

## **MSCA Delegate Assembly**

### **President's Report**

**May 5, 2023**

Maria Hegbloom

The 2022-2023 AY has been a busy and fruitful one for our union and our members. The following report provides an overview of some of the key priorities, initiatives, and goals from this year - highlighting the progress made over the year and areas for continued growth. This work on these initiatives has included many union leaders and members. The progress we have made and the wins we have achieved are truly the result of collaboration and solidarity and point to the building of our collective strength.

### **MTA & UNION SOLIDARITY**

One of the goals of my presidency was to strengthen the ties between MSCA and the MTA so that we could help contribute to the higher education agenda of the MTA and ensure it was responsive to the needs of our membership. In addition, such relationship building is also important for creating stronger connections to the other higher education unions within the MTA and other public sector unions across the state.

We have made significant progress with respect to these goals this year. In addition to our MSCA representative to the MTA Board of Directors - Luis Rosero (Framingham State University), MSCA has a number of members serving on important MTA committees, including the MTA Advisory Budget Committee (Joanna Gonsalves), Bylaws & Rules Committee (Michelle Corbin), and the Taskforce on Race (Keith Washington). We have also had a number of members serve on important working groups that were instrumental in developing the Cherish Act (Joanna Gonsalves, Maria Hegbloom, Rich Levy, Dan Mulcare) and members central to the work of the Adjunct Faculty Working Group and the development of the Adjunct, Contingent, Part-time Faculty Bill of Rights (Sarah Heim, Jessica Stimpson, Michael Stassen). Maria Hegbloom, Joanna Gonsalves, and Rich Levy also served on the steering committee for the Higher Ed for All campaign and Hannah Haynes worked with the campaign in organizing the MassMoCa event, "Forever in your Debt."

In addition, a number of our members participated in the MTA Winter Union Skills event in Boston this year and we will have a number of member-activists helping to run workshops at the upcoming MTA Summer Conference in August.

The MSCA officially endorsed the ESP Bill of Rights this year and became an official local of the Higher Ed for All campaign.

In developing stronger ties with our fellow higher education unions, the MSCA has also made important progress. We have continued to build stronger ties through participation in the Higher Education Leadership Council (HELCC) and have held monthly meetings with our fellow state-university local, APA in order to ensure we are well informed of issues happening on our campuses across unions and to build support for one another. We have also worked closely with MCCC on several initiatives including working closely on the parameters activism to encourage member outreach to Governor Healey.

As we look toward next year we hope to create even further connections with the MTA and higher ed locals across the state, including working with individual chapters to construct strong ties between MSCA, APA, and AFSCME members in our workplaces.

### **MEMBER EDUCATION & BENEFITS**

Member education is an important component of our union work as we seek to deepen an understanding of our union and facilitate active member participation and engagement. In addition, helping to bring awareness to members about their benefits as a union member helps to ensure they can fully take advantage of union support. To that end the MSCA has run, or helped to run, a number of events for our members. These included: unemployment benefit workshops for our contingent faculty, retirement workshop, public service loan forgiveness workshop, bargaining training for our DGCE and Day bargaining teams, a parameters workshop.

We hope to expand this work next year including the development of a library of video and text resources to serve our members.

### **LABOR/MANAGEMENT RELATIONS**

In addition to building relationships with other unions, the MSCA has also been working on developing relationships with management in ways that better serve our union. The employee relations committee, which consists of representatives of the Council of Presidents and the union, met monthly to discuss issues as they arose. We met both via zoom and face-to-face throughout the year. Union members include Maria Hegbloom, Tiffany Chenault, and Graziana Ramsden along with our MTA Field Representative, Roberta James. Beyond the ERC meetings union leadership also met directly with the Council of Presidents on a number of occasions. This year we initiated a meeting between the union and the presidents of all of the campuses to discuss shared interests and concerns. This was a

productive meeting that we hoped would help set a tone for collaboration throughout the year. I also met with the Council of President, along with APA president Seth Bean and MTA president Max Page, to encourage support for the Cherish Act. The Statewide Advocacy Committee met several times throughout the year to discuss areas of shared legislative concern between the union and management and discuss ways that we could collaborate to deepen student engagement in civic activities and to move legislation that is advantageous to the state universities and public higher education in Massachusetts. Members of the committee for the union included (Maria Hegbloom, Dan Mulcare, Zeynep Gonan, and Catronia Standfield). Finally, I also regularly attended the Board of Higher Education meetings and participated in the Parthenon stakeholder discussions. I also shared comments during the public comment section of the BHE meetings on several occasions. With a new Commissioner of Higher Education, now is a great opportunity for the unions to seek a stronger relationship with the BHE to move toward policies that advantage public higher education faculty and students.

### **LEGISLATION & MEMBER ACTIVISM**

This year has been one of big wins for legislative action and member activism! The passage of the Fair Share Amendment was a huge win for our union and for the entire Commonwealth. This step toward equity will ensure at a minimum at least \$1 billion in revenue earmarked for public education and transportation every year! And it was the MTA and education unions across the state that were most prominent in that fight! In addition, while a one-year contract was not what many of us had hoped for, the fight for better parameters saw an unprecedented coalition of public sector unions working together to push Governor Healey to do what was right for public employees across the Commonwealth. This practice in solidarity is a huge step toward ensuring better salary adjustments in years to come. And this coalition was strengthened primarily by the activism of the education unions who made sure that this work was not only happening behind closed doors, but was public and targeted to ensure pressure when we needed it.

Beyond those wins, the Cherish Act has been introduced with some important legislative champions and a number of important co-sponsors. As a higher education omnibus bill, this legislation seeks to address many issues in our public higher education institutions from crumbling buildings, to student supports, to debt relief, to adjunct faculty health insurance. While it is unlikely to be an easy fight to win this legislation, it is an important step toward redefining the narrative around public higher education in Massachusetts. Equally important, the fight for the Cherish Act has activated many of our local chapters and members and helped them to deepen relationships with their local legislators. A number of our chapters have had legislative events on their campuses and facilitated opportunities for

their members to meet with representatives and senators. This work is an important foundation not only for the passage of legislation, but for building our long-term union power.

### **UNION INFRASTRUCTURE**

This year has seen significant work that is not always visible to our membership, but that is essential to the functioning of our union. One key goal of my presidency has been to engage more members in the daily work of the union. To this end we have committed to convening all of the constitutionally defined committees that we have in our statewide union, to give them resources and support to accomplish their work, and to connect that work to our statewide union. Our Vice President Joanna Gonsalves has spearheaded those efforts and as a result our union committees are more active than they have been in recent history. In addition, we had open calls and applications for a number of paid positions within our union. We were able to hire several of our members to engage in important union work that will help move our union forward. These include our Web Curator, our Perspective Editor, and our Bargaining Action Leader.

Significant work has also been made on creating stronger organizational record-keeping, curating resources for chapter leaders, shifting work to union-owned spaces instead of personal spaces, and beginning a communications plan to strive for more transparency and urgency in the sharing of information. In this we have been working to create shared internal resources through the use of google workplace, have started to organize past archival materials so that they are more accessible to union leaders, have embarked on a plan for more efficient tracking of members, and have started work on a new website for better member usability. This work has only started, but it will continue to be essential to the long-term health of our organization.

We also held a summer retreat for our chapter presidents, creating a handbook and other resources to aid their work at the chapter level, and have worked to create shared resources that they can use to better meet the needs of their members.

### **NEXT YEAR**

Next year will see a continuation of much of this work. Some of the key goals will be to build member capacity and engagement through careful communication planning and the development of social media, campaign texting, and additional outreach efforts. We hope to build a library of member resources that will aid the understanding of union rights and contract language so members feel empowered within their workplaces. And we hope to deepen the political work that seeks to expand funding to our institutions to better address the needs of our students, our members and the Commonwealth.