

**MSCA Board of Directors Meeting
Minutes of the Regular Meeting
February 5, 2021
Virtually using Zoom**

Present: Chenault, Ciano-Boyce, Diakite, Donohue, Eve, George, Hegbloom, Hennessy, Hibbert, Krishnamurthy, Lam, Leone, Mitroka-Batsford, O'Connell, O'Donnell, Pilkenton, Ramsden, Riel, Seceleanu, Smith, Washington, Weeks

Guests: Chris Gullen (Westfield), Melissa Henderson (MSCA Treasurer's Office), Roberta James (MTA), Catherine Santiago (MTA)

Approval of the Orders of the Day:

It was moved and seconded to approve the orders of the day.

It was moved and seconded to amend the orders of the day, to move the Salem chapter report to the beginning of the Chapter Reports. The motion passed.

The original motion passed as amended.

Approval of the Minutes: December 4, 2020 and January 8, 2021

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes from December 4, 2020.

It was moved and seconded to amend the minutes so that they read under the Fitchburg Chapter Report (second paragraph, second sentence, addition in **BOLD**):

There have been interesting discussions with the university vice president regarding equivalencies.

The motion passed.

The original motion passed as amended.

It was moved and seconded to approve the minute from January 8, 2021. The motion passed.

MSCA Officers Reports

Treasurer – Weeks and Melissa Henderson, Administrative Assistant to the Treasurer

Administrative Assistant Henderson provided Board members with a brief update on the status of the new member database. She reported that the new database will be much easier to work with due to automated features regarding data input. Members will be in the system using their state employee ID numbers. Payments and billing is run through the new system.

Treasurer Weeks provided Board members with the monthly expense report via email. He reviewed the report and stated that the purchase of the new server has been accounted for in the report.

President – O'Donnell
Committee Nominations

It was moved and seconded to approve the following committee nomination:
AA/EO/DIV: Sam Witt – Framingham
The motion passed.

FY22 Budget

The governor's budget was released. It is likely that the House and Senate will increase funding for public higher education to at least include the line item overrides.

Tuition Remission

The MTA included language for tuition remission in their legislative package. The proposal is for 100% wavier of tuition and fees at state institutions.

Vaccinations

Letters have been sent by both the MTA and the state university presidents to include faculty and librarians in Phase 2 of the vaccination schedule.

Retirement Incentive

President O'Donnell reported that he had been told that the presidents intended to have filed a bill allowing for an early retirement incentive for faculty that they had drafted last year. The deadline to legislative filings is February 25, 2021.

Vice President – Hegbloom

MTA LEGISLATION & SPRING CAMPAIGN

Spring Legislative Campaign:

- **First Goal** = Win universal vaccines for all educators. Bring staff back to work on our higher ed campuses.
 - Tell Baker to add higher ed to Phase II #weareteacherstoo and share it
- **Second** = Lead statewide, grassroots campaign for public education funding (preK-higher ed) through passage of The Cherish Act, fully funding for the SOA, and passage of progressive taxes.
- **Third** = Lead the first-ever, MTA state-wide bargaining campaign, that will seek to bring together our campaign work on funding with local demands for safety and equity (particularly for ESPs and Adjunct faculty).

The Cherish Act: HD 1224, An Act Committing to Higher Education the Resources to Insure a Strong and Healthy Public Higher Education System

- Filed February 2nd (Legislation attached)

Resources:

- See how much of the most recent federal relief on your campus must go to students and how much can be used for institutional needs [here](#).
- See the most recent funding ad [here](#).

Get your campus involved:

- Sign-up for the grassroots organizing series of winter skills [here](#)
- February – Educate & Organize (build legislative teams on each campus). Please send me the names of any members who might want to be involved.

MTA/NEA UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES AND EVENTS: *Please consider sharing the following with your members. There are a number of events taking place throughout February and March that may be of interest to them.*

Member workshops:

Student Loan Management & Forgiveness Webinar:

- Monday, February 8th @ 6:00-7:00pm – Register [here](#)
- Wednesday February 10th @ 11:00-12:00am – Register [here](#)
- Monday, February 22nd @ 6:00-7:00 – Register [here](#).

Educator Self-Care: Throughout February and March

- Yoga Mondays, 7:00-8:00pm – register [here](#)
- Meditation Wednesdays, 8:00-8:45pm – register [here](#)
- Tai Chi Saturdays, 8:00-9:00am - register [here](#)
- If you missed it, you can also access the MTA recording of the “The Science of Educator Burnout” [here](#).

Rank & File Member Meeting: Please get the word out to your members about this MTA rank-and-file, regional meeting which will provide information to our members about our legislative campaigns.

- Members should register by noon on February, 9th - [here](#).

Union leader & activist events: All members are welcome to attend these events, but they may be more interesting for union leaders, those interested in becoming more active in their union, or those who are interested in taking on an organizing or activist role within their union.

Winter Skills: Workshops on bargaining foundations, grassroots organizing, labor law, conflict resolution, contract enforcement and more will be offered throughout the months of February

and March. Please consider attending what you can and inviting other chapter leaders/activists to attend. Register [here](#).

MTA Bargaining Summit: February 27th 9:00am – 12:00pm. Learn more & register [here](#).

NEA Higher Ed Conference: March 10-12th. Register by February 26th – [here](#).

NEA National Leadership Summit: March 14th-16th. Register by February 19th. More information can be found [here](#).

OTHER INFO:

2022 NEA Foundation Awards for Teaching Excellence: MTA forwards one nomination to the NEA each year to recognize, reward, and promote both excellence in teaching and advocacy for the profession. Deadline to submit nominations to MTA is February 28th. (See attached flyer for further details).

DHE (Department of Higher Education): Budget Recommendations

- Parthenon report on recommendations for financial indicators for state universities and community colleges as well as potential regional opportunities for cost sharing.

Secretary

The NEA-RA nomination form is on the MSCA web page. This year, the meeting will be virtual, and occur from June 30-July 3, 2021. 16 MSCA members may attend the conference.

Chapter Report

Salem

Salem chapter leadership provided Board members with updated information on the university administration's desire to cut the budget at the expense of providing a high-quality, higher education experience to members of its community.

It was moved and seconded to go into executive session. The motion passed.

It was moved and seconded to come out of executive session. The motion passed.

Worcester

There are 30 faculty members who are eligible for the retirement incentive. It is surmised that about half of these faculty members will take the incentive.

Charlie Fox is the new grievance officer at Worcester.

The provost recently stated that for Fall 2021, 50-75% of classes will be in-person. The required teaching modality will be 50-75% in-person for hybrid courses.

The university is a COVID-19 vaccination site. The site will give 1000-2000 vaccines per day. University health sciences affiliated and trained staff, faculty and students are participating in providing vaccines to individuals. They are using the Pfizer vaccine.

Westfield

The efficiency committee submitted a comprehensive report to the interim president recently. There are concerns regarding, "right sizing Westfield," and the Board of Trustees.

Chapter President Ciano-Boyce spoke with Higher Education Commissioner Santiago about the report and her concerns. Santiago stated he would read the document.

MassArt

Enrollment numbers are solid for next year. Campus administration still insists MassArt needs to cut costs.

Mass Maritime

Classes begin next week. Many commuter students have been non-compliant with COVID-19 rules and regulations. If residential students do not comply, they are supposed to be removed from campus.

Fitchburg

The CFO provided a presentation to the union heads. A dire financial picture was presented. It is unknown if "right sizing" will have to happen.

Bridgewater

The relationship between the provost and faculty/librarians is difficult and strained.

Money from state and federal funds is being spent on non-academic expenses.

Bi-weekly meetings are being held with the president's chief of staff.

MSCA Reports

Organizing and Unity Leader – Seceleanu

FY22 Budget

The governor's proposed FY22 budget for state universities reverted back to the his proposal without the overrides included. We have another fight ahead.

Vaccination Campaign

We were able to generate 4800 signatures on the letter to allow higher education employees moved into Phase 2 of the vaccination schedule. MTA leadership met recently with Secretary Sudders to discuss the situation. There is no response from the Secretary at this time. The campaign will need to be taken to the next level. It was noted that the state of Massachusetts ranks third to last in vaccination distribution compared to other states (NY Times).

Events

A few events have been held recently, including the Educator Burnout program, which was well attended and well received.

Bargaining Action Leader – Gullen

Reported he is working with Vice President Hegbloom on bargaining focus groups.

Day Bargaining – Hegbloom

ERIP

Agreement reached with management on 2.2.21 on an early retirement/separation agreement. Finalizing language and expect to have the agreement signed 2.5.21. We will upload the agreement to the website as soon as possible.

The agreement provides \$25,000 to members with +20 years service who wish to separate from the university or retire in Spring 2021. We were unable to win backfill language or to extend the eligibility date to cover those members who had submitted an intent to retire prior to December 31, 2021.

While we recognize the benefit of this agreement to some of our members, particularly those who may have a heightened interest in leaving the university during this time of the pandemic, the bargaining committee remains concerned about the potential negative consequences that such types of agreements might have in contributing to the undermining of tenure-track positions on our campuses.

Day Bargaining

The Day Bargaining committee is scheduled to return to the table by March 31, 2021. In preparation for that return, we are working to elicit member input and feedback to identify key priorities and directions for this bargaining session. To that end we will be holding two focus groups for members on:

- **Tuesday, February 9th from 12:30-1:30 – [Register Here](#)**
- **Wednesday, February 10th from 4:00-5:00 – [Register Here](#)**

We will also be working on revising the member survey which we hope to distribute by mid-February.

As per the NBI passed at the Delegate Assembly last year, chapter's may submit proposals to be considered by our bargaining team. We ask that those be submitted by February 22nd so that the committee has time to consider these before finalizing our proposal to the BoD. You can send proposals directly to me and I will distribute these to the bargaining committee.

Finally, the committee will be sending around a request to chapter presidents for some information we are hoping you can help us to collect to aid in the bargaining process. There will be a google form for the chapter presidents as well as a survey we are asking department chairs to complete. We would appreciate any help with encouraging such completion that you can provide. You can expect to see that form and survey within the next week.

DGCE Bargaining – Ramsden

There is a sign up form available for members to become silent representatives for DGCE Bargaining.

Chair Ramsden provided Board members with information on the committees bargaining activities.

Grievance - Donohue

The Grievance Committee is down to two mediations that need to be scheduled. BSU has stated they are not available for mediations on Wednesdays, although the CBA states that mediations are held the first Wednesday of every month.

Librarians – George

No report. The meeting will be held next week.

MTA Reports

Consultants – James and Santiago

MTA consultants continue to assist part-time faculty with unemployment claims. DUA is eight weeks behind in claims. Fraudulent claims continue to hamper the DUA.

The medial and parental provisions of PFMLA began January 1st. There are concerns regarding how this will be implemented at the universities. PFMLA provides up to 80% of salary with a cap of \$800 a week. Part-time faculty may want to use this, but full-time faculty/librarians may be better off using personal sick leave.

It was requested that the MTA put out a handout that shows how PFML applies to part-time faculty.

Health and Welfare Trust – George

The next meeting is towards the end of February.

Board of Directors – Washington and Hegbloom

Cancel Wall Street Campaign – The EC voted to support the Cancel Wall Street campaign being initiated by ACRE (Action Center on Race and the Economy).

- Key ask of this campaign is to call on the Federal Reserve to make 30-year loan available to all state, territorial, tribal, and local government agencies, public school districts, and public systems of higher education to meet all their financing needs without charging any interest or fees on a permanent basis going forward.
 - If successful, Massachusetts would stand to save \$2 billion that would have gone to pay for interest and debt servicing but could now be used for public goods. An incomplete list of savings by town/institution - **Massachusetts - Potential Savings from Cancel Wall Street Campaign - Google Sheets**
 - Locals can consider connecting this campaign to bargaining:
 - “The employer shall lobby the Federal Reserve Bank of the US to offer long-term loans to all state, territorial, tribal, and local governments and government agencies in the United States without charging any fees or interest.”
 - “The employer shall only do business with banking institutions that agree to offer long-term loans to the employer to meet the needs of the community without charging any fees or interest.”

Federal Stimulus: More than \$400 million for public higher ed in Massachusetts.

- Summary of the impact of the bill can be found at the NASFAA website
- Campus by campus breakdown can be found on the ACE site.
 - MTA is still analyzing the bill, in particular to see if there are “maintenance of effort” requirements that would prohibit further cuts. The NASFAA says: “Unlike the CARES Act, the CRRSA does not require that 50% of an institution’s funds be spent on student grants. It does, however, require that institutions spend the

same dollar amount on student grants as they were required to spend under the CARES Act.”

Budget & Legislative Updates:

- January 27th – Baker released his FY22 budget. Higher ed is “level-funded” which actually means a cut in funding for most of our institutions. Overall the budget represents a .7% reduction in state spending.
- February 19th – The date by which legislation must be filed. MTA is working on partnering with legislators to file the bills for our legislative campaign.

Spring Legislative Campaign:

- **First Goal** = Win universal vaccines for all educators. Bring staff back to work on our higher ed campuses.
 - Tell Baker to add higher ed to Phase II #weareteacherstoo and share it
 - Check out the new Massachusetts Agrees ad and share it on your social media
- **Second** = Lead statewide, grassroots campaign for public education funding (preK-higher ed) through passage of The Cherish Act, fully funding for the SOA, and passage of progressive taxes.
- **Third** = Lead the first-ever, MTA state-wide bargaining campaign, that will seek to bring together our campaign work on funding with local demands for safety and equity (particularly for ESPs and Adjunct faculty).
- **Union Skills Winter Workshop Series – January 30-March 30:** Workshops on bargaining foundations, grassroots organizing, labor law, conflict resolution, and more. Register to attend.

Old Business:

none.

New Business:

none.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy George
MSCA Secretary