



Affiliated with the MTA and NEA

April 23, 2021

Dear Delegates,

Thank you! I know you do not hear that nearly enough.

For more than a year now thousands of our faculty and librarians have been required to move classes online or to remote teaching, to work from home, to manage student emailing us all hours of the day and on weekends, all while juggling our family responsibilities. The stress has been immense and platitudes from management do not ease that.

A year ago we anticipated returning to in-person classes for the Fall 2020 semester. A year later we now anticipate returning to in-person classes for the Fall 2021 semester. The creation of vaccines makes the return more likely, but apprehension remains. Details of our fall returns are not known, but the union will be demanding a safe return. I am hopeful that a year from now we will once again be able to meet in-person.

The professionalism and dedication of the MSCA librarians and faculty continue to make me proud to me a member. It remains an honor to serve as President of the Massachusetts State College Association these last thirteen years.

Please know that the MSCA Officers, Chapter Presidents, members of the Board of Directors, members serving on MSCA committees and staff continue to work hard on your behalf, although virtually. In particular, your chapter presidents have had unprecedented challenges dealing with new and unusual situations that have arisen this past year.

I would also like to express the great appreciation the Board and I have for the two MTA consultants assigned to the MSCA. **Roberta James** is assigned to the MSCA's Bridgewater, MassArt, Mass Maritime and Salem chapters; and Catherine Santiago is assigned to the MSCA's Fitchburg, Framingham, MCLA, Westfield and Worcester chapters.

Recruitment of New Members

This past year I have worked closely with Organizing and Unity Co-Leaders **Irina Seceleanu** and **Aruna Krishnamurthy** to develop and implement strategies to recruit new faculty and librarians as union members, as well as working to convince current non-union bargaining unit members to join the union. You can read more about this in the [Organizing and Unity report](#).

Funding for Public Higher Education

The MSCA took the lead in a push to [override Governor Baker's vetoes](#) of public higher education funding line items in the FY 2021 budget. These efforts generated thousands of emails to our state representatives and senators, and we were able to convince the Legislature to override ever veto, resulting in an additional \$15 million for the state universities and community colleges.

The MSCA Legislation Committee is working to pass MTA's [Cherish Act](#) as part of [MTA's legislative action](#) and our effort to increase funding for public higher education. You can read more about this in the [Legislation Committee's report](#).

Fighting the Austerity Narrative

At last year's Assembly delegates passed a [new business item](#) to have an issue of the [MSCA Perspective](#) dedicated to resisting austerity. This issue appeared in [December 2020](#). Austerity is now a false narrative being pushed more and more frequently as it adversely affects faculty and librarians, and the quality education we work diligently to provide.

In addition, and in response to statements by state university administrators and representatives at the DGCE bargaining table restrictions on the use of federal relief funds, we worked with MTA and NEA and posted [the Truth about Federal Relief](#). This is one of many regular posts members should view on the [MSCA website](#).

Furloughs and Retrenchment

The MSCA has appealed the hearing officer's dismissal of our charge against Salem State University's implementation of furloughs this spring. SSU President Keenan furloughed faculty for a week in March and will furlough faculty again for a week in May. Librarians will also be furloughed for two weeks, but the weeks were not prescribed.

MSCA members from seven of the nine chapter joined SSU faculty and librarians at a rally against furloughs on March 18th which was covered by a number of media outlets. We were joined by SSU alumna and state representative Jessica Giannino (16th Suffolk).

You should know that as part of the day contract negotiations last year, the state university presidents sought to diminish contract language regarding retrenchments. We anticipate the presidents will again employ this anti-employee, union-busting tactic.

Contract Enforcement

Grievance officers have had unprecedented challenges this year with new and unusual situations arising frequently. I have worked with Grievance Committee Chair Robert Donohue at committee meetings and in mediation and arbitration preparation. You can read more about contract enforcement in the [Grievance Committee report](#).

Day and DGCE Bargaining

What seems like perpetual bargaining continues. The DGCE contract expired on December 31, 2020 and the team has been at the table since July 2020. For details on proposals see the [DGCE Negotiation page](#) and DGCE Bargaining Committee Chair **Irina Seceleanu's** [DGCE Bargaining Committee report](#). There are upcoming sessions scheduled for April and May.

The one-year day contract extension expires on June 30, 2021 and the team has been at the working to put together a comprehensive proposal for several months. For details on negotiations see the [Day Negotiation page](#), Day Bargaining Committee Chair **Maria Heggblom** will be reporting today. Ground rule have been agreed to and there are upcoming sessions scheduled for April and May.

Unemployment Workshops

Working with **Irina Seceleanu** and **Aruna Krishnamurthy**, the union held three unemployment workshops this year focused on part-time and DGCE faculty. Another workshop will be held on May 13th and we intend to invite community college part-time and DCE faculty to attend as well.

Prioritizing Higher Education Employees in the Vaccine Rollout

The MSCA spearheaded an effort to have higher education employees, particularly those working on campus, moved from Phase 3 to Phase 2 of the rollout of COVID-19 vaccination plan. Phase 3 includes all adults (now those 16 and older) while Phase 2 included preK-12 educators. We believed higher education employees – declared essential workers by the governor in March 2020 – would have appropriately been included in Phase 2. We were not successful, although some employees at the state universities were able to receive vaccinations prior to the state entering Phase 3.

Post-Tenure Review

PTR results were released this month. The initial results are:

University	Reviewed	6%	3%	0%
Bridgewater	27	27	0	0
Fitchburg	9	9	0	0
Framingham	17	16	1	0
MassArt	11	11	0	0
MCLA	6	6	0	0
Mass Maritime	0	0	0	0
Salem	34	32	2	0
Westfield	7	7	0	0
Worcester	18	18	0	0
Total	129	126	3	0

Respectfully submitted,
CJ O'Donnell
MSCA President