

Massachusetts State College Association
DRAFT Delegate Assembly Minutes
April 24, 2020
Held Virtually using Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 4:15 p.m. by President C.J. O'Donnell.

President C.J. O'Donnell introduced the MSCA officers, Maria Hegbloom, Vice-President; Mark Love, Treasurer; Nancy George, Secretary; Kendra O'Toole, the Parliamentarian; our MTA Consultants Roberta James., Catherine Santiago, Bret Seferian and Colleen Fitzpatrick. Special thanks to Roberta Govoni for her work in making the arrangements for this meeting.

Thanks to Chris Gullen for procuring a Zoom account and for assisting with entrance into the meeting and monitoring of the speaker recognition.

And, thanks to all the delegates who gave this Friday afternoon and evening to represent their colleagues and conduct the business of the union.

First Report of the Credentials Committee:

Sarah Mabrouk, Framingham/MSCA Chapter, delivered the first Credentials Committee Report: 56 registered delegates, 5 guests. It was moved and seconded to adopt the report. The motion passed.

Standing Rules:

It was moved and seconded to adopt the standing rules as received. The motion passed.

Special Rules:

It was moved and seconded to adopt the special rules of order as received. The motion passed.

Agenda:

It was moved and seconded to adopt the agenda, as received, for the Assembly.

It was moved and seconded to amend the agenda to move the new business items prior to item ten and after item nine. The motion passed.

The original motion passed as amended.

Minutes:

It was moved and seconded to accept the 2019 Delegate Assembly Minutes. The motion passed.

MSCA Officers' Reports:

President's Report – C.J. O'Donnell

Dear Delegates,

Thank you!

I think you do not hear that enough nearly enough.

When the COVID-19 pandemic started to affect us in Massachusetts and the state universities announced that we needed to move classes online or to remote teaching, thousands of state university faculty did so... in just days, for the benefit of our students.

There was – rightfully and understandably so – great apprehension. There were bumps and there will continue to be bumps, but things have gone much more smoothly than I think any of us could have imagined. We were able to get protections regarding evaluations during this very uncertain time and while we anticipate returning to in-person classes in the fall, we need to prepare for the possibility that that will not be possible.

The professionalism and dedication of the MSCA librarians and faculty continue to make me proud to be a member. It remains an honor to serve as President of the Massachusetts State College Association these last twelve years, now more than ever.

Please know that the MSCA Officers, Chapter Presidents, members of the Board of Directors, members serving on MSCA committees and staff continues to work hard for your benefit as we have moved our meeting to virtual meetings.

You may have heard rumors from your administration. We hear the same rumors. The union has not been contacted with any proposals, although we have agreed to start thinking about what ifs. Any changes that would alter the collective bargaining agreements would need to be negotiated at the bargaining table. Decisions to waive certain provisions that do not adversely affect members (like the suspension of classroom observations and student evaluations this semester) will be considered as necessary.

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

Health Insurance for Part-time and DGCE Faculty

Despite significant effort has been put into passage by the MSCA and MTA, the bill has not been passed in the House. There appears to be renewed interest in the bill at the Statehouse given the pandemic and the number of underinsured citizens in the Commonwealth.

Day Collective Bargaining Agreement

As you know the day Bargaining Committee is back at the table. Although we were energized for a new round of bargaining and efforts to build on some successes last round, the pandemic and the economic fallout from it are likely to affect our efforts. We have met with management virtually and will continue to do so.

DGCE Collective Bargaining Agreement

The DGCE Bargaining Committee has put together and distributed a survey. It's unclear if face-to-face negotiations will be possible this summer/fall when negotiations are slated to begin.

Post-Tenure Review

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

University	Reviewed	6%	3%	0%
Bridgewater	18	14	3	1
Fitchburg	12	11	1	0
Framingham	9	9	0	0
MassArt	4	4	0	0
MCLA	7	6	1	0
Mass Maritime	5	5	0	0
Salem	23	21	1	1
Westfield	12	12	0	0
Worcester	14	9	1	4
Total	104	91	7	6

Janus Decision Fallout The MSCA has had more than 100 former agency fee payers switch to union membership this year, on top of more than 350 last year. Many of these members are part-time and DGCE faculty. We have had less success with full-time faculty and librarians, particularly new hires. The MSCA will be reaching out this summer to try to increase new faculty union membership.

Respectfully submitted,
CJ O'Donnell

Vice President's Report
Maria Hegbloom, Interim Vice-President

AY 2019-2020 has been significant in term of legislative actions for MSCA and MTA. The following highlights some of the bills and actions that our union has been supporting and that support our members.

Janus and the Freedom to Join Bill

In response to the Janus decision, public sector unions in Massachusetts introduced the Freedom to Join Bill (H3854) which was signed into law earlier this year. The bill was meant to mitigate some of the worst effects of the Janus ruling. Among the most significant parts of this legislation is the requirement of employers to provide information about new hires within 10 days of a contract being signed. This includes emails and addresses so that the union can reach out to potential members immediately. Also included is a protection of this information from third-party (and potentially anti-union) organizations. In the coming years it will be important for our chapters and our statewide office to access this information for member and organizing purposes.

Fund our Future: The Cherish Act

A primary legislative goal for the MTA has been to address the decades-long dwindling funding for public higher education in Massachusetts. The Cherish Act is the Higher Ed bill that would restore funding for our public colleges and universities to 2001 levels, bringing in \$600 million over 5 years.

This year was focused on seeking the 1st year of this funding in the FY 21 budget. This meant asking for: \$120 million additional dollars toward public higher education

- MassGrant Plus – financial aid for neediest students (\$20 million)
- Debt-free future for educators – higher ed debt relief for new K-12 educators (MA public higher ed graduates) who take positions in needy districts in the state; important diversity initiative (6\$ million)
- Adjunct Health Insurance – S1547/H2322 (\$13 million)
- Adjunct Pay Equity
- Capital Debt – (\$15 million) – savings must be invested in hiring full-time faculty/librarians/staff & student success initiatives
- Campus Funding - \$64 million – operating costs – fully meeting each universities request

Our MSCA members joined this campaign in fighting for increased funding in a number of ways.

- Joint Committee on Higher Education Campus visits – members from the joint committee on higher education visited the nine state universities and were met by MSCA members advocating for increased funding to our institutions. They shared powerful stories about our students’ debt, the plight of adjunct faculty, and our crumbling infrastructure.
- Public Higher Education Advocacy Day – On March 2nd MSCA members from across the state joined over 300 other public higher education students, faculty, and staff to advocate for the public colleges and universities that we all deserve.
- Forums & events with students, organized by MSCA chapters have been held on a number of campuses to bring attention to the lack of funding and need for the state to pick up its fair share.

The Cherish Act bills (S741, H1241) were scheduled to be heard in the Joint Committee on Higher Education at 10:00am on April 30th. However due to the Coronavirus, these hearings have been postponed and are expected to be rescheduled in July or August.

Fair Workplaces, Part-Time Faculty Benefits

Another important area for legislative action has been on the continued fight for part-time faculty health insurance and equity. For several years now the MSCA and MTA have been pushing for legislation that would provide access to health insurance for our part-time faculty. This fight continued the past legislative session with the introduction of an omnibus bill, An Act for Fair Public Higher Ed Workplaces (S1547, H2322). This bill would, among other things, provide access to GIC health insurance for part-time faculty.

The bill was passed favorably out of the Public Service Committee.

COVID-19 and Higher Education Funding in Massachusetts

The CARES Act, which was recently signed into law, provides, among other things, a 6 month pause on student loan payments without interest or penalties until September 30th. This moratorium could greatly aid our recent graduates as well as many members who are still struggling to cover the costs of their own education or those of dependents. In addition, the CARES Act also provides an additional \$14 billion in direct aid to colleges and universities during this time. Half of this aid must go to financial aid and it is still unclear exactly when the money will be distributed, but based on the guidelines colleges and universities already have a rough idea of how much they are likely to receive.

The following provides some idea of crisis impact on Massachusetts public higher education and the expected monies from the CARES act.

Impact of CARES Act Funds on Known FY20 Public Higher Education Funding Gap				
Public Higher Education	CARES Act Funding	Less Student Grants	Current FY20 Gap	After CARES Act
UMass System	\$46,018,581	\$23,009,290	\$70,000,000	(\$46,990,710)
State Universities	\$35,952,400	\$17,976,197	\$38,000,000	(\$20,023,803)
Community Colleges	\$51,897,471	\$25,948,731	\$45,000,000	(\$19,051,269)
Total	\$133,868,452	\$66,934,218	\$153,000,000	(\$86,065,782)

Source: U.S. DoE Funding Allocations, April 2020; Self-reported funding gaps from UMass, and state DHE system; MTA table.

Recent Massachusetts legislation has offered a Higher Education Recovery bill, but it has failed to gain much traction. However, there has been some renewed interest around adjunct health insurance. The MTA is seeking to take advantage of the crisis to push through an emergency measure that would provide health coverage to adjuncts.

In relation to FY 21, Massachusetts is projecting an expected revenue shortfall from between \$2-\$6 billion. It is unclear what this will mean for the state expenditure for public higher education, but the following provides some idea of what cuts we have seen during previous economic downturns:

FY2021 State Budget Scenarios for Public Higher Education from Past Recessions			
FY2021 HE Governor's H2	FY02-03 Percent Cut	FY2020 Reduction	
\$ 1,322,098,252	-7.1%	(\$93,868,976)	
FY2021 HE Governor's H2	FY07-08 Percent Cut	FY2020 Reduction	
\$ 1,322,098,252	-11.3%	(\$149,397,102)	
FY2021 HE Governor's H2	FY03-04 Percent Cut	FY2020 Reduction	
\$ 1,322,098,252	-14.6%	(\$193,026,345)	
FY2021 HE Governor's H2	FY01-04 Percent Cut	FY2020 Reduction	
\$ 1,322,098,252	-27.5%	(\$363,577,019)	

Source: MassBudget; calculations by MTA.

The situation is unclear, but what is clear is that the MSCA and MTA need to focus attention on stemming potential cuts to higher education funding and seeking to increase aid to colleges and universities being hit by the COVID crisis.

Secretary's Report

Nancy George

In the past year, as secretary of the MSCA, I attended all regular MSCA Board meetings; took detailed notes during the meetings; and submitted meeting minutes, in the form of a digital file, to the MSCA President, C.J. O'Donnell, typically no later than a week after each meeting.

Spring semester I supervised the nomination/election process for the 2020 NEA Representative Assembly to be held this coming summer either in Atlanta or virtually due to COVID-19. I would like to congratulate those members who will represent the MSCA at the NEA-RA this year: Don Bullens (Worcester), Jon Cash (Bridgewater), Elaine Craghead (MMA), Raila Diakite (Fitchburg), Chris Gullen (Westfield), Maria Hegbloom (Bridgewater), Aruna Krishnamurthy (Fitchburg), Christopher O'Donnell (MMA), Len Paolillo (Bridgewater), Sandra Rahman (Bridgewater), Irina Seceleanu (Bridgewater), Jaime Wilson (Mass Art)

In closing, thank you so much for allowing me to serve you as the Secretary of the MSCA and for re-electing me into this position. It has been an honor to serve the MSCA in this way and I will continue to work on various issues that relate to the role of the MSCA Secretary. Thank you again.

Treasurer's Report

Mark Love

It was moved and seconded to adopt the auditor's report, as presented in the Treasurer's Report. The motion passed.

It was moved and seconded to go into the committee of the whole to hear the presentation of the budget and the dues. The motion passed.

Treasurer Love presented the MSCA budget and dues structure to the Assembly.

It was moved and seconded to come out of the committee of the whole. The motion passed.

It was moved and seconded to adopt the proposed FY 2021 budget, as described in the Treasurer's Report. The motion passed.

It was moved and seconded to adopt the proposed FY 2021 dues structure as described in the Treasurer's Report. The motion passed.

Second Report of the Credentials Committee:

Sarah Mabrouk, Framingham/MSCA Chapter, delivered the second Credentials Committee Report: 60 registered delegates, 5 guests. It was moved and seconded to adopt the report. The motion passed.

New Business:

It was moved and seconded to approve the following resolution:

**Resolution for Democratic Election of Bargaining Committee Members
MSCA Delegate Assembly 2019**

WHEREAS, Democratic process is essential to union governance; and

WHEREAS, most positions within the MSCA including delegates are appointed through democratic elections; and

WHEREAS, a democratic elections process for the nomination of Bargaining Team members would be in line with the democratic process requirement for other MSCA appointments;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that unless expressly prohibited by a chapter constitution, Chapter Bargaining Committee representatives must be elected via a written, secret ballot as is required for MSCA chapter delegates; and

Resolved, That the Chapter President must recommend the person receiving the highest number of votes to be the chapter representative and the person receiving the second highest number of votes to be the alternate; and

Resolved, That the Chapter President must provide the election results to the MSCA President; and

Resolved, That the Bargaining Committee members so elected will be nominated by the MSCA President and appointed by confirmation of the Board.

It was moved and seconded to amend the resolution so that the fifth paragraph reads [deleted] **BOLD** new language:

Resolved, That the Chapter President [must recommend the person receiving the highest number of votes to be the chapter representative and the person receiving the second highest number of votes to be the alternate] **shall consider the election results in making the recommendation to the MSCA President;** and

The motion passed.

The original motion passed as amended.

It was moved and seconded to approve the following resolution:

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

MSCA Delegate Assembly 2020

Maker: Michelle Corbin, Worcester State

Second: Virginia Rutter, Framingham State

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 and existential threat to public higher education through significant budget cuts, sever staffing reductions, particularly for part tie 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, an/or the Organizing and Unity Leader also focus their allocated resources and primary attention to develop coalitions with other affiliated public higher education 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 on-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 sin 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 resource 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 pulic higher education.
6. Provide regular updates to the full membership via existing MSCA communication systems on steps taken toward these goals.

The motion passed.

MSCA Committee Reports:

Day Bargaining Committee – Maria Hegbloom

Our bargaining team has worked to create a process meant to expand member participation and involvement. Thanks, in part, to several new business items passed at last years delegate assembly we have worked to expand communication with members and allow for greater engagement in the prebargaining process. These measures have included:

- Offering an initial open-ended questionnaire to assess general concerns, values, and interests of our member to which we received nearly 1000 responses from members.
- A bargaining survey designed to better address the concerns, values, and interests discussed in the open-ended questionnaire. We received nearly 900 responses to this.
- Opportunities for local chapters to submit their own proposals for consideration to be included in our bargaining platform. Nearly all of the submitted proposals were included.
- Packaged our proposals considering important values of our union and to emphasize the issues that seemed to matter to our members. These included proposals to address: shared governance proposals; workplace equity; health & life issues; librarians; as well as salary considerations.
- Working to increase our communication with membership and to proposals after these are shared at the table. share materials as we are able.

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- We have met a total of 5 times with management. First 2 meetings were devoted to ground rules.
- We met on April14th to share a revised proposal meant to specifically our current crisis situation. We did not receive a clear response from management.
- Our next meeting is scheduled for April 27th, but on April 24th management asked our team to consider putting bargaining into abeyance and to postpone our next meeting.
- The bargaining team will be meeting this Sunday to consider this decision.

Bargaining Committee (DGCE) – Graziana Ramsden

Pre-COVID19, DGCE Chair Graziana Ramsden (MCLA) and Vice Chair Irina Seceleanu (Bridgewater) held four campus visits (at Fitchburg, Salem, MCLA and Westfield) to hear members' concerns and suggestions to inform the DGCE Bargaining Survey. Post-COVID19, the remaining campus visits were cancelled. The Bargaining Survey, which is a collaborative effort by DGCE Bargaining Team members, is currently open to DGCE members, and will close on 4/27. The Bargaining Team will use the survey results to build a series of proposals for Bargaining, which will be ready to send to management on June 1, 2020. The DGCE contract will expire on 31 December 2020.

DGCE Bargaining Team members are: Graziana Ramsden (MCLA), Chair Irina Seceleanu (Bridgewater), Vice Chair Rala Diakite (Fitchburg) Sarah Pilkenton (Framingham) Ben Ryterband (MassArt) Elaine Craghead (Mass Maritime) Jim Gubbins (Salem) Don Bullens (Worcester).

Elections Committee – Sarah Mabrouk

An extension Elections Committee report was distributed to attendees via the MSCA web page.

Election results:

Ballots were sent to 2827 eligible voters. 138 paper ballots were returned, 321 online ballots were cast via the election webpage, and 69 online ballots were cast using paper ballot information. A total of 528 ballots were cast by approximately 18.68% of eligible members.

MSCA President

Christopher J. O'Donnell: 464

MSCA Vice President

Maria Hegbloom: 483

MSCA Secretary

Michelle Corbin: 203

Nancy George: 283

MSCA Treasurer (write-in only)

Eric Weeks: 109

It was moved and seconded to reject Intelliscan, the voting vendor, for future MSCA elections; improve and maintain a reliable database of members that includes updated personal emails from as many members as possible, acknowledging that this will require innovations and outreach; allow elections committee chair to communicate directly with all members regarding elections procedures.

The motion passed.

Grievance Committee – Robert Donohue

The MSCA grievance Committee Chair serves as a resource to campus grievance officers during the initial stages of grievances and works directly with grievants if grievances proceed to mediation and/or arbitration. The MSCA grievance chair also communicates and consults with the MSCA president.

Many grievances are resolved at the campus level. This efficient enforcement of the collective bargaining agreement demonstrates the competence and commitment of the campus grievance officers. If grievances

are not resolved at the campus level the MSCA grievance committee determines if the grievance merits being taken to mediation and/or arbitration.

At the beginning of academic year 2019-2020 there was a backlog of 27 grievances slated as pending mediation or arbitration. In September 2019 local grievance officers, the MSCA president and the MSCA grievance secretary began working to clear the backlog. Collectively we were able to determine that some of the backlog were moot, and some grievances had been resolved. The remaining grievances were scheduled for mediation and arbitration. Although several mediations had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 shutdowns, as of April 17, 2020 the backlog was reduced to four mediations/arbitrations pending. This reduced backlog allows us to move unit-member grievances through the mediation and/or arbitration process in a timelier manner than at any time with which I am familiar.

This academic year the MSCA grievance committee considered 22 grievances for mediation and arbitration. Topics of grievances considered for mediation and/or arbitration included violations of evaluation procedures, violations of governance procedures, and non-contractual discipline of unit members.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert L. Donohue, Ph.D.
MSCA Grievance Committee Chair

Legislation Committee
No report.

Librarians Committee – Nancy George

Membership:

Participants included the following MSCA librarians:

Nancy George (Salem), Suzanne Meunier (Framingham), Pamela Hayes-Bohanan (Bridgewater), Pamela Contakos (MCLA), Caitlin Pereira (Mass Art), William Lundmark (Worcester), Linda LeBlanc (Fitchburg).. President O'Donnell served as an ex-officio member; Nancy George served as chair and William Lundmark served as vice-chair of the committee.

Communication:

The committee communicated via email and met in-person and via online meeting software. Nancy George represented the committee at MSCA Board meetings and in librarian-related discussions with other Board members.

Concerns and Activities:

Deprofessionalization Issues

This was again a topic that came up at our meetings. Members of the committee are troubled by the trend to hire librarians in positions in non-MSCA units. The issue was brought up in a MSCA Board meeting last year and the committee has not yet found out the results of the investigation.

Workload

As with the previous year, the committee has had in-depth discussions about the smaller number of MSCA librarians in their libraries and subsequent increased, unsustainable workloads for those librarians remaining at the libraries. It was determined that the primary way to address this issue and protect librarians from workload abuses is to seek language changes in the CBA that address workload.

Librarian CBA Language

The committee worked on CBA language and met with members of the Day Bargaining Committee and the chair of the committee to communicate this language to the team. The language was also sent to the Day Bargaining Committee. Two items which have been problematic for librarians include librarians being considered essential personnel and Library Program Areas having a minimum number of librarians needed to be considered a LPA.

Massachusetts Teachers Association – Reports:

MTA Director – CJ O'Donnell

I would like to state that it has been my pleasure serving as the one of the two MSCA (District 45H) representatives to the MTA Board of Directors for the past seven years. My term expires on June 30, 2020. The seat also expires on June 30, 2020 based on the number of union members in the MSCA. Of note this year:

- MTA had an exciting initiative called Fund Our Future that brought roughly \$1 billion to public schools via The Promise Act. A similar initiative called The Cherish Act for higher education currently appears dead given anticipated, significant cut in the FY 2021 budget on Beacon Hill, due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

You can read more about the initiative on MTA's website:

<https://massteacher.org/current-initiatives/fund-our-future>

<https://massteacher.org/news/2019/01/higher-ed-bill-backed-by-fund-our-future-and-mta-is-filed>

- MTA's legislative priorities this legislative session includes support for students, progressive revenues, fair workplaces, fair and dignified retirement and protecting public employees' rights. You can read more about these at:

<https://massteacher.org/current-initiatives/legislative-action>

- Despite the Supreme Judicial Court's rejection of the constitutional amendment ballot questions, Legislative efforts on the fair-share amendment that would increase the tax rate on income in excess of \$1,000,000 by 4% continue, after the Supreme Judicial Court ruled the ballot question as unconstitutional in 2019.
- We see some fallout for the United States Supreme Court decision in the Janus case. MSCA and MTA have actually seen an increase in former agency fee payers joining the union, but new faculty are not joining the union in numbers we have seen in the past. The MSCA and chapters will need to do more to inform new faculty of the protections the union provides.
- The Higher Education Leadership Council is hoping to hold a higher education conference next year.

- The MTA Summer Conference will either be held virtually or canceled this August due to the pandemic.

MTA Director – Keith Washington

No report.

MTA Region H Executive Committee – Maria Hegbloom

MTA Higher Education Conference (Springfield) was held on January 10th . A number of MSCA members attended. There were some mixed reviews from higher education leadership council, but my engagement with MSCA members found the conference to be useful and well done. Higher Education Leadership Council passed a motion that stated that HELC will organize the Higher Ed conference in the future. A subcommittee has been formed to begin that planning.

New Director of Government Relations – Erik Nakajima.

New Business Item – A renewed focus on the Professional Development Needs of Higher Education – working to be more responsive to higher ed needs for Summer Conference, but also more generally by the MTA. Members could share ideas with their local leadership.

New Business Item – In relation to the Cherish Act, this NBI directs the union to construct a funding formula for the distribution of funds to higher ed that would be based on a per/student (not per/institution) rate and would be defined through need (something closer to the K-12 model). A committee has been formed and has started work on this.

Early College – Still early, but MTA is moving more toward developing a position in relation to this issue. NBI at the annual meeting this year that would direct the MTA to conduct research into the programs that have already started across the state, to look into best practices from the national scene, as a means to begin developing a more coherent and shared response to this initiative.

CEPP (Center for Education Policy & Practice): Is working on developing alternatives to MTELS in the teacher licensure regulations.

MTA Health & Safety Committee – This committee is beginning to do a lot of work to organize members and build campaigns around workplace safety. This is particularly important as Massachusetts has newly adopted OSHA laws that influence art & science departments in particular; and are likely to matter much more as campuses seek to reopen after the COVID-19 Crisis.

BHE/MTA Health and Welfare Trust – Nancy George

The Board of Higher Education/MTA Health and Welfare Trust Fund administers the Dental Plan and Vision Discount plan for all employees in public higher education who are affiliated with the MTA. There are twelve Trustees, six appointed each by management and by labor. I serve as the MSCA Trustee and as treasurer of the Trust.

Currently, the fund represents approximately 9000 individuals who hold either individual or family dental plans. Funding is provided solely by negotiated state contributions of around \$15.50 per week per employee (depending on the employee's bargaining unit).

The Dental Plan is currently administered by MetLife. Coverage is up to the annual maximum benefit of \$1,200. Negotiations have just ended for the MetLife renewal and the trust will vote on the premium costs at the next meeting. Our average loss ratio is anticipated to be lower than usual from July 2019-March 2020 due to the COVID-19 shutdowns of services; our typical loss ratio for the end of the fiscal year months is 99%. Our rate cap continues to be negotiated for FY2022.

The manager of the trust is Health Plans, Inc. (HPI). HPI has created a solid member database and strives to answer members' questions in a pleasant, professional, timely manner. The Trust also employs Jack Nicolas, of KD Consulting Group, as our negotiator/consultant. The monthly reports to the trust are very comprehensive and informative and the consultant is extremely helpful to the Trustees at both Trust meetings and Financial Committee meetings.

Financial activities in the past year:

We are almost complete with the transition to EBSB and hope to close the Bank of America account in the near future. An audit was performed by Whittlesey & Hadley, P.C.; IRS tax forms 5500 and 990 were filed in a timely fashion.

We are in significant need to increase the state contributions as the amount has not changed for a number of years and our premiums continue to increase in cost. Due to the recent downturn in the economy, the Trust suffered a significant loss of investment income.

Any members having issues with their dental or vision plans can contact any Trustee who can put them in touch with either Health Plans, Inc. (eligibility manager for the trust) or with our direct representative at MetLife. Web page: <https://bhe.healthplansinc.com/>

Final Report of the Credentials Committee:

Sarah Mabrouk, Framingham/MSCA Chapter, delivered the final Credentials Committee Report: 51 registered delegates, 6 guests. It was moved and seconded to adopt the report. The motion passed.

Old Business

None.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy George
MSCA Secretary