

Massachusetts State College Association
DRAFT Delegate Assembly Minutes
April 23, 2021
Held Virtually using Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m. by President CJ O'Donnell.

President CJ O'Donnell introduced the MSCA officers, Maria Hegbloom, Vice President; Eric Weeks, Treasurer; Nancy George, Secretary; Kendra O'Toole, the Parliamentarian; our MTA Consultants Roberta James and Catherine Santiago. Special thanks to Roberta Govoni for her work in making the arrangements for this meeting.

Thanks to Chris Gullen for assisting with this Zoom meeting.

Thanks to all the delegates here this afternoon for representing colleagues and conducting our union's business.

First Report of the Credentials Committee:

Sarah Mabrouk, Chair of the MSCA Credentials Committee, delivered the first Credentials Committee Report: 62 registered delegates, 1 guest. It was moved and seconded to adopt the report. The motion passed.

Special Rules:

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

Standing Rules:

It was moved and seconded to adopt the standing rules as posted on the MSCA website. 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 between agenda items 7 and 8. The motion passed.

The original motion passed as amended.

Minutes:

It was moved and seconded to accept the 2020 Delegate Assembly Minutes. The motion passed.

President O'Donnell called for a ten minutes recess in order to find new business items sent to him less than an hour before the call to order.

New Business Items:

New Business Item #1:

It was moved and seconded to approve the following new business item:

Resolution for Democratic Election of Bargaining Committee Members

Submitted: Irina Seceleanu on behalf of the MSCA Board of Directors

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, unless there is no more than one candidate for the position as is required for MSCA chapter delegates; and

Resolved, That the Chapter President shall consider the election results in making the recommendation to the MSCA President; 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.

Submitted by Irina Seceleanu, upon the unanimous recommendation of the MSCA Board of Directors, voted April 23, 2021.

The motion passed.

New Business Item #2:

It was moved and seconded to approve the following new business item:

Resolution for MSCA to adopt Open Meeting Practices

Maker: Joanna Gonsalves, Salem State University

Second: Mara Dodge, Westfield State University

Whereas, MSCA members have the right to affect the union's position on policy matters and internal governance,

Whereas, Regular meetings of the MSCA Board of Directors are open to all MSCA members in good standing – full-time, part-time and DGCE,

Whereas, Time is set aside at the beginning of the Regular meetings of the MSCA Board of Directors meetings each month for visiting speakers,

Whereas, Dates and Times for Regular meetings of the MSCA Board of Directors are posted on the official MSCA Calendar but presently not the correct location of the meetings,

Whereas, Agendas for Regular meetings of the MSCA Board of Directors and Committee meetings are not posted in advance on the official MSCA website,

Whereas, Minutes of the Regular meetings of the MSCA Board of Directors are posted on the MSCA website but not the minutes of MSCA Committee meetings, and

Whereas, Current posting practices make it difficult for members to attend both Regular meetings of the MSCA Board of Directors and MSCA Committee meetings.

Therefore, Be it Resolved that All MSCA meetings, including Regular meetings of the MSCA Board of Directors and MSCA Committee meetings, be posted on the MSCA website, clearly labeled and easy to find, with instructions on how members can attend,

That agendas of meetings be posted three business days in advanced on the MSCA website,

That minutes of all meetings be posted to members once approved, and

That meetings are open to all members unless otherwise restricted by the MSCA Constitution.

It was moved and seconded to amend the above new business item so that the resolution is titled: *Resolution for MSCA to adopt Transparent Meeting Practices*. The motion passed.

It was moved and seconded to amend the above new business item so that the following language is modified (**BOLD** added language; [] deleted language)

Therefore, Be it Resolved that All MSCA meetings, including Regular meetings of the MSCA Board of Directors and MSCA Committee meetings, **excluding the Grievance and Bargaining Committees' meetings**, be posted on the MSCA website, clearly labeled and easy to find, with instructions on how members can attend,

That agendas of **these aforementioned** meetings be posted three business days in [advanced] **advance** on the MSCA website,

The motion passed.

The original motion passed as amended.

New Business Item #3:

It was moved and seconded to approve the following new business item:

Resolution for MSCA to hold state-wide candidate forums via video conference

Maker: Virginia Rutter, Framingham State University

Second: Katie Riel, Massachusetts College of Art and Design

WHEREAS, the election of our statewide officers requires outreach throughout our state; and

WHEREAS, during the past two years we have established confidence and fluidity in using video conference as a meeting context for union activities such as our bargaining sessions and our general assembly; and

WHEREAS, outreach, communication, and contact between leadership and membership are crucial to organizing and leading our union; and

WHEREAS, efficiency in the form of conserved time and resources is crucial for our union; and
WHEREAS, candidate travel to individual campuses is costly in terms of time and resources for the candidate as well as the overworked chapter presidents; and

WHEREAS, members benefit from direct contact and communication with their potentially elected leaders, Resolved, that the MSCA Delegate Assembly recommends that the MSCA Board of Directors include state-wide video conference forums in the biennial election procedures and elections calendar so that members may meet all candidates, including those who are unopposed; hear their reasons and preparation for serving; and ask them questions.

Resolved, That this plan specifically recommends election procedures that allow for the MSCA to

1. Establish separate one-hour forums for each elected position--including President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and any other elected positions that the Board of Directors determines would benefit from such a forum.
2. Schedule the forums at least two days prior to the commencement of voting and one week after close of the nomination and verification period. 1 2. Advertise these forums at least two weeks in advance to the full membership via social media, direct email, and our website.
3. Ask the Chair of MSCA elections to moderate or name a moderator in their place.
4. Set a timetable for each forum where candidates speak for 5-7 minutes about their reasons and preparation for serving before responding to questions.
5. Replace these plans for the previous elections procedures that include options for campus visits that were to be instigated and scheduled by each MSCA chapter president.

The motion passed.

New Business Item #4:

It was moved and seconded to approve the following new business item:

Resolution for MSCA to adopt a “last-is-first” guiding principle to foster greater equity within our

union and our campuses.

Maker: Michelle Corbin, Worcester State University

Second: Bryant Sculos, Worcester State University

--inequity described--

WHEREAS, all who are employed in state universities under the Massachusetts BHE currently have widely unequal employment circumstances, with a lack of transparent decision-making and access to resources, particularly for part-time and full-time temporary employees; and

WHEREAS, these unequal statuses are growing in the context of management tactics that invoke austerity and claims that “this is how the market operates now”; and

WHEREAS, these inequalities emerge routinely in ordinary, everyday practices on our campuses and in our union as well as within our contracts and other agreements that formally regulate our working conditions; and

WHEREAS, these inequalities reflect and exacerbate the intersecting inequalities across race, ethnicity, nationality, and gender; and

WHEREAS, these inequalities are not to be confused with differences that are spelled out for tenure-line faculty around seniority and tenure and promotion status; and

WHEREAS, our working conditions, which feature this inequity and unpredictability, are our students’ learning conditions, undermining our students’ educations and opportunities; and

-divide and conquer described-

WHEREAS, these disparate statuses constitute management’s divide-and-conquer approach, which fosters divisions between more- and less-privileged employees in our work arrangements and access to physical spaces and resources in our universities; and

WHEREAS, “divide-and-conquer” is a well-known union-busting and union-weakening tactic; and 1

WHEREAS, this divide-and-conquer approach creates working arrangements that leave workers within our ranks subject to widely disparate payment schemes and working conditions; and

WHEREAS, this divide-and-conquer approach has actively facilitated excessive growth among university administrations to the exclusion of the needs of the rest, both through bloat and disproportionately high salaries for executives and other administrators; and

WHEREAS, the present COVID-19 pandemic and attendant economic crisis have amplified these divide-and-conquer methods as seen in escalating means of intimidation via furloughs and through practices of blunt abrogation of accountability by management for part-time faculty, full-time temporary faculty, and other positions that are more vulnerable under our contracts; and

--last-is-first introduced--

WHEREAS, MSCA’s navigation of the foregoing issues of equity occurs on individual campuses where

each chapter takes the lead as well as in statewide contexts such as, but not limited to, the Employee Relations Committee (ERC) and bargaining; and

WHEREAS, a “last-is-first” approach involves a decision-making framework wherein an organization centers the needs and concerns of the most vulnerable members of their community, in opposition to the divide-and-conquer strategies and tactics that have fostered internal stratification and unequal working conditions; and

WHEREAS, a last-is-first approach signifies that our organization prioritizes addressing these inequities in its policies and decisions when negotiating, making proposals, or addressing community needs and thereby prioritizes these as opportunities to correct persistent and intractable inequalities at work; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of this resolution by the Annual Meeting of Delegates is its formal expression of opinion, intent, belief or position to guide the MSCA, its members, Board of Directors, Executive Committee and other groups within the MSCA structure; therefore, Resolved, That the MSCA adopt a “last-is-first” guiding principle, such that in decision-making the MSCA aims to prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable members as our first priority. Resolved, that, in particular the MSCA Board of Directors will adopt a last-as-first framework in executing its duties which could include but is not limited to bargaining, membership meetings, resource allocation, and ERC.

It was moved and seconded to amend the above resolution to include (**BOLD** added language; [] deleted language) the word **librarian** where the word faculty appears in the resolution. The motion passed.

It was moved and seconded to amend the above resolution to include the following changes (**BOLD** added language; [] deleted language):

WHEREAS, these inequalities reflect and exacerbate the intersecting inequalities across race, ethnicity, nationality, and gender, **and sexuality including gender non-conforming and LGBTQIA identities**; and

The motion passed.

The original motion passed as amended.

New Business Item #5:

It was moved and seconded to approve the following New Business Item:

Resolution on Non-Elected Statewide MSCA Positions MSCA Delegate Assembly 2021

Maker: Charlotte Haller, Worcester State University

Second: Vicki Gruzynski, Worcester State University

WHEREAS, members should be aware of the various non-elected statewide stipend & salaried positions that MSCA elected officers and members fill (i.e. those not listed in the MSCA Constitution) and have a way to contact those serving in these roles;

WHEREAS, those serving on the MSCA Board of Directors often carry many heavy responsibilities;

WHEREAS, involving more members in statewide leadership roles can expand leadership ranks and bring to the union new perspectives and skills;

WHEREAS, according to the MSCA constitution “No person shall hold, at one time, two paid positions within the MSCA” (Article VI, Section 3) it could be beneficial to open such positions to all members;

WHEREAS, a clearly defined process through which non-elected paid positions and stipends are allocated and candidates are selected creates greater transparency and accountability;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that brief job descriptions be created for the salaried/ stipend positions whose duties are not currently listed in the MSCA constitution (i.e. Bargaining Action Leader, Perspective Editor, Assistant Editor, MSCA Webmaster, Organizing & Unity Leader, and Archivist);

Resolved, That these job descriptions be listed on the MSCA webpage along with the name of the person filling each role, their contact information (email) and university affiliation;

Resolved, That an application process be established for those positions which could be filled by MSCA members who both do and do not serve on the Board of Directors

Resolved, That this application process include the following – the advertising of such positions and the creation of an application process;

Resolved, That the MSCA Board of Directors takes an advisory vote on the selection of the candidate(s).

Resolved, That each person filling these non-elected positions submit an annual report on their work which shall be shared at the annual Delegate Assembly (similar to the reports of the Standing Committees).

The motion passed.

MSCA Officers' Reports:

President's Report – CJ O'Donnell

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 employee 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 Hegbloom 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 were:

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

Vice President's Report
Maria Hegbloom, Vice-President

Overview

This has been a year of upheaval, change, and transformation. While the pandemic has created significant concerns and problems for our universities, members, and union, it has also opened new opportunities to rethink some of our work, our priorities, and how we might take advantage of possibilities for connection and action in the upcoming years. So it is within this context that I would like to highlight a few key areas of our union work as we look toward growing our power in the coming years. These have been priorities for me in my work as Vice President and I feel that they have helped to make our union stronger as we face continued threats in the coming years.

- Utilizing zoom technologies for new opportunities for member-to-member engagement, statewide union activities and actions, and member inclusion in bargaining.
- Growing attention to funding issues, campus debt, and the need to address these through organizing and activism.
- Stronger connections between the work of the MSCA, MTA, and the NEA to grow our union power.
- Increased transparency so that our members know what is going on in the MSCA and MTA and feel prepared to get involved.

MSCA Summer Forum Series: Statewide Member Engagement

Taking advantage of the introduction of zoom as a platform, we were able to create new opportunities for our members across the state to come together and discuss key issues that are shaping the landscape of public higher education. These discussions were successful for shaping some of the work that the union engaged in throughout the rest of the year, but also in helping define the conversations our members would have with one another, with their administrations, and in their communities.

Over 350+ members from across the nine state universities attended one or more of the forums that were held throughout June/July.

- Fall Return? Considering Safety and Educational Quality in a Global Pandemic
- Public Educators and Educating the Public: Fighting Racism in our Communities, Campuses, and Classrooms
- Now More Than Ever: Funding the Future of Public Higher Education in Massachusetts
- Don't Waste a Good Crisis: (Re)Defining Public Higher Education

These forums were planned and led by a variety of union leaders and members.

A number of key items came from these forums and helped us to move issues forward throughout the year.

Fall Return: Health & Safety

- Checklist: This checklist represents some of the key health and safety concerns that members' voiced in relation to their university return plans. It was shared earlier in the summer as a tool that chapters and members could use to assess the plans of their own university
- Collective Bargaining Agreements: Our bargaining committee has worked to incorporate health and safety language into our 1-year proposal that we hope to secure agreement on before the beginning of the semester to provide some increased security for the rights of our members to a safe and healthy workspace.
- Continued Monitoring: Chapter leaders will continue to monitor the health and safety protocols and plans on their campus and we encourage members who have specific concerns to contact their chapter presidents. In addition, our MSCA statewide board of directors will be working to create a Health & Safety committee to help keep track of broader state-wide and federal guidelines and to incorporate the

tools and advice from MTA on health and safety at our local levels. Union members interested in serving on this committee should contact their chapter president.

Fighting Racism in our Classrooms, Campus, and Communities

- **Union Statement:** In response to the George Floyd murder and subsequent protests, our statewide Board of Directors crafted a public message outlining our union commitment to fighting racism.
- **Working toward Collaboration:** Several of our campuses have already started to engage with their own campus police units to seek collaborative change that acknowledges systemic racism within policing and seeks implementation of anti-racist measures on our campuses. We plan to have several forums open to our entire statewide community to share information about these initiatives to aid other members seeking change on their campuses.
- **Collective Bargaining Agreement:** Our union feels that anti-racism is essential to our very work as public educators. As such, we feel that including this work in our collective bargaining agreement is important. To that end the bargaining committee has proposed language to create a standing committee within our structure of shared government which would be focused on assessing racism on our campuses and making recommendations toward change. We hope to win agreement for this committee in our negotiations with management.

Funding our Future

- **Now More than Ever:**

This powerpoint offers resources and links to current public higher ed funding fights at the federal and state level as well as tools for examining campus finances to hold our local administrations' accountable for allocation of funds. We hope that this will provide some useful starting points for members interested in becoming more involved in this fight for funding.

- **MTA Massachusetts Agrees Campaign:**

The MTA has launched an important campaign to hold our employers accountable for fighting for the funds that our public colleges and universities need to stave off layoffs and furloughs during this COVID-crisis. MSCA has been working with public universities across the state on this initiative. Several key actions have taken place at chapters to bring attention to the funding crisis, over 2000+ members have signed a petition sent to Marty Meehan and Carlos Santiago demanding that they fight for us and for public higher education, a media campaign including targeted advertisements and member op-eds has been working to get the message out, and numerous meetings bringing our members together with legislators to discuss this crisis have and will continue to take place. Actions are being planned throughout the coming months and we hope members will look for opportunities to get involved.

We hope to continue this MSCA Summer Forum Series in 2021 looking toward issues around austerity, the return to face-to-face, and other dangers faced by our members to create more opportunities for our members to engage with one another across the campuses and discuss problems that are shared by us all.

In addition, we will be holding a Summer Book Club via zoom on the book "A Wolf at the Schoolhouse Door: Dismantling of Public Education and the Future of school" by Jack Schneider and Jennifer Berkshire which examines the dangers faced by public education today and how to fight against those seeking to dismantle it. Schneider and Berkshire are hosts of the popular, education-focused podcast "Have you Heard" and are being awarded the Friend of Labor award at the 2021 MTA Annual Meeting.

Those interested in participating should add their names to this form no later than May 5th. The MTA will provide books to participants and we will be in contact with those interested in joining to discuss meeting dates/times that will work best. The club is likely to have its first meeting in late May/early June. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact MSCA VP Maria Hegbloom at

hegbloommaria@hotmail.com.

Strengthening ties with the MTA

One issue that often occurs in organizations is that there is a significant amount of information and it is easy for important actions, updates, and ideas to get lost in the traffic. One thing I have tried to do is to better package information that might be of interest and benefit to our members so that this does not get lost in the mix. In particular, I have tried to pull out important information about MTA initiatives, events, actions, state budgets, and legislation that members may want to know about. These reports are shared with the BoD each month and chapter presidents are encouraged to share these with their larger membership. I have included the most recent of these as example (included below).

Overall it is my hope that these efforts have helped to create opportunities for members to become more involved with the MSCA, to connect with one another, to connect to statewide opportunities through the MTA, and overall to feel more ownership in your union as it is through our connections and work together that we have strength!

MTA Member Opportunity

Throughout the year and at their annual Summer Conference, the MTA provides opportunities for educators and union leaders/activists to learn from one another through professional development workshops and conferences. While these offerings have sometimes favored the K-12 classroom and educator experience, we are hoping to grow the higher ed options for members in these areas. So, if you are a higher ed faculty or librarian who has skill in classroom practice, pedagogy, teaching and learning, union activism, or union leadership and you want to share your knowledge with others, please consider adding your name to this facilitator database so that you can be considered for upcoming conferences, workshops, and events. The MTA provides a gender stipend of \$125/hour for facilitators with additional compensation for recorded sessions or those that have significantly large attendance. Training & Professional Learning- Facilitator Database (smartsheet.com)

Bargaining Committee & Union Leader Opportunity

The Annual Labor-Management Conference of the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions, to be held May 17-20, is FREE this year. The conference is titled Higher Education, Collective Bargaining, and the Biden Administration and includes panels on topics such as: bargaining and online learning, adjuncts and strikes, preparing for grievances and arbitrations, and the pandemic and the future of higher education. You can register for the conference [here](#). Please share with others you think might be interested.

Budget & Legislative Update/April

NEA & FEDERAL UPDATES

Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF): American Rescue Plan Act provides funding for public schools and colleges (massteacher.org)

- The big picture:
 - o \$4.5 billion for the state – half this spring, half next spring, to be used by 2024
 - o \$3.5 billion for cities and towns – half this spring, half next spring, to be used by 2024
 - o \$1.8 billion for our K-12 public schools – all this spring for use through 2024
 - o \$438 million for our public colleges and universities – all coming to your campuses this spring for use through 2024, half of which goes to financial aid support for our students. This builds on the level-funding for this year we all won this past fall.
- Find out how much your university is receiving here: [heerf_allocation_in_american_rescue_plan.pdf](#) (massteacher.org)
- Possible uses of this money (HEERF)

- o Lost revenue (can mean almost anything) § Tuition, fees, room and board, enrollment declines, supported research, summer terms
- o Reimbursement for expenses already incurred
- o Technology costs association with a transition to distance education
- o Faculty and staff trainings
- o Payroll
- o Financial Aid Grants to Students
- Ask campuses if they have reports of how they are using this HEERF funding For more information on how these funds can be used and a great toolkit for thinking about how to organize so that this money is spent in responsible ways, check out the NEA website.

Biden Infrastructure Bill:

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/04/01/what%E2%80%99s-2-trillion-infrastructure-plan-higher-ed>

- **American Jobs Plan** was introduced by the White House in March, a comprehensive infrastructure package that includes provisions to address traditional American infrastructure projects, such as roads, waterways, bridges, air transit. The package also includes \$100 billion for K-12 public schools and \$12 (billion) for community college infrastructure. Congressional leadership is currently translating this into legislation and figuring out whether to move this plan in a bipartisan manner or exercise reconciliation again, like they did with American Rescue Plan.
- **American Families Plan** is the second part of Biden’s infrastructure plan, the side of “human infrastructure.” This has not been released yet, but is nearly finalized by the White House. We expect it to include additional huge investment in public education and establish a program to provide free community college. First Lady, Dr. Jill Biden has made comments recently asserting free community college will be part of this plans inclusion.

Status of Student Debt Relief

- Sens. Warren, Schumer and Rep. Pressley continue to press on the White House to use executive authority to enact broad-based federal student debt cancellation of \$50,000. The NEA is in support of this and fully believe this is the best pathway forward in getting this done. There are too many hurdles to get this done via legislation, and the NEA and consumer protection groups fully believe that the Presidency has the authority to do this.
- The American Rescue Plan, passed in March, included a provision to make any student loan forgiveness passed between Dec. 31, 2020 and Jan. 2, 2026 tax-free. Typically, forgiven debt, excluding Public Service Loan Forgiveness, would be treated as taxable income. This clears a major hurdle for President Biden to implement broad-student debt cancellation through executive action.
- In April, the NEA led a letter to the U.S. Department of Education demanding an audit of Public Service Loan Forgiveness and provide immediate cancellation of student loans for public sector workers who have served 10 or more years. 17 other national unions cosigned the letter to represent more than 10 million public service workers in the letter.
- o We have since received resounding support from community partners and media attention - Business Insider and Politico covered our efforts in exclusive stories.

On capital debt relief

- In early April, the U.S. Department of Education discharged \$1.6 billion in capital debt provided to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), providing relief to 45 HBCUs. These institutions were all participating in the HBCU Capital Financing Program. This was allowed due to the passage of December’s COVID relief package – the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021.
- American Rescue Plan did not expand on this further and we do not expect additional action in the future.

We cannot emphasize enough the historical investment to public education American Rescue Plan

provided to public education by including NEA's \$170 billion ask for the Education Stabilization Fund. This included \$40 billion for the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF III).

MTA & STATE UPDATES

State Budget Updates

State Revenues are up \$1.5 Billion up from where the state expected. February Tax Haul Shatters State's Expectations, With Collections Rising Nearly 25% | Bostonomix (wbur.org)

State Budget Process - On Schedule for a normal budget year.

Governor's Budget – “Level-funded” higher education, which was actually a cut because it did not include any of the other items we had won in the previous budget.

House Ways & Means Budget - Increases higher education funding by \$35 million over FY21. Increases funding for campuses at each level of higher education by just about 2%, which will likely be enough to keep pace with inflation. Increases funding for scholarships by \$10 million, bringing the total to \$130 million. Increased funding by \$3.5 million for the SUCCESS program, bringing the total to \$10.5 million. This program provides supports needed to help students who face significant obstacles to be able to thrive and succeed in college.

But, this funding level is well below the \$136 million increase that the MTA has called for to begin the process of providing higher education institutions with the resources needed to meet the needs of all students. The MTA has recommendation of a \$70 million increase to state operating budgets, \$26 million increase to funding for scholarships, and a \$14 million increase for the SUCCESS program.

House Debate - The MTA is backing an amendment to the House Budget #746, filed by Representative Sean Garballey (DARlington) to increase the public higher ed allocation by \$120 million, the level that would be required under the Cherish Act. Go here to urge your legislators to support the Cherish Act and to support amendment 746.

Money Beyond the Budget! – The legislature has decided to address the \$4.5 billion dollars in one-time Federal Covid aid granted to Massachusetts in a separate budget process. This money must be spent on COVID-related stuff, but this is defined very broadly. This is a chance for public higher education to get some additional funding to offset the past years of struggle. The real discussion/debate on how to use these funds will likely be taken up late May/early June when the state budget is in Conference Committee. But we need to make noise now to make sure our interests are represented in the use of these funds.

UNION ACTIVISM & MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

While the budget process is only beginning, it moves very quickly and it is important that we make noise now so that our representatives will have us in mind as they move through debates and decide about funding. Our MTA union priorities for this budget include increasing funds to our students through expansion of the MassGrant Plus program and increased resources for student support, health benefits and pay parity for our part-time faculty, as well as increasing overall operating budgets.

This funding is necessary for addressing the significant inequities that the pandemic has illuminated and ensuring that access to educational opportunities is part of how the Commonwealth recovers from this pandemic. [investing-in-student-success-fact-sheet.pdf](#) (massteacher.org)

Legislative Forums - You can help us to get the message out about why public higher education is so important and the significant need for increased funding to our students and our institutions.

Please consider coming to one of the Legislative Forums that will be held through the end of April, beginning of May. If you live or work in one of these districts that is great! But even if you do not, please feel free to attend and help us to represent higher ed.

There will be forums held on:

- Monday, April 26th @ 4:30 – Greater Taunton area
- Thursday, April 29th @ 5:00 – Greater Springfield/Chicopee (House)
- Friday, April 30th @ 4:00 – Cambridge/Somerville/Belmont/Watertown
- Tuesday, May 4th @ 3:30 – Bedford/Burlington
- Wednesday, May 5th @ 5:00 – Greater Springfield/Chicopee (Senate)
- Thursday, May 6th @ 4:30 – Greater Lowell
- Thursday, May 6th @ 4:30 – Lexington
- Tuesday, May 11th @ 3:30 – 3rd Middlesex
- Thursday, May 13th @ 4:00 – Norfolk & Suffolk

You can see more about which legislators will be in attendance and sign up for these forums here: [2021 Spring SDC In-Districts - Google Sheets](#)

Is your representative a Co-Sponsor for the Cherish Act? Our funding fight this year is really only the first step in working to ensure that the Cherish Act is ultimately passed and funding to public higher education is restored to an appropriate level. Unfortunately, we have fewer legislative co-sponsors so far for this bill. Please Urge Your Legislators to Support the MTA Backed Cherish Act! - Action Network

Look for opportunities in May for actions to call your legislators and make some noise for public higher education!

Secretary's Report

Nancy George

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

Spring semester I supervised the nomination/election process for the 2021 NEA Representative Assembly to be held this coming summer virtually due to COVID-19. I would like to congratulate those members who will represent the MSCA at the NEA-RA this year:

Chris Gullen (Westfield)
Maria Hegbloom (Bridgewater)
David Keil (Framingham)
Christopher O'Donnell (MMA)
Len Paolillo (Bridgewater)

In closing, thank you so much for allowing me to serve you as the Secretary of the MSCA. 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

Eric Weeks

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 Weeks 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 2022 budget, as described in the Treasurer's Report.

It was moved and seconded to amend the proposed FY 2022 budget so that line item 9060 for Phenom is changed to, *support for student led organizations* at the level of \$4,000.00. The motion passed.

It was moved and seconded to amend the proposed FY 2022 budget, as described in the Treasurer's Report to decrease line 9030 to \$0.00. The motion passed.

It was moved and seconded to amend the proposed FY 2022 budget, as described in the Treasurer's Report to move \$2,500.00 from line 9080 to line 9030. The motion passed.

The original motion passed as amended.

It was moved and seconded to adopt the proposed FY 2022 dues structure as described in the Treasurer's Report.

The motion passed.

Second Report of the Credentials Committee:

Sarah Mabrouk, Chair of the MSCA Credentials Committee, delivered the second Credentials Committee Report: 56 registered delegates, 1 guest. It was moved and seconded to adopt the report. The motion passed.

MSCA Committee Reports:

Organizing and Unity Leader Report- Irina Seceleanu & Aruna Krishnamurthy

(1) Supported Part-time Faculty with Filing for Unemployment Benefits

Given the decrease in student enrollment and number of sections offered at the 9 state universities and the consequent loss of employment for our part-time faculty, we organized 3 unemployment workshops in May and August 2020 to help our part-time faculty members navigate the complex application process for unemployment or reduced hours with the Department of Unemployment Assistance. The workshops consisted of a presentation about eligibility, benefits, reasonable assurance and step-by-step instructions on how to file the unemployment form, and an hour-long Q&A session. Over 300 part-time faculty attended the workshops. We are very grateful to MSCA President CJ O'Donnell, MTA Field Representatives Roberta James and Catherine Santiago, and AFL-CIO Advisor Robert Bower for their help with the workshops.

Upcoming Unemployment Workshop for Part-time Faculty: May 13th, 2021.

After consulting several unemployment experts, CJ and Irina co-authored a step-by-step guide for part-time faculty on how to fill out the DUA form. We received positive feedback from members who were able to use the guide to successfully file for unemployment.

To support our members this past year when the DUA locked their unemployment accounts to prevent fraud, we worked individually with over 200 part-time faculty to unlock their unemployment accounts. Roberta James, Robert Bower and CJ O'Donnell were instrumental in supporting this major endeavor.

(2) Developed and Implemented Strategy for Recruitment of New Members

Given that recruitment of new hires in this remote environment is very challenging, we put together a 7-step state-wide strategy for recruiting new hires to the union, which included presentation materials for new hire orientation workshops, emails highlighting benefits of union membership, as well as workshops targeted to new hires. These materials were shared with all chapter presidents and implemented at several chapters with very high success rates. We also developed a special campaign focused on our part-time faculty members highlighting the benefits of union membership for adjunct faculty.

We coordinated the efforts of 5 New Member Liaisons that supported the chapter presidents' recruitment efforts.

We worked with the MSCA Treasurer Office to keep track of union membership numbers, as these strategies were developed and implemented.

Given the success of our recruitment efforts this past year, we were invited to present the MSCA recruitment strategy to other higher education unions at an MTA workshop in 2021.

(3) Organized Campaign for State-wide Funding for Public Higher Education

As part of a coordinated state-wide campaign, we organized a petition urging our state legislators to commit to, at a minimum, level-funding for public higher education for this fiscal year in order to strengthen the ability of our institutions to survive the pandemic. This petition was supported by local efforts of individual chapters that organized their own events ranging from an in-person car rally to online Zoom meetings with legislators. Our petition received 1,000 signatures from our members across the 9 state universities. The campaign was successful, and the Massachusetts legislature voted to approve level-funding plus an additional \$15,000,000 for state universities and community colleges as a result of this advocacy.

However, Governor Baker vetoed these additional funds, so in January 2021 we organized a second campaign petitioning our state legislators to override all 11 higher education line-item reductions that would have slashed nearly \$15 million in funding for state universities and community colleges. Our second petition received over 1,200 signatures having sent close to 2,500 emails to state representatives and senators. Together we made a big difference, as the Governor's vetoes were overridden by the state legislature with very large margins. This is a major victory for the state universities, as the funding cuts would have left our public institutions and our students financially vulnerable during a very difficult year.

(4) Organized Campaign to Add Higher Ed Along K-12 to Phase 2 of the Vaccination Rollout

We worked with MSCA President CJ O’Donnell to initiate a campaign for adding higher education employees to the Phase 2 for the vaccination rollout in Massachusetts. We worked closely with the MTA, supporting two petitions addressed to Governor Baker that received over 12,000 signatures statewide. We met with various stake holders and legislators to garner their support, gave presentations at various meetings to help build support for the campaign, organized an op-ed writing workshop and published several op-eds in local newspapers. The campaign was successful in a limited way. While we did not gain access to vaccines in Phase 2, we were able to establish several important coalitions that we will be able to build on in future campaigns. The op-eds also created visibility for issues regarding public higher education in the public sphere.

(5) Organized Workshop on Educator Burnout for our Members

Given the high burnout among our faculty and librarians this past year, we organized a workshop in January 2021 on The Science of Educator Burnout with over 50 members in attendance. The workshop helped validate the experiences of our members by explaining the science behind the physical and emotional symptoms of burnout and provided evidence-based prevention strategies as well as practical suggestions for ways that our members can recover from burnout.

Respectfully submitted, Irina Seceleanu & Aruna Krishnamurthy
MSCA Organizing and Unity

Day Bargaining Committee – Maria Hegbloom

Early Retirement/Voluntary Separation Agreement

The union reached an agreement with management on 2.2.21 on an early retirement/separation agreement.

The agreement provided \$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 returned to the table on March 31, 2021. We agreed to ground rules which allow us to continue to hold bargaining via zoom even if things return to in-person later in the year. We will also continue to have Silent Bargaining Representatives to be included as an important part of our bargaining team. Our next meeting with management will be Thursday, April 29th from 2:00-6:00. Our bargaining platform was approved by the MSCA Board of Directors on Friday, April 23, 2021. The platform focuses attention on key problems that our bargaining committee seeks to address at the table through a variety of potential proposals. The problems identified in our platform have all come from either our member survey, chapter proposals, or potential coalition bargaining with other higher education unions across the state. Given the work we have done to engage members in the creation of this platform, we feel confident that it represents key concerns and helps to create strong priorities for our upcoming negotiation session.

Day Bargaining Survey Report

We had 892 members complete our MSCA Day Bargaining survey which has provided our committee with a strong description of key concerns and priorities of our members. The survey was constructed

utilizing the feedback we received from the prior 2019 bargaining survey and the input we gained from members across all nine state universities during our bargaining focus groups. The key priorities and concerns as well as other information learned from the survey will be important for our bargaining team as we seek to construct a platform that addresses our members' needs. Summary of Findings: (Members can read the full responses below) The survey identified the top concerns of members which focused on the need for increased salaries overall, equity for part-time faculty, and issues around compensation for additional required work. In terms of workload, the increased effort required by the pandemic illuminated several areas of concern including the increased workload around meeting expanding student needs as well as adjusting to new course modalities. Members noted that this increased workload addressing students and teaching has meant a lack of adequate time to focus on research and scholarship. Additionally, members identified concerns around the heavy weight given to student responses in the evaluation process, class maximums and minimums, and the reduction of, and inequities in, the distribution of Alternative Professional Responsibilities (APRs). Relative to campus climate, members noted concerns about lack of faculty and librarian voice in relation to evaluation of administrators, budgetary decision-making and concerns about financial transparency, and the overall reduction of tenure-track positions. Overall, the survey represented clear concerns with salary, increased workload, and a lack of faculty/librarian voice in decision-making.

In addition to general member questions, we also asked specific groups of members about their concerns. These included part-time faculty, librarians, chairs, and professional maritime faculty. While these groups were also included in the full-member survey, finding out about their specific concerns is important to making sure we address their needs. For our part-time faculty we learned that, in addition to salary concerns, instability in employment, increased course cancellations, lack of a seniority system, and lack of office space were key priorities. For librarians, in addition to concerns about the reduction of MSCA librarians throughout the system, concerns were voiced about the desire for better alignment in contract language between librarians and faculty and a desire for a telecommuting option for work post-pandemic. Chairs duties have continued to increase and this additional workload was identified as a key issue along with the minimal stipend that is provided for this work. Professional Maritime faculty identified the need for their licenses to be able to be held in abeyance as a significant priority.

Beyond these key priorities and concerns, we found some significant information that will be important to our bargaining team as we construct our platform for negotiations. Some of these include:

- Full-time, Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty: In addition to their day-load, 66% teach some courses in the DGCE contract with 50% identifying additional income as the key reason.
- Full-time, Temporary Faculty: 64% of respondents had a terminal degree and had previously held a FT, Temporary position at their current university before. Over 50% have been in their position for 2 years or more suggesting that these positions are being used as more long-term employment options rather than as temporary faculty positions despite the title.
- Part-time Faculty: Many of our part-time faculty members are long-term members of our universities who provide significant service beyond their contractual responsibilities. 71% of the respondents reported working as a part-time faculty member for 6 or more years at our institutions. 54% hold regular office hours for students outside of class and 36% reported participating in university service responsibilities despite these being uncompensated areas of their jobs. The pandemic has also hit our part-time members hard with 53% reporting the loss of at least one course due to the pandemic and 36% expecting even more losses in the Fall 2021 semester. 44% saw a loss of income at their state university positions due to the pandemic with the same number reporting that this has had an effect on their financial security. 43% reported that the primary reason for teaching part-time is the lack of available full-time faculty positions.

Note: following the textual part of the report was a lengthy review of survey results.

Bargaining Committee (DGCE) – Irina Seceleanu

After negotiations for a 1-year contract with no-cost items broke down in January 2021, the DGCE Bargaining Team resumed negotiations over a 3-year DGCE contract. Our existing DGCE contract expired on December 31st, 2020. You can find here a comprehensive list of all MSCA and BHE proposals as well as our committee's monthly bargaining reports for our members. The MSCA proposals advanced at the table are motivated by the following key priorities:

- address inequities that exist between the Day and the DGCE contract with respect to stipends and workload for various equivalencies,
- recognize the currently uncompensated work of faculty when preparing for class prior to the beginning of the semester if their class gets cancelled, or when adapting a course from a traditional classroom setting to an online setting,
- maintain academic quality for online courses by introducing course caps for these courses,
- provide technology support for faculty teaching in the DGCE contract,
- protect the privacy and confidentiality of faculty and students with regards to course management platforms, and
- provide some relief for DGCE faculty during the pandemic by suspending student evaluations and classroom observations.

Stating uncertainty about student enrollments in the future and difficult financial predicaments, management rejected our request for even a modest stipend increase, proposed that DGCE faculty pay the maximum allowed contribution from the employees by law for the Paid Family and Medical Leave Act (PFMLA), and rejected most cost items proposed by the MSCA. Instead, management proposed the introduction of an open comment section on the student evaluation form, the discontinuation of the DGCE pool, several changes to the classroom observation form for online courses, and language that would give the Dean the ability to mandate (unpaid) training to those teaching an online course.

Our team believes that investing in the quality of the DGCE programs and faculty is the surest way to meet the challenges and uncertainty ahead of us. Moreover, while we acknowledge the forecasted decline in the number of high school graduates in the next decade, DGCE courses are for the most part populated by a different student demographic (for example, this past year graduate enrollment at public 4-year institutions increased by 6.2%), and so DGCE courses are not affected to the same extent by these enrollment trends. Finally, with level funding awarded this past year the state as well as the influx of federal relief funds that can be used to offset pandemic related costs and losses (\$200 million across the 9 state universities), our institutions find themselves in greatly improved financial circumstances. For more details about the federal aid received by the state universities, please see this posting from MSCA President on The Truth about Federal Relief. Our team believes that this is the time when our institutions should be investing in DGCE faculty and quality programs, as well as work together with our members to seek solutions to the challenges ahead of us to help shape the future direction of our universities.

We are very grateful to the 100+ silent representatives that signed up to participate in the last two bargaining session; your presence at the table showed management that our members care deeply about the issues discussed at the DGCE bargaining table. We greatly appreciate your contributions during the bargaining sessions and encouragement in support of our team. Please sign up here to join us as a silent representative at the next bargaining session on Monday, May 3rd from 2:00-5:00 pm.

Finally, we are incredibly grateful to the entire DGCE Bargaining Team—Irina Seceleanu (Bridgewater), Rala Diakite (Fitchburg), Robert Donohue (Framingham), Ben Ryterband (MassArt), Graziana Ramsden (MCLA), Todd Hibbert (Mass Maritime), David Goodof (Salem), Chris Masi (Westfield), Sam O'Connell

(Worcester), CJ O'Donnell (MSCA President), Roberta James (MTA Field Representative)—for their amazing contributions to the DGCE bargaining efforts.

Respectfully submitted,
Irina Seceleanu & Rala Diakite
DGCE Bargaining Chair and Vice Chair

Bargaining Action Report – Chris Gullen

A brief oral report was made by the Bargaining Action Leader on his activities.

Elections Committee – Sarah Mabrouk

An extension Elections Committee report was distributed to attendees via the MSCA web page. In it, Chair Mabrouk detailed her exhaustive work in investigating possible election vendors, and also reported the following information:

- Nomination papers may be used without concern in pdf format;
- The calendar and rules for the 2022 MSCA Officers Election were adapted and revised from the 2020 MSCA Officers Election and distributed for review to the MSCA Board;
- The Chair emphasized the need for up-to-date off-campus email addresses of members and requested that chapter presidents obtain this information for future use.

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 2020-2021 there were 19 grievances pending mediation or arbitration. Over the course of the academic year the Grievance Committee considered 23 grievances for mediation or arbitration. As of April 23, 2021 there are 12 grievances pending mediation or arbitration. Over the academic year the Grievance Committee was able to resolve 30 grievances.

The Grievance Committee continues to attempt to resolve members' grievances in a timely manner. And, the number of backlogged grievances remains low.

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

Legislation Committee - Katie Riel

Membership

Katie Riel - MassArt (Chair)

Mara Dodge - Westfield (Vice Chair)
Michael DeValve - Bridgewater Michael Stassen - Fitchburg
Tiffany Chenault - Salem
President O'Donnell serves as an ex-officio member

The Legislation Committee met several times during the spring semester and identified a number of projects to work on. Due to the committee members' prior commitments and just the general exhaustion of living through this past year, we did not make a lot of progress on these projects. However, the committee has established a plan to continue work on these projects this summer and into the next year.

Identifying Legislation and the Legislation Process

Working with the MTA, the Committee plans to identify legislation that is important to MSCA members. This includes legislation crafted by the MTA and any legislation that could affect our members. Our continued goal is to gather this information to share with members. In addition, the Committee plans to learn more about the legislation process to better understand the crucial times for advocacy. The Committee hopes to share this information with members to help all MSCA membership understand the legislation process.

Actions

The Committee has worked to share information with membership about actions regarding legislation. Many of these actions have been organized by the MTA and we hope to involve more MSCA members in these actions such as meeting with legislators and attending advocacy days at the State House.

Communication

This is an ongoing component of the work of the Legislation Committee. We have and will continue to share with members information about legislation and actions. We created a survey asking members about their legislative priorities and their ability to attend events and actions. The survey results will help the committee target communication to those issues most important to our members. In addition, one important goal for the Committee is to update and enhance the Legislation page on the MSCA website with information about the legislation process, current pieces of legislation, and planned events and actions.

Librarians Committee – Nancy George

Membership:

Participants included the following MSCA librarians:
Nancy George (Salem), Suzanne Meunier (Framingham), Pamela Hayes-Bohanan (Bridgewater), Kate Flowers (MCLA), Sarah Loudenslager (Westfield), 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 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.

Workload and Schedules

As with the previous year, the committee had discussions about the smaller number of MSCA librarians in their libraries and subsequent increased, unsustainable workloads for those librarians remaining at the libraries. In addition, the current remote work environment has shown that librarians may successfully work from off-campus locations. Librarians have stated that additional language in the CBA concerning workloads and telecommuting is desired.

Librarian CBA Language

The committee met with a member of the Day Bargaining Committee to discuss issues relevant to their libraries and librarian language in the CBA. Language previously sent to the Day Bargaining Committee did not have to be updated as the last CBA focused only on COVID-19 issues.

Massachusetts Teachers Association – Reports:

MTA Executive Committee Report – Maria Hegbloom

While the MTA financial position remains strong, we have seen a drop in membership this year. The hope is that this is primarily related to the pandemic, but it also means we need to continue to focus on membership recruitment in this post-Janus world. This is particularly true in higher education as we face increased difficulties with recruitment due to large numbers of adjunct faculty.

MTA Legislative Priorities

The MTA legislative package, which includes 16 different pieces of legislation focused on Pre-K-16, offers some important and strong bills for higher education. Addressing the need for high quality, debt-free public higher education, legislation includes a resubmission of the Cherish Act which would restore overall higher education funding to 2001 levels with new attention to distributing those funds across campuses based on issues of equity and student need; a bill to provide pay equity, benefits, and access to the state retirement system to part-time faculty; 100% tuition and fee remission to higher ed faculty and librarians (including part-time faculty), employees, and their families for state public education institutions; a health and safety bill that addresses issues of ventilation, Covid testing, PPE, and prioritizes health and safety as issues on each campus; and a bill to ensure debt-free education at all our public MTA Leadership President/Vice President Merrie Najimy/Max Page Executive Committee 12 Elected Representatives 1 Higher Education Representative Maria Hegbloom 400 MTA Locals & Chapters 12 Higher Education Locals Board of Directors 70ish Elected Representatives 1 MSCA Representative Keith Washington MSCA institutions of higher education. You can read more about these priorities and find easy ways to reach out to your legislators to support these priorities here: [Legislative Action \(massteacher.org\)](https://www.massteacher.org).

Higher Ed Organizing & Campaigns

It has been a huge year for members across each of the sectors in terms of the need for organizing and activism. In higher education this has included: the fight to end furloughs and bring back faculty laid off during the pandemic; the battle to move higher ed members up in the vaccine schedule; the fight for level funding for our institutions and push-back on the Baker's vetos. MTA has been central to all of these campaigns, has helped to organize higher education members across the state through committees and all

member meetings and has provided important materials and aids as we have undertaken this work on our campus. The Massachusetts Agrees campaign Massachusetts Agrees – Massachusetts Agrees has been an important media wing of these battles helping to bring attention to these issues.

Training and Professional Learning

The Training and Professional Learning division of MTA puts on workshops and conferences for members largely around union and leadership skills as well as professional development. This year they also included mental health workshops, meditation, tai chi, and yoga as members worked to ensure selfcare during this tumultuous time. These self-care options are weekly and ongoing offerings that members can continue to take advantage of. TPL also helped to put on the union winter skills conference that had a number of workshops addressing higher education issues specifically and that provided important skills development for members seeking to become more involved with union work. The annual MTA summer conference, which is likely to be held online, presents another opportunity for union and professional skills development for members. In addition, due to the benefit of zoom recordings, many of these different workshops are available to members anytime. You can access these recordings and check up upcoming events here: [Training and Professional Learning \(massteacher.org\)](https://www.massteacher.org)

MTA Benefits

The benefits division of the MTA keeps working on adding member benefits that will have an impact for our members. To that end they added critical illness and accident insurance, along with short and long term disability insurance that is available to members who work 18.5 or more per week. MTA Benefits |

MTA Reorganization, Hiring, & Local Support

Within the ranks of the MTA there has also been some significant hiring that has happened this year in order to provide better support to our locals. This hiring resulted in an additional Field Representative/Organizer assigned to the BHE unions that means an additional Field Representative is now working with the MSCA. We continue to have the support of Roberta James with Catherine Santiago now taking on additional representative duties as well. In addition to this increased support, the MTA has hired three new employees to work as a team of Bargaining Specialists. These specialists primary job is to provide support to the locals for their bargaining, including providing necessary background research and potential standard contract language. Courtney Derwinski was hired as one of these new Bargaining Strategists with particular attention to her experience with higher ed bargaining in the MCCC. Finally, the reorganization of Field staff within the MTA is meant to increase opportunities for K-12 & higher education organization and coalition work through attention to regional districts. It is the hope of the MTA that Pre-K-16 can become a more coherent approach to education activism and that we can all benefit off increased connections between the sectors.

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. The Trust has met on a quarterly basis during the pandemic via zoom.

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. Our ratio claims to premium is 78% (as of January, 2021), which is significantly lower than the

previous year of 99%. As a result, MetLife provided the Trust with a premium reduction of \$50,000 a month going back to July 1, 2020.

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 closed the Bank of America account and are using East Boston Savings Bank as our sole bank.

Our investment account averaged a 4.69% rate of return in 2021 (as of the February meeting). This was down from the previous year's rate of 15.11% return in 2020.

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.

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, Chair of the MSCA Credentials Committee, delivered the final Credentials Committee Report: 54 registered delegates, 1 guest. It was moved and seconded to adopt the report. The motion passed.

Old Business

None.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy George
MSCA Secretary