

2022 MSCA Officers Election

Certified Candidates

Office of President *(names and statements listed in ballot-order determined by lottery mandated by MSCA Constitution; lottery held February 8, 2022)*

- [Christopher J. O'Donnell](#), Massachusetts Maritime Academy
- [Maria Hegbloom](#), Bridgewater State University

Office of Vice President *(names and statements listed in ballot-order determined by lottery mandated by MSCA Constitution; lottery held February 7, 2022)*

- [Joanna Gonsalves](#), Salem State University
- [Irina Seceleanu](#), Bridgewater State University

Office of Secretary *(names and statements listed in ballot-order determined by lottery mandated by MSCA Constitution; lottery held February 8, 2022)*

- [Aruna Krishnamurthy](#), Fitchburg State University
- [Michelle Corbin](#), Worcester State University

Office of Treasurer

- [Eric Weeks](#), Bridgewater State University

Christopher J. O'Donnell

Massachusetts Maritime Academy

For fourteen years as MSCA President I have fought to strengthen our union and improve working conditions for our members, advocated for increased funding for public higher education and supported our members on all fronts. I have more than two decades of experience negotiating and enforcing contracts, and unmatched experience in defending members and the union from administrative mistreatment.

In my 23 years at the bargaining table, I have taken on many roles including chairing both the Day and DGCE teams. Over this time, we have been successful in winning significant salary increases and preserving PTR in its current form.

Most recently, I recommended a strategy that resulted in the sudden and successful conclusion of Day negotiations, superseding the one-year contract with no salary increase and eliminating management's dangerous proposals on retrenchment and decreases in full-time faculty positions. Looking towards future bargaining rounds, my goals include conducting a salary study focusing on gender and race equity and supporting the work of the newly created MSCA Investigative Budget Committee to better position us to fight management's austerity narrative.

By expanding member engagement and encouraging more than a thousand members to connect with their legislators, we reversed significant funding cuts to our state universities' budgets and strengthened our position with the Legislature. I have built partnerships with other unions within MTA and across the state, and most recently was elected to serve as Chair of the statewide Higher Education Leadership Council.

I have always been a strong advocate for our part-time and DGCE faculty, fighting for pension and health insurance benefits, and assisting them navigate the unemployment process. During the previous Day bargaining round, I suggested diverting additional funds offered at the table to increase part-time stipends by 13%.

These important union victories would not have been possible without your engagement and support as we face the challenges of underfunding and under-enrollment. It has been a privilege to serve you and our union as MSCA President. I ask for your vote in order to continue to build on our accomplishments and secure a strong, stable future for our universities and our union.



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Maria Hegbloom

Bridgewater State University

From enrollment declines to state underfunding, public higher education is facing uncertain times. Our power to meet these challenges comes from standing together; from member engagement and activism, alliances with students and communities, and solidarity with educators across the state.

I am running for MSCA President because I believe that together we can create a stronger future for public higher education in Massachusetts. My record provides clear evidence of my success in building this kind of union.

As the chapter president at BSU, I worked to increase member involvement, doubling the number of members on our executive committee and expanding member engagement. Through this more democratic approach to leadership, members took ownership of their union and won increased equivalences on our campus that we were unable to win at the negotiating table.

As the Chair of the Day Bargaining Committee, I worked to further expand member involvement in bargaining and pushed for a more open structure. Beyond just observing, members helped shape our platform and, through open communication and increased transparency, informed our negotiations at the table.

As the MSCA Vice President, I worked to provide opportunities, through summer forums and book clubs, for solidarity across the nine state campuses as members listened and learned from one another on issues ranging from pandemic teaching and racial equity in our classrooms, to our role as public educators for the public good. Increasing connections among our campuses is a key strategy to increase solidarity within our union and increase our collective power.

Finally, in my role as the representative for Higher Education on the MTA Executive Committee, I have worked to build a stronger alliance between the MSCA and MTA, publishing a member newsletter to inform our members about MTA initiatives, advocating for increased attention to adjunct concerns and student debt on the MTA executive committee, and working on the Cherish Act committee to transform higher education funding in our state.

If elected, I will continue to work toward a member-driven, democratic, and activist union for our future. To learn more about my candidacy for MSCA President please visit unionforourfuture.wordpress.com.



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Joanna Gonsalves

Salem State University

It's with great enthusiasm that I am running for MSCA Vice President. I've served the Salem State Chapter as Interim President, Vice President, Interim Grievance Officer and Bargaining Alternate, and I have a record of advocacy and organizing for public higher education. I'm running for VP because I believe we can create a union that is more democratic, transparent and one that centers social justice and equity in our work.

Currently I'm coordinating an MTA-sponsored campaign to reveal our campuses' capital debt and its impact on student fees and our campuses' budgets. This important but obscure problem is connected to a larger pattern of disinvestment by the Commonwealth. The notion that public higher education is a public good supported by taxes is under assault, and we can't fight this alone. I strongly believe that it is time for the MSCA to speak out, as we can't rely on our college Presidents and Trustees to advocate for our campuses.



Our power as a union derives from our members' solidarity and action, thus I reject the notion that a strong union is top-down. We can do better to engage with and listen to our members; a first step is to invite members into spaces where union matters are decided. The recent introduction of expanded bargaining (inclusive of silent observers and frequent member discussions during negotiations) provides an example of what good member engagement looks like. In addition, we need to build stronger alliances with the MTA, students and other community groups.

I bring to the table a collaborative mindset and a strong work ethic. My Salem State chapter leadership, scholar activism, and a decade of department and program chair roles have given me knowledge and insight about systems and practices that need change on our campuses and in our union. I have relevant experience as a former Woburn Alderman-at-Large where I authored local legislation to create a Human Rights Commission, expand ADA accessibility, establish an affordable housing trust, and implement zoning changes for environmental protection and historic preservation. To learn more about my candidacy for MSCA VP please visit unionforourfuture.wordpress.com.

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Irina Seceleanu

Bridgewater State University



My commitment to our union stems from a deep belief that our power lies in facing the challenges ahead not as individuals but together as a union. Over the past few years, I have served as the Bridgewater Chapter's President and Vice President, DGCE Bargaining Chair, Organizing Leader, on the Employee Relations Committee and MTA's New Member Committee. In these roles I have strengthened our union, expanded our member-driven advocacy, built coalitions with other unions and student organizations, and fought to secure better working conditions for our members.

As Chapter President I built a strong union leadership team and expanded member participation in our advocacy for more faculty and librarian voice at the university. Through increased transparency and member outreach, we secured better safety provisions, corrected longstanding injustices for part-time faculty, and had unprecedented member participation in legislative campaigns for increased funding. Most recently, through member-driven advocacy efforts, we secured the university's commitment to expend \$5M to address library ventilation and mold problems.

I secured three MTA grants to support this organizing, one that created a new union recruitment program to keep our membership numbers strong.

In support of our most vulnerable members, as Organizing Leader I worked with CJ O'Donnell to create an unemployment filing guide allowing hundreds of part-time faculty to secure unemployment benefits.

As DGCE chair, I led our team with the unprecedented support from members and silent representatives to reverse management's NO-increase proposal and secured the same increases as other statewide unions.

Our union and universities can only face the challenges ahead by engaging in statewide advocacy to reverse decades of disinvestment in public higher education. I organized rallies attended by legislative leaders and more than 450 participants and several statewide letter-writing campaigns with thousands of members writing to their legislators, which resulted in increased funding for our institutions. I will continue to build momentum together and advocate for additional state funding to prevent further program cuts at our institutions.

It would be my privilege to serve as Vice President and work to strengthen our union so that together we can traverse the challenging times ahead.

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Aruna Krishnamurthy

Fitchburg State University

Years ago, when I joined Fitchburg State University, I was struck with wonder and excitement to learn that I had the privilege to join a union. The union offered a sense of security as well as an egalitarian space of collective identity, something I valued as an immigrant and person of color. Elected Fitchburg State chapter president in 2017, I took on the enormous opportunity and responsibility of representing members, upholding our collective bargaining rights as well as creating a culture of solidarity and change on campus.

One of my goals as a union leader was to energize members by forging strong links between the union and our working lives. As chapter president I maintained frequent and transparent communication with members, and organized numerous workshops on contract articles and higher education issues such as online learning, workplace equity, student evaluations, tuition waiver, grievances, gender harassment, among others. These solidarity-building activities are crucial for our spirited activism around contract negotiations as well as robust turnouts for legislative forums. When our members were threatened with furloughs, it was the trust and strong support of our members, built around my communication skills, that allowed us to neutralize the threat.

I bring the same energy, dedication and mission of connecting the union with membership in my state-wide leadership roles. I revived the *MSCA Perspective* newsletter in 2019 and served as its Editor for two years, creating a space for members to share their experiences, expertise and concerns, and highlighting campus issues and union activism. As Organizing and Unity Leader I have worked with each chapter to shape new strategies for member recruitment in a post-Janus age, written member recruitment letters, helped craft petitions, written op-eds, and coordinated unemployment workshops for part-time faculty. I advocate for members on the Employee Relations Committee, as well as articulate the state university faculty and librarian perspective in the MTA's Higher Education Blueprint group.

I have defined my leadership in terms of commitment and accountability towards members. As we enter into a new era in higher education, I ask for your support in continuing this work as MSCA Secretary.



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Michelle Corbin

Worcester State University



I seek election as MSCA Secretary to fight for public higher education and to build union power.

As a feminist, antiracist sociologist and teacher-scholar, I believe that public higher education is a public good. It is essential for democracy and an invaluable liberatory project fought for by marginalized communities. Now more than ever we need a powerful union to defend this essential public good and its equalizing promises. I believe that union power comes from the collective strength of a fully engaged membership. It requires building a union that is inclusive, member-driven, democratic, and grounded in social justice.

As MSCA Secretary I will promote these values by providing accurate records; strengthening institutional memory, transparency and democratic accountability; and ensuring member access to information to support active member engagement.

I will also build on my ongoing work supporting union democracy and member engagement as a rank-and-file activist. I have helped lead rank-and-file members to pass several resolutions at our Delegate Assembly including EXPANDED BARGAINING which have strengthened members' ability to actively engage in the work of our union. Such organizing shows how members can directly decide how we take action together and in so doing build our collective power.

I also believe that union power derives from engagement with our full union membership including our large parent unions the MTA and NEA. I regularly serve as a delegate to both the MTA and NEA delegate assemblies to support public education unionism at the state and national level. I also serve on the MTA Resolutions Committee and Chair the Teaching and Professional Learning Committee working to strengthen racial and social justice within the MTA. As Secretary, I will build on this experience by working to strengthen our relationship with the MTA and to support collective organizing and solidarity across our entire public education union.

I am running for office in order to continue this work of organizing with other members to build our power and to defend our colleges and universities, our students and our colleagues. To learn more about my candidacy for MSCA Secretary please visit unionforourfuture.wordpress.com.

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Eric Weeks

Bridgewater State University

I am in my tenth year as a part-time and DGCE faculty member at Bridgewater State University, and have served as the MSCA Treasurer for the past two years. I strongly believe it is important that part-time faculty have greater representation at all levels of the Union, particularly on the Board of Directors, where I am currently the only part-time faculty member.

I am an active member of Bridgewater's MSCA chapter, having served on the Executive Committee for more than five years. I have also been a Part-time Faculty Union Organizer for the MSCA/MTA. At both the statewide Board and the BSU chapter, I have sought to be a passionate, consistent advocate for part-time and DGCE faculty, serving on committees and working groups in order to highlight the vital and distinct role of this segment of our membership.

I took office as MSCA Treasurer in the Spring of 2020, and as such have contended with membership concerns and managing a budget that have both been negatively impacted by the pandemic. Despite that, however, one of my highest priorities has been to keep membership dues constant year-over-year, which I have been able to do. I oversaw the completion of a new, more robust membership database system, as well as the transition of the Treasurer's office's computer system to a secure, independent server. This move allows the MSCA to have greater protection and control over membership information, while also making our internal operations more efficient.

I value the opportunity to continue to serve members as the MSCA Treasurer, and would appreciate your vote.



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