

MSCA Board of Directors Meeting

Minutes

November 5, 2021

Virtually using Zoom

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

Guests: Robert Donohue (Framingham), Chris Gullen (Westfield), Jennifer Mendell (Bridgewater), Roberta James (MTA)

Approval of the Orders of the Day:

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

Approval of Minutes: October 1, 2021:

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the October 1, 2021 MSCA Board meeting. The motion passed.

Visiting Speakers:

There were no visiting speakers.

MSCA Reports:

DGCE Bargaining – Seceleanu

It was moved and seconded that the MSCA Board of Directors recommends that the membership vote in favor of ratification of the Tentative Agreement reached on October 15, 2021 on a proposed collective bargaining agreement for the period January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2023. The motion passed.

It was moved and seconded that the ratification be done digitally. The motion passed.

It was moved and seconded that the ratification vote be held from November 15-19, 2021. The motion passed.

President O'Donnell explained that if the tentative agreement is ratified, then the universities do not need to seek funding to pay the increases and retro. He noted that the universities will pay retro at the same time, not as each university finalizes computations.

Organizing and Unity Leader – Krishnamurthy

FT faculty recruitment

By all accounts the recruitment efforts for new faculty went well on most campuses (data based on those that were present at the meeting) thanks to the efforts of MSCA-central, NMLs and chapter presidents working

together to get people to sign up.

One issue that is emerging on most campuses is the decrease on tenure-track lines and the rise in FT temp lines. Bridgewater, for instance, had ONLY FT temp lines this year, and a sizable number were there on other campuses as well. While many of the themes that are relevant for tenure track faculty apply to FT temps as well, the latter are sometimes hesitant about signing up for union membership as their future is uncertain and they see union as an expense.

One action plan is to create a recruitment narrative that is targeted specifically at FT temps and their concerns. I need to work with all of you to come up with specific ideas on this front.

Action: chapters should add the high percentage of FT membership on campus as an incentive to have everyone sign up. I'll create a template for that sentence in the FT letter.

PT faculty recruitment

The bulk of our conversation was on the issue of how to reach PT faculty effectively, and who to reach out to. Melissa explained the recruitment drive from MSCA as follows:

1. **DGCE faculty** are unit members automatically from day one and are "billed" at the start of fall semester. Sometimes they pay up, at other times they send a letter refusing union membership, but many don't respond and are "non-compliant" (from the old pre-Janus language).

Action plan: NMLS/chapter presidents on each campus should reach out to Melissa to get an updated list of DGCE faculty that have been billed but yet to pay dues.

Action plan: A DGCE-specific letter should go out to these individuals. I will work on this letter this weekend and include the latest contractual wins etc.

2. **Day PT faculty** who are unit members have been billed on some campuses already (where info has been shared about PT faculty teaching for fall). MSCA sends out a first bill of dues by the end of October. The dues are based on the number of credits taught in the year (starting from summer teaching) and capped at 9 credits of teaching for the whole year (summer, fall, spring). A second reminder for dues is sent out a month later. Here too we have some that have joined, some that have sent non-membership letters, and some that are AWOL.

Action plan: Chapters should reach out to Melissa at the end of October to obtain an updated list of PT non-dues paying members. They should (on smaller campuses) send out individual, personalized letters to non-members.

Action plan: I will update the PT letter further to include more details, perhaps add the video link etc. I will include the work we are doing around legislative items for PT faculty.

Action plan: we should work on developing more materials for PT recruitment and build on testimonials from PT faculty around unemployment help. Worcester has an "affinity group" that brings FT and PT faculty together--chapters can think about how to engage our PT faculty through these and other means. At Fitchburg we have had workshops on the theme of PT inequities.

Questions: should the NMLs add the amount owed by each person on the letter before sending them? This is possible to do in smaller chapters, perhaps.

Send a step-by-step guide on filling out the membership form. Can this be done as a short video? Soon?

Thanks again to all who made it and looking forward to more conversations and recruitments!

Discussion followed.

Elections – Mabrouk (not present)

A detailed Elections Committee Report was distributed to Board members via email by Chair Mabrouk. Included in the report was the following information:

Nomination Papers

As of the sending of this report, nomination papers have been requested by those listed below on the specified dates.

President

Maria Hegbloom, Bridgewater State University (November 3, 2021)

Christopher J. O'Donnell, Massachusetts Maritime Academy (November 2, 2021)

Vice President

Joanna Gonsalves, Salem State University (November 4, 2021)

Irina Seceleanu, Bridgewater State University (November 4, 2021)

Secretary

Michelle Corbin, Worcester State University (November 4, 2021)

Aruna Krishnamurthy, Fitchburg State University (November 2, 2021)

Treasurer

Eric Weeks, Bridgewater State University (November 2, 2021)

Grievance - Donohue

Chair Donohue provided Board members with a brief overview of the status of grievances, mediations and arbitrations.

Progress is being made regarding a new panel of mediators.

Librarians – George

Chair George provided Board members with an overview of a recent meeting.

Library budgets continue to be cut, with the largest reduction being at MassArt with a 30% decrease in FY21; level funding in FY22. Fitchburg experienced a 10% decrease in FY22; Salem has been level funded for five years. Chair George will obtain details on decreases at all campus library budget for Board members. These cuts adversely affect the institutions' abilities to educate and retain students.

Librarians present stated they are working remote at least one day a week. Salem and Bridgewater librarians are working remote two days a week.

The mold issue at the Bridgewater State University library has been a serious situation since July. The university has been rather relaxed in its approach to solving this dangerous health problem. Administration has pointed the blame to a variety of incorrect causes, when in reality it is a poorly operating HVAC system that is to blame. Bridgewater Chapter President Seceleanu provided information and her work in rectifying the problem in this report as well as in the Bridgewater Chapter report.

Discussion followed.

Day Bargaining – Hegbloom

The contract was ratified and now awaits funding by the legislature. The contract missed being funded in the October budget. The only chance of funding, this calendar year, is in the ARPA budget. Otherwise, it will be funded in early 2022.

Discussion followed.

Bargaining Action Leader – Gullen

Leader Gullen thanked the chapter presidents and silent bargaining representatives, who were ready to take action right after DGCE mediation if necessary.

During this time between negotiations, Leader Gullen will continue to make sure the CAT teams are on each campus and ready to go.

An additional request for non-campus email addresses has been sent out.

A password protected part of the web page will be developed for members.

Legislation – Dodge (not present)

No report.

Chapter President Reports:

Worcester – O'Connell

There continues to be problems with faculty/librarian sabbatical deferrals. A grievance will be filed.

Over twenty tenure track positions are being hired.

Chapter funds are being used for organizing efforts.

Westfield – Ciano-Boyce

UEAAC group continues its work on campus.

There are a new president and provost.

A new VP of Diversity and Inclusion is being hired.

The VP of Student Affairs was not terminated.

COVID-19 infection rates are increasing.

The recommended school structure has not been put in place.

NECHE has begun.

Salem – Chenault

Still on work to rule.

The university president continues to be difficult to work with.

A person continues to come to campus to preach Christian religious messages, including messages of hate towards members of the LGBTQ+ community. Students are holding rallies in opposition to this person's presence. The chair of the Board of Trustees has recommended that students avoid the person by entering building via the back door.

Discussion followed.

MMA – Hibbert

There are a few tenure track searches ongoing.

The sea term proved to be problematic. There engineering department sailed six people short. As such, a large number of the students could not complete their assessments.

MCLA – Ramsden

The new Provost is familiarizing himself with the CBA. Regular meetings are being held between the Provost and the Chapter's Executive Board.

It is reported that 99% of students are complying with the mask mandate. There was a mini outbreak among vaccinated students. Only one faculty member refused to get vaccinated.

There is a mold situation in Hopkins Hall. University administration has requested emergency funds from DCAM to repair the building.

Student enrollment is down to 994 students (head count).

MassArt – Riel

A search for a new provost has begun.

There are 17 ongoing tenure track searches due to faculty lines being vacant for a long period of time.

Seven faculty/librarians are up for tenure. The Chapter is hopeful that this will give the institution some relief when trying to fill PEC's and other committees that require tenured faculty/librarians.

Framingham – Caffrey

Searches are underway for the following administrative positions at the university: president, provost, head of HR, head of diversity and inclusion, dean of the library and chief of police.

Department Chairs have taken on additional work. There are numerous open seats on committees. Burnout is an issue on campus.

The Chapter is working on educating members on their rights and responsibilities.

A white supremacy group is putting up recruitment stickers on campus.

Fitchburg – Diakite

A search for a new provost has begun. In addition, a Dean of Science search is underway.

Many administrative positions have been created staffed.

1000 students have left Fitchburg in the past few years. The student enrollment is now at around 2500.

There was a \$8.1 million deficit last year.

The Chapter passed a resolution stating their concern regarding the institution's precarious financial and enrollment situations. This will be read at an upcoming Board of Trustees meeting.

NECHE will begin in the spring.

A financial committee has been formed.

MTA building consultants inspected and evaluated the physical condition of the Conlon Building. A report has been generated. The Chapter is hoping for improved ventilation and a thorough assessment of the structural integrity of the building.

It was moved and seconded that the MSCA cover the cost of the \$211 balometer equipment rental. The motion passed.

Bridgewater – Seceleanu

The chapter is down 20 full-time faculty positions. The Chapter is pushing to get tenure track positions hired.

There are now 40 executive managers on campus.

Enrollment is down by 900 students.

95% of students are vaccinated against COVID-19.

Chapter President Seceleanu provided Board members with additional details on the serious mold situation in the university's library. There was 90-95% humidity in library offices, the mold was visually evident in the facility, facilities employees have been instructed to clean the building without proper safety gear in such a way that mold will spread even more in the building, lies have been generated by the university's administration regarding the etiology of the mold. Although approximately \$250,000 has been spent on eradicating the mold, the situation persists due to an aging and inefficient HVAC system.

MSCA Officer Reports:

President – O'Donnell

Committee Nominations

It was moved and seconded to approve the following committee nominations:

Day Bargaining: Luis Rosero (Framingham)

Day Bargaining alternate: Mirari Elcoro (Framingham)

Health and Safety Committee: Jennifer Mendell (Bridgewater)

Health and Safety Committee: Jennie-Rebecca Falcetta (MassArt)

Investigative Budget Committee – Joanne Gonsalves (Salem), Miranda Lam (Salem)

The motion passed.

MSCA t-shirts, mugs, stickers

Mugs have been purchased.

A quote for tee-shirts was presented to the Board, it is recommended that we delay purchasing tee-shirts until the spring.

MTA was prepared to print stickers. President O'Donnell put that on hold when the DGCE contract was settled.

Vice President – Hegbloom

Vice President Hegbloom attended the last BHE meeting.

MCLA President Birge highlighted that MCLA's STEM students are successful due to their liberal arts background.

The BHE discussed changing STEM degrees requirements, with a focus on making the degrees easier to attainable.

A number of other topics were brought up at the meeting including online office hours, mental health issues and equity issues. Occupancy rates are stable, retention rates are down, first time freshmen rates are stable, community college numbers are up.

The MTA Executive Committee meeting is on Saturday.

ARPA funds: \$175 million is focused on infrastructure problems and deferred maintenance.

Treasurer

Treasurer Weeks reviewed the monthly expense report. It was pointed out that line 9040 has a negative balance due to the recent purchase of the MSCA mugs.

Secretary

No report.

MTA Reports:

Consultants – James

There are a number of grants available to chapters. A listing of the grants was sent to Board members. The All-in Grant can cover the purchase of tee-shirts. To receive funding, an application needs to be completed.

MTA is planning to form a statewide working group of adjunct faculty and would like chapter presidents' recommendations of members for consideration. The new MTA working group would have the following responsibilities:

The charge of this working group is to identify the most pressing needs of adjunct faculty in the state and community colleges and develop/assess solutions. The final report will include a "bill of rights" or values statement. This group will meet approximately six times between November 2021 and May 2022.

If chapter presidents have a member that could offer information and insight to bring the voice of adjunct faculty forward, please let Consultants Santiago or James know as soon as possible. If there are any questions or concerns, please let them know.

Health and Welfare Trust - George

The dental loss ratio is 91%.

A travel policy, which was first drafted by Trustee George, has been reviewed and edited by the Trust's legal counsel. The edits will be thoroughly reviewed at the December meeting.

The Trust's bank, East Boston Savings Bank, is merging with Rockland Trust.

Interest rates are down and there are discussions about moving money from the bank account into low-risk investment accounts.

Management Co-Chair of the Trust, Mike Murray (BHE), stated in the last meeting that there is an increase in the FY22 budget line item for the Health and Welfare Trust. He is optimistic that additional funding will be available for the Trust. President O'Donnell stated that he did not believe that there were in fact additional funds, but that for the first time in many years the Legislature had actually funded the line-item at an amount that will not require supplemental appropriations.

A meeting was called in September and held by MTA Higher Education Director Heather LaPenn to discuss the Health and Welfare Trust. Labor trustees and some union leadership were invited to attend. Trustee George attended and provided attendees with information on the Trust via a PowerPoint presentation. Trust Consultant, Jack Nicolas, provided attendees, via email, a spreadsheet with information about the Trust's dire financial situation. Both the PowerPoint presentation and spreadsheet were sent to Board members via email before the October Board meeting.

As a result of this meeting and a subsequent meeting of the MTA Higher Education union leadership, it was requested that the MTA/BHE Health and Welfare Trust pass the following motion:

"The MTA Health and Welfare Board of Trustees authorize the MTA Director of Higher Education to initiate a cost/benefit analysis of a merger of the Trust with the Public Employee Health and Welfare Trust. The results of the cost/benefits analysis shall be shared with the MTA Board of Trustees and the respective participating MTA Higher Education Local Presidents."

Due to a lack of time during the October meeting, the Trust will be discussing this issue further at the December meeting.

It was noted that there has been a fair amount of turnover among labor Trustee representatives, which Trustee George sees as a positive situation. The Labor Co-Chair (MCCC) was not present at the special meeting called by MTA Higher Education Director Heather LaPenn in September.

Board of Directors – Washington and Hegbloom

The MTA Board of Directors has been discussing the inequities of ESP's.

Hoping for an adjunct faculty bill of rights. Asking locals to endorse this. Can have that vote at the next MSCA Board meeting.

The MTA Board had a discussion about the location of the next 2022 NEA-RA (Texas) and whether to boycott the conference, or move the RA out of Texas. It was decided to have the MTA's NEA representatives work on this at the NEA level.

MTA has a fund that will help reimburse members who lose wages due to union activities.

Old Business:

Common Start

It was moved and seconded that the MSCA join the Common Start Coalition. The motion passed.

Committee to Review MSCA Employee Leave Policy

A review was made of the benefits possibilities for staff members. A vote will take place at the next meeting on the benefits.

Committee on non-elected statewide MSCA positions

The positions were reviewed. If there are suggested changes, Board members were asked to send them to Vice President Hegbloom.

Discussion followed.

New Business:

MSCA/APA Health and Safety Committee

Staffed earlier in the meeting.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy George
MSCA Secretary