

12/23/20

Dear FSU Members,

Update: During bargaining on Tuesday the Administration verbally presented a possible proposal to change how RES Funds are utilized. A written proposal will soon follow.

At present, there are \$200,000 in RES funds, of which \$50K is dedicated to NTT faculty and \$150,000 to TT faculty (see Article 26.6.1(a) of the [contract](#) for current RES Funds language). Of this, less than half is typically used. Last year, 84 NTT faculty (out of roughly 380 eligible) accessed the money at an average of \$123, using only about 20% of the allocated funds; 244 TT faculty accessed the money at an average of \$255 each (about \$62,000). This means a lot of money is not used, with the remainder being spent on something agreed upon by Admin and the FSU (typically going to the library, computer replacement, etc.).

Admin is suggesting the following:

- 1) The \$50K dedicated to NTT faculty would now reimburse NTT faculty for Travel, allowing attendance at conferences for research or professional development. This would be capped at \$500 per faculty per year. [Note: this money could no longer be used as it was in the past; that is, it could only be used for travel and not for other expenditures for printers, organizational membership costs, etc.]
- 2) The \$150K currently dedicated to TT faculty would be allotted to several categories (exact amounts are unclear):
 - a. The largest amount of money would be to allow all new TT hires, and eventually all pre-tenure faculty, to attend a training with the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (<https://www.facultydiversity.org/fsp-bootcamp>).
 - b. A portion of the money would be set aside for “other faculty training,” including anti-racism training.
 - c. A smaller portion of the money would be set aside for “subventions” to help subsidize publication costs.

Any unspent money could be shifted from one pool to the other. If there is still money remaining, it would be transferred to IT for computer replacement.

Please share your thoughts about this proposal. Our next bargaining session in January 6th.

Invite: As part of the FSU’s commitment to expanded bargaining (see the FSU policy [here](#)), we invite you – as members of the FSU bargaining team – to our next bargaining session on **January 6th from 10am-12pm.**

Please register in advance for this

webinar: https://umassboston.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_hEXam9YtQgm4crGxMdGb4w

Sincerely,

Core Bargaining Team

Caroline Coscia, Senior Lecturer II, Political Science, FSU Vice President

Katie D'Urso, MTA Field Representative

Jessica Holden, Librarian III, Healey Library

Maria Mellone, Non-Reappointed (i.e., laid off) Associate Lecturer, Math

Alex Mueller, Associate Professor, English

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12/16/2020

Dear FSU Members,

We have now finished well over a semester of bargaining, including impact bargaining due to COVID-19 as well as main table bargaining around the successor agreement (2017-20). The state of Massachusetts has not provided its annual budget parameters, which are necessary for us to begin salary negotiations – although this did not prevent Admin from pre-emptively offering us 0% raises for the next three years. We turned that down and await information from the state.

Bargaining so far has been frustrating. The Administration's proposals have all focused on increasing administrative control at the expense of faculty/librarians and shared governance – all the while looking for new ways to increase workloads, limit academic freedom, and otherwise discipline and control faculty and librarians.

Perhaps most telling, Admin has offered no proposals designed to improve the university, let alone the working conditions or productivity for faculty and librarians. No proposals were offered that might enhance teaching or research. In this case, the lone exception proves the rule: when Admin did throw out the "carrot" of research-intensive semesters (RIS) for junior TT faculty, their "package proposal" was so full of "sticks" that it was effectively a non-starter. To be sure, this is part of the

bargaining process. But one can't help but wonder: if Admin recognizes that a research-intensive semester would be beneficial for junior faculty, as well as the research profile of the university, why not just make it happen?

We are hopeful that we will find more common ground in 2021. Faculty, librarians, and the core bargaining team will review priorities, tactics, and strategies over the winter break, although we will prioritize efforts to negotiate the time-sensitive proposals on RES and Travel Funds. We will stay in touch with you about all these developments. And we will likely ask you to join the FSU to pressure our Administration to bargain with the well-being of the university in mind – including not just its faculty and librarians, but also its staff and students.

For a specific update on the most recent and final bargaining session of the semester, please see below.

Please share your thoughts. This is your union.

Sincerely,

Core Bargaining Team

Caroline Coscia, Senior Lecturer II, Political Science, FSU Vice President
Katie D'Urso, MTA Field Representative
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Tony Vandermeer, Senior Lecturer II, Africana Studies

[Bargaining Update](#) (for previous bargaining updates see [here](#)):

During our bargaining session on December 9th, the FSU presented proposals to more clearly define “additional work” for NTT faculty and the process by which it is assigned. We also proposed that continuing appointments percentages for NTT faculty be correlated with the actual percentage of time they work. Finally, we proposed to expand the use of FSU Travel Funds during Covid, when faculty travel is restricted.

This was not our first shot at Travel Funds – we started that conversation in the summer, but have not heard much from Admin in response. And we're still waiting for their promised proposal to use our RES funds to fund antiracist university initiatives. The only proposal we received from Admin was a slightly modified proposal regarding “fitness for duty” – Admin's effort to make it easier to dismiss faculty who are deemed medically unfit.

We are pleased to end on a positive note: we reached agreement on a number of minor, contract “clean up” items related to dues check off, the agency fee, and timelines for grievance hearings. Importantly, Admin agreed to our proposal to use gender-neutral language for the successor agreement. The CBT is thrilled about this agreement.

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11/4/2020

Dear FSU Members,

Update: During our bargaining session on October 28th, the FSU received two proposals from the Administration (attached), including one on course caps, a 2-2 teaching load, and a research intensive semester for junior faculty. Please note: This is a ‘package proposal,’ meaning the Administration will not provide any one part of it without us agreeing to all of it. This means, for example, that if we want a research-intensive semester for our pre-tenure faculty (which we do), we have to agree also to giving up faculty approval of increasing course caps and 2-2 teaching load for TT faculty awarded on the basis of a punitive system of “accountability” conducted by department personnel committees (essentially, everyone’s AFR would be evaluated as to whether or not they are adequately “research active”; if you are determined not to be, you will be demoted to a 3-3 teaching load).

The entire “package” proposal for Article 15 is [attached](#). Please pay careful attention to all of the additions and remember that they are being proposed in tandem and we that have been told that Admin would not be open to having the FSU pick and choose which parts we like.

The Administration’s other proposal (see [attached](#)) is also a “package proposal” wherein faculty may be allowed to retire immediately after a sabbatical without providing the otherwise requisite service year, in exchange for faculty also being subject to medical evaluations of their “fitness for duty” if Admin learns they might be falling down on the job.

Meanwhile, The FSU presented two proposals. The first suggested a small committee of faculty of color be formed to provide mentorship around teaching, research, service, personnel reviews, and promotion for other faculty of color on campus. The second proposed that NTT faculty should be integrated into their academic departments as voting members.

The Administration also responded to a few of our previous proposals (see [here](#) for previous bargaining updates):

Regarding Associate Lecturers, Administration indicated that they were not favorable to our changes and that any reduction in administrative flexibility regarding their ability to hire and not re-hire Associate Lecturers would jeopardize their ability to grant continuing appointments to Lecturers (in their view, the tradeoff for the long term employment status accorded to Lecturers with continuing appointments is to have a sizable pool of temporary NTT). They said they will be conducting an analysis

of hiring practices to determine whether or not there has been a misuse of the Associate Lecturer title. (the FSU has gathered its own data on AL hiring and un-hiring practices across the university; see [attached](#)).

Regarding our proposal that librarian salaries be equitable with those at UMass Amherst, Administration indicated that they are not yet in a position to formally engage with salary proposals until the UMB and state budget situation is clarified.

Finally, with regard to academic freedom, Admin rejected our counter-proposal and stated that they stand by their [original proposal](#). Given how important this issue is on our campus, it is a good idea to take a look at Admin's original proposal and see what they have in mind when they talk about "academic freedom."

Invite: As part of the FSU's commitment to expanded bargaining (see the FSU policy [here](#)), we invite you – as members of the FSU bargaining team – to our next bargaining session on **November 13th from 1pm to 3pm**, where the Core Bargaining Team will receive proposals from Admin while presenting some new proposals of our own.

Please register in advance for this webinar (contact the [FSU](#) or [Steve Striffler](#) for Zoom info).

Sincerely,
Core Bargaining Team

Caroline Coscia, Senior Lecturer II, Political Science, FSU Vice President
Katie D'Urso, MTA Field Representative
Jessica Holden, Librarian III, Healey Library
Maria Mellone, Non-Reappointed (i.e., laid off) Associate Lecturer, Math
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Jason Rodriguez, Associate Professor, Sociology
Heike Schotten, Associate Professor, Political Science
Steve Striffler, Director of the Labor Resource Center and Professor, Anthropology, FSU President
Tony Vandermeer, Senior Lecturer II, Africana Studies

10/21/2020

Dear FSU Members,

Update: During our bargaining session on October 14th, the FSU responded to (and rejected) [Admin's proposals](#) for no pay raises (for 3 years), increased workload (and increased course caps), and restricted academic freedom. We also presented two proposals, one seeking salary equity for librarians and the other attempting to limit and redefine the category of Associate Lecturer.

Invite: As part of the FSU's commitment to expanded bargaining (see the FSU policy [here](#)), we invite you – as members of the FSU bargaining team – to our next bargaining session on **October 28th from 1pm to 3pm**, where the Core Bargaining Team will receive proposals from Admin while presenting some new proposals of our own.

Please register in advance for this webinar (contact the [FSU](#) or [Steve Striffler](#) for registration info)

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10/2/20

Dear FSU Members,

On Wednesday, the FSU Core Bargaining Team, along with our 30 member Expanded Bargaining Team, received proposals from Administration (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)) that would eliminate raises for three years, curtail academic freedom, explicitly require unpaid work during the period of non-responsibility, and potentially increase course sizes significantly. Quite simply, the administration wants us to do more work for less pay and with diminished autonomy.

There is good news. We did not receive proposals asking for furloughs or increased parking rates – and hence have something to look forward to in future bargaining sessions (lol). Administration is on a roll.

We are perplexed that our own Administration is proposing no raises for the next three years – at a time when enrollments look good and we do not know what state funding will look like two months from now, let alone two years (the state level-funded Higher Ed through October). We were also surprised, if not exactly shocked, that Administration’s first proposals call for an increase in unpaid work while giving Administration even more discretion to increase course caps.

Please review the attached proposals and let us know what you think. And stay involved in your union.

An invitation to participate in our next bargaining session on October 14th will be coming soon to FSU members. The Core Bargaining Team will respond to Admin's proposals and present some of our own for librarians and faculty on the 14th.

Sincerely,

Core Bargaining Team

Caroline Coscia, Senior Lecturer II, Political Science, FSU Vice President

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8/20/2020

Dear FSU Members,

We just finished our second main table bargaining session, the agenda for which was that administration would respond to the FSU's proposals (detailed below our signature) and present proposals of their own.

Despite having had over a month to prepare, however, administration did not in fact have any proposals to offer. As well, they were largely dismissive, without substantial engagement or discussion, of the FSU's proposals.

They then cancelled our next scheduled bargaining session, a date they themselves had proposed and which was finalized a month ago.

Admin did, however, provide a preview of which *areas* (with no details) their future proposals will cover:

1. Parking (yes, you read that correctly)
2. Furloughs (they'd like to spread this around beyond the administrative level)
3. "Course capacity" (no sense of what this means or pertains to)
4. Distance learning (see #3)

It is difficult not to conclude that Admin is contemplating proposals to increase parking rates, increase course sizes, ask for faculty/librarian furloughs, and change contract language about distance learning. But we have no concrete details.

We invite you to attend our next bargaining session (whenever that may be!).

You may recall that the CBT won expanded bargaining, which means that 30 FSU members can attend bargaining sessions and "watch" them as an audience, just like you would attend an online webinar. We think it is really important for our members to see administration in (in)action during these sessions. As well, it builds power to have our membership beside us in this process. Finally, during the many "caucus" periods (i.e., private de-briefings) that come up during bargaining, we can confer with you and discuss what is happening and get your opinions and advice about how best to proceed.

We'll send details and an invitation to bargaining as soon as it is scheduled.

In the meantime, stay safe, good luck with course preparation, and stay in touch.

Sincerely, and in solidarity,

Core Bargaining Team:

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[FSU Proposals \(submitted July 10th\)](#)

1. 2-2 teaching load for all TT faculty
2. 3-3 Teaching Load for all NTT faculty
3. No course cancellations
4. Implement the recommendations of the Alternative Scheduling Taskforce (see [attached](#)).
5. Re: the \$1000 FSU Travel Fund:
 - a. Expand eligibility to all bargaining unit members (TT faculty, NTT faculty, librarians, etc.) and ensure sufficient funds to cover this expansion.
 - b. During semesters in which Covid-19 travel restrictions are in place, allow the Travel Fund to reimburse any expenditure that contributed to the research, scholarship, and/or creative activity of the bargaining unit member.

7/14/2020

Dear FSU Members,

We started main table bargaining last Friday. The FSU core bargaining team was there, along with—for the very first time!—30 additional FSU members, who attended as part of our expanded team. It was really exciting to bargain with administration knowing that our members were in the Zoom room with us, holding it down throughout and ready to caucus with us at a moment's notice.

We presented five proposals to administration, based on your feedback this past Fall and Spring:

- 1) institute a 2/2 Teaching Load for all Tenure Stream Faculty
- 2) institute a 3/3 Teaching Load for all (full-time) NTT Faculty
- 3) eliminate course cancellations due to low enrollment
- 4) implement the recommendations of the Alternative Scheduling Taskforce
- 5) expand the FSU travel fund – (a) In the event that travel is restricted, allow faculty to use travel funds for other research, scholarship, or creative purposes; (b) extend travel fund to Librarians, Clinical Professors (all ranks), and NTT faculty.

We also initiated a discussion about limiting/capping enrollments for virtual courses for both pedagogical and workload reasons.

These were just the initial proposals for the first bargaining sessions – there will be others!!

The Administration will not respond to these proposals until our next meeting (date TBD), but did make it a point to outline the dire financial situation of the university – suggesting that from their perspective, proposals must be cost-neutral or even save money.

Admin also raised the possibility of agreeing to a one-year contract as opposed to the typical three-year deal – which many campuses around the state are now exploring given the uncertain financial future. This has some appeal to unions. Given the financial situation (and political mood), a three-year

contract could lock us in to no raises for three years whereas a one-year contract would limit the pain and perhaps allow us to negotiate a longer term contract under an improved economic climate. There will be much discussion about this in the coming weeks.

We will continue to update you. And – we will let you know when the next bargaining session is so you can join us at the virtual table!

Sincerely and in solidarity,

Core Bargaining Team:

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6/26/2020

Dear FSU Members,

At yesterday’s Special Session of the General Assembly, the membership unanimously approved (43-0) the [attached agreement](#) with Administration allowing up to 30 FSU members to attend each bargaining session (in addition to the core bargaining team). This represents a significant step towards expanded bargaining – and a more engaged, transparent, and powerful union.

The next bargaining session has not been scheduled yet, but once it is we will send out a request for members to join us at the virtual bargaining table. We will also continue to caucus during bargaining sessions with as many FSU members who want to participate.

Sincerely,

Core Bargaining Team:

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5/22/2020

Dear FSU Members,

We write with three important bargaining updates and a request for your help.

First the good news: Administration (finally!) signed the Spring 2020 agreement that we reached with them in April (please see [attached](#)).

Now the bad news:

You may know that the Provost sent a memo in April (also [attached](#)) to faculty about summer teaching. In her memo, she discussed converting Summer courses to online modality, but without assuring faculty of the \$3k distance learning course development stipend, as stipulated in Article 35 of the [contract](#). We believe that this memo violates the contract, and the FSU Grievance committee will be filing a grievance on behalf of all affected FSU members.

Finally, you may recall that the FSU enacted a new [policy](#) of [expanded bargaining](#), which "will by default allow all FSU members to attend all main- and side-table bargaining sessions." On May 11th, we wrote to you about this new policy, explaining our work to communicate it to administration and their ongoing reticence to engage or comply with this new policy.

At our last bargaining session, on May 20th, the CBT attempted to follow our union's policy and asked Administration to allow expanded bargaining team members to join the meeting (we had 41 FSU members asking for entry). They refused to do so. This refusal is not surprising, given how obstinate

they have been throughout this process. But it is a clear signal that we need to insist on expanded bargaining and demand that administration recognize our lawful and legitimate right to do so.

Hence this request: we need your help!

Please write to the Administration and tell them you support (and want to participate in!) expanded bargaining.

Below is a template email you may draw from; please personalize and send to:

Interim Provost Emily McDermott (emily.mcdermott@umb.edu)

Vice Chancellor for Human Resources Marie Bowen (marie.bowen@umb.edu)

Employee and Labor Relations Generalist Jennifer Springer (jennifer.springer@umb.edu)

Dear Provost McDermott, Vice Chancellor Bowen, and Ms. Springer

I write to ask you to agree to expanded bargaining with the FSU. As a member of the FSU, I believe that contract negotiations should be a transparent process that all FSU members can observe. There is no legal or logical reason to prohibit union members from silently observing a process of negotiation that has a profound impact on our lives and the university as a whole. In fact, expanded bargaining will produce a better-informed faculty and stronger university.

Thanks so much for reading our updates! If you have any questions, concerns, or want to get more involved, please just reply directly to this email.

Sincerely, and in solidarity,

Core Bargaining Team

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