

Bargaining Action Leader Report 2023: MSCA Contract Action Team

This report will also serve as the 2023 CAT Committee Report

5/02/23

Outreach and Strategy: Primarily in February and March extensive outreach was conducted by Bargaining Action Leader, Guy Bellino (Salem State), in order to find potential leaders to help with the development of CAT on each campus. Across most of Spring 2023, weekly meetings have been held between the bargaining action leader and MSCA Vice President Joanna Gonsalves to discuss strategy and tactics for outreach and development of an action team. This outreach included meetings with leadership on campuses in order to ascertain the union's culture on each campus and to gather contacts/leads for possible leaders and CAT members. Additionally, past and current silent bargaining representatives from all campuses were contacted about CAT. This outreach also included education on the following: explanation of CAT & campus CAT leader (termed point person at first), the filling of a statewide CAT committee with two representatives from each campus, and an ask for other contacts if the initial person wasn't able to be involved. Names given by MSCA union leadership as possible CAT leaders were given the same outreach and information. Some interested parties also brought CAT to their respective EC meetings.

Results and Challenges: Outreach was met with general enthusiasm and interest, including from leadership. Additionally, there were a handful of volunteers who reached out on their own to volunteer for CAT leadership -some names in March CAT report to BoD and committee spreadsheet. Others were recruited as a result of above outreach. However, it has been challenging to accomplish follow-through. A significant portion of these initial volunteers have not yet responded to further outreach, including people who forwarded themselves as CAT leadership unsolicited. After a meeting (more on this in the next section) with an experienced MTA field rep, an MTA CAT/action specialist, and MSCA leadership, it became clear that a possible explanation for the middling follow-through was that there may be a perceived lift/workload or "bandwidth" concern by people who were very enthusiastic about the idea of a working CAT. (see March BoD CAT report for initial CAT point description) This was evident in some of the outreach; for example, one email chain with five people from the same campus who were expressly enthusiastic about CAT and CAT development resulted in all five people declining immediate involvement because of personal bandwidth. Ultimately, we were never able to fully seat the CAT committee or call the first committee meeting.

Shifting Focus: The strategy meeting mentioned in the section above also offered a fresh perspective on developing some kind of statewide, campus-based action team. It was noted that most people who were likely to be CAT volunteers/CAT interested were also past silent bargaining representatives or signed up to be silent representatives for future bargaining. Treating regular silent reps as the defacto CAT leaders, for the time being at least, helped reframe the work involved. In April, an open-invite "informational" silent representative meeting on upcoming bargaining was sent to over 100 current and past silent reps as well as all

volunteers, leads, and contacts from initial outreach. While smaller than hoped, this meeting proved fruitful. When reframed as being “primarily a silent rep” that may take charge of or share responsibility for communication from the bargaining table/caucus back to campus, some previously hesitant volunteers seemed more amenable to the work.. A late May 2023 “CAT training” meeting with an MTA action expert is planned in order to further develop this new focus.