCA communication systems on steps taken toward these goals.