Dear FSU Members,

Here is a quick update from our two (!!) bargaining sessions last week.

**SALARY**

As you know, the parameters for raises are set by the governor. This year, those parameters are across-the-board raises of 2.5%-2%-2% over the three-year contract, plus a one-time 1.5% bonus (i.e. money that does not go on salary) in the first year.

Administration, however, proposed carving merit out of these already spare across-the-board raises, offering us across-the-board raises of even less—1.5%-1%-1%—with the rest coming in the form of merit raises of up to 1%-1%-1%. They also propose leaving Associate Lecturers hired after January 2018 out of this raise structure altogether (that would amount to approximately 115 of our current members).

We are countering by insisting that all of the money be given as across-the-board raises (2.5%-2%-2%). As it is, these raises do not even keep up with the cost of living. They are simply too small to carve merit out of—both in the sense that everyone deserves at least a 2% raise and in the sense that squeezing merit out of 2% not only leaves some faculty with less but does not provide others with nearly enough to be worth the effort. We have urged Administration to return with a proposal that includes merit paid for by them, on top of the across-the-board raises provided by the state, as well as an additional $500 bonus for all members (on top of the 1.5% bonus the state is providing).

Beyond this, the FSU is proposing that:
- Promotional raises be increased in order to address our low salaries while keeping up with inflation and our colleagues at Amherst (for example, from Assistant to Associate Professor, or Lecturer to Senior Lecturer I);
- NTT faculty get a longevity raise of $6500 at 20 years of service;
- Salary floors be increased (again, reflecting both inflation and salaries at Amherst);
- To address more salary anomalies, increase the pool from $60,000 to $100,000 and include Scholarship of Practice Clinical Nursing professors of all ranks;
- The Summer/Winter per course rate be increased to $6000 (yes, this would actually be an increase from what the university currently pays).

As you can see from the attached, these proposed increases are quite modest.

**ARTICLE 15: Faculty Workload**

The other major proposal we are currently bargaining is located largely within Article 15 of our contract.

With regard to Article 15, Administration is pushing for:
- greater control over increasing course caps;
- a formal path for evaluating whether faculty are or are not “research active” (and hence remain at 2-2 or be bumped to a 3-3 teaching load);
• a requirement that faculty respond to all work-related email communications in the summer.

By way of counter, we are proposing that:
• pre-tenure faculty be given a real Research-Intensive Semester prior to going up for tenure;
• a 2-2 teaching load be written into the contract for all tenure-line faculty;
• control over course cancellations for “low enrollments” should rest firmly with academic departments;
• NTT faculty should have basic rights in departments, including the right to attend department meetings and vote (with details to be determined by departments).

Thus far, we have been very surprised by the Administration’s resistance to including NTT faculty in department governance, the very places where some of the most important decisions impacting NTT faculty’s working conditions are made. This move towards a more democratic workplace would cost the university nothing, but make great strides toward ensuring equity and autonomy for our more vulnerable members.

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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Tony Vandermeer, Senior Lecturer II, Africana Studies

For information on the FSU, links to our contract and bargaining updates, and a calendar of events, see the [FSU webpage](#)

10/21/2021

Dear FSU Members,

The question around expanded bargaining should be resolved in time for the next bargaining sessions on October 27th and October 29th; the system of expanded bargaining that allows 30 FSU members to attend bargaining will continue. So please consider participating as we bargain around teaching load, a research-intensive semester for junior faculty, promotional raises, online classes, and other important topics. Come support the process! Bargaining will intensify this semester, in part because we expect a formal salary proposal soon and face deadlines around the state’s budget.

Register in advance (even if you can’t attend the whole time; contact FSU or Steve Striffler for registration information).
October 27 (4-7pm)
Oct 29 (3:30-6:30pm)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Sincerely,
Core Bargaining Team

Caroline Coscia, Senior Lecturer II, Political Science, FSU Vice President
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Tony Vandermeer, Senior Lecturer II, Africana Studies

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10/9/2021

Dear FSU Members,

Please join us on Tuesday at 3:00 pm to support the union’s demand for open and transparent bargaining: (contact FSU or Steve Striffler for Zoom information).

The Administration is refusing to continue with expanded bargaining. The expanded bargaining MOU signed in 2020 allows 30 of our members to join the core bargaining team in bargaining sessions (as audience members). This system has functioned smoothly for the past year.

The Administration does not want bargaining to be open or transparent – for members to witness what the Administration is proposing or how they treat faculty/librarians and the bargaining process itself.
The FSU determines who is on our bargaining team – not the Administration. Please join us on Tuesday to make this demand clear.

10/5/21

Dear FSU members,

If you make it to the end of this overly long email you will have a guaranteed place in union heaven! There is something for everyone!

**Bargaining** -- The FSU has engaged in bargaining with the Administration for over a year. We had hoped to re-start bargaining at the start of the semester but were unable to get the Administration back to the table prior to October 12th. Admin is also indicating a reluctance to continue with “**expanded bargaining**” which we negotiated in 2020 to allow thirty FSU members to attend bargaining sessions – to insure that bargaining is transparent and open. Now that university operations have returned to campus, and the MOU that allowed for expanded bargaining no longer applies, the Administration is looking to roll back expanded bargaining – because, we assume, they don’t want faculty/librarians to see their proposals firsthand (or hear their rejection of our proposals). We hope to have this resolved prior to the first bargaining session on October 12th.

**Raises and Merit:** Our raises are largely determined at the state level. The Governor sets the parameters, which are then haggled over with state-wide unions (including the MTA), eventually “agreed” upon, and then filtered down to the university level (where negotiation is limited). The FSU has not yet received a salary proposal from the Administration (except for the initial one of 0%-0%-0% that we got in 2020). However, unions at other state colleges and universities have been getting proposals of 2%-2%-2% (raises over the three-year contract), with a one-time 1.5% bonus the first year. Given that these disappointingly low numbers do not keep up with the rising cost of living, it seems very unlikely that there will be merit raises. We have heard that Deans have been telling Department Chairs that there will likely be merit. Please know that merit must be bargained with the union, and we have not begun the discussion. Also know that other universities are not electing to squeeze merit out of 2% raises for a simple reason – to do so would inevitably require some faculty/librarians getting no raise at all. The Administration could always opt to fund merit raises out of the university’s general operating budget, in effect topping off the state-funded 2% raises with additional merit raises. This is, after all, where bonuses for Administrators come from.

Sincerely,

Steve Striffler
FSU President
Director, Labor Resource Center
Professor, Anthropology

Caroline Coscia
FSU Vice President
Senior Lecturer II
Political Science

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9/20/2021
Dear FSU Members,

Are you interested in becoming more involved in the FSU and bargaining? Yes….you say?

The FSU is looking for 3-5 people to be part of the Contract Action Team, or CAT! If you are interested, please let the FSU know (fsu@umb.edu) and join us on September 29th at 3pm: https://umassboston.zoom.us/j/97771206497 Chris Fung, a faculty member in anthropology and FSU organizer, will chair this important team. The CAT supports bargaining. It does not involve a ton of work, but it is important – and our first bargaining session of the Fall is October 12th. The CAT:

- Makes sure we have 30 members at each expanded bargaining session.
- Makes sure that we don’t have the same 30 members at every bargaining session. We want as many members as possible, from all colleges and ranks, to experience the joys of bargaining! This just requires some nudging and a bit of organization.
- Finds ways to support FSU bargaining proposals outside of bargaining sessions by mobilizing members (and sometimes media) to pressure the Administration to do right by faculty, students, and staff.

Sincerely,

Steve Striffler Chris Fung
FSU President FSU Organizer

For information on the FSU, links to our contract and bargaining updates, and a calendar of events, see the FSU webpage

5/21/2021

Dear FSU Members,

We thought the end of the semester would be a good time to provide an outline of where things stand in the bargaining process. For previous bargaining updates see here, but for a broad re-cap continue reading!

Raises: Now that the state has released their economic parameters (see here), we are expecting to see another proposal from Admin with a revised raise that will be better than their first offer of 0%-0%-0%. The FSU, in coalition with other UMass unions, presented the following proposal: 4.5% raise for each year of contract; one-time $1000 increase to base pay for increased cost of benefits and working conditions.

Non-Tenure Track Faculty: The FSU made a number of proposals designed to address NTT issues. These include: mandating that NTT be allowed to attend department meetings; clarifying the additional work clause of Article 21 to make it clearer how such work will be assigned; ensuring that continuing appointment percentages of time are reflective of actual work history; enhancing the status of Associate Lecturers by reducing the number of semesters needed to convert to Lecturer along with other significant changes; ensuring access to office space; extending Travel Funds eligibility to NTT; and, perhaps most significantly, proposing that full-time NTT should be on a standard 3-3 workload with 25%
time allotted to service and/or research. Admin has said no to virtually all of these proposals (they accepted a version of the NTT office space proposal). We are preparing a subsequent counter proposal.

**Tenure Track Faculty Workload:** The FSU made a comprehensive counter proposal to Admin on Article 15 which included the following tenure-track (TT) specific items: enshrining a 2/2 TT course load in the contract and a Research-Intensive Semester for junior faculty. Admin has shown some openness to the 2/2 and RIS, but with a series of problematic strings attached. We are preparing a subsequent counter proposal.

**Librarians:** We proposed some administrative, ‘clean up’ language for Article 20, that Librarians must be allowed to do service and scholarship during their assigned work hours, that salary floors and promotional raises match those of our UMA Librarian colleagues’, and that Librarians be eligible for Travel Funds. Admin has not yet responded to salary/financial aspects of the proposal but has countered with some acceptance of our other proposals. We submitted a counter proposal.

**Scholarship of Practice Nursing Faculty (SOP):** We have proposed that SOP be eligible for Travel Funds and are working on a more comprehensive proposal to address workload concerns.

**Course Caps and Cancellations:** Admin has tried throughout bargaining to increase administrative control over course caps – to allow them to increase caps without instructor permission. The FSU has resisted this while proposing that courses cannot be cancelled due to low enrollments.

**Travel and RES Funds:** The Administration has resisted expanding the Travel Fund either in the sense of allowing more faculty/librarians access to it, or in allowing expanded uses of the Fund itself (when travel was restricted). We intend to make another comprehensive proposal that will include: increase in the overall amount in the pool, expansion of eligibility for Travel funds to NTT, Librarians, and SOP, and the allocation of leftover funds to racial justice initiatives as well as the library (for info on our separate agreement on RES Funds for 20-21 see here). We will also push to make access to RES Funds easier.

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

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4/30/2021
Dear FSU Members,

We invite you – as members of the FSU bargaining team – to our next bargaining session on Wednesday, May 12th, 1-3pm. (contact FSU or Steve Striffler for registration information).

We are permitted to have 30 FSU members join the core bargaining team during contract negotiations. We are hoping to fill the zoom room on May 12th in order to insist (or at least encourage!) the Administration to bargain in a way that moves the conversation forward. They have not been doing this in a productive way as of late – and need a push.

We anticipate receiving a statement from the Administration explaining why the use of Associate Lecturers has expanded so rapidly in recent years (this is in response to our Associate Lecturer proposal which would limit the usage of this rank). Although the category of Associate Lecturer was created to be used relatively sparingly in order to fill short-term staffing needs, it has become almost the only way in which new NTT faculty are hired at the university – giving the Administration great flexibility while creating an expanding class of faculty with little security and poor pay.

We also expect to receive Admin’s proposal on Distance Learning. In addition, we anticipate submitting proposals of our own.

If you haven’t joined the FSU in bargaining before – please consider doing so. It’s both interesting and enlightening!

Sincerely,

Core Bargaining Team

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Tony Vandermeer, Senior Lecturer II, Africana Studies

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4/29/2021

Dear FSU Members,

Governor Baker just informed that National Association of Government Employees (NAGE) of the following salary parameters for the next three years:
1.5% bonus in year one (July 1, 2020), followed by 2% raise in year two, and a 2% raise in year three. These will (almost certainly) be the parameters we are given as well — for our current contract negotiations. As you will see from the attached letter from NAGE to its members (worth a read!), this news did not sit well with the union. State tax revenues are $1.4 billion above the original benchmark, and billions more are flowing into the state as part of the American Rescue Plan. Massachusetts is flush and state employees have worked incredibly hard this past year. We deserve better.

NAGE will be pushing back and so will the MTA. Stay tuned!

Steve Striffler
President, FSU

For information on the FSU, links to our contract and bargaining updates, and a calendar of events, see the FSU webpage

3/8/2021
RES Funds – New Agreement

Dear Members,

The FSU and Administration reached a Memorandum of Agreement on the allocation of RES Funds. This agreement only applies to the current fiscal year. Our rationale for signing a separate MOA for the current fiscal year is simple: while the current fiscal year ends on June 30, 2021, bargaining for the current contract may not be finished by that point. Since RES Funds need to be expended in the fiscal year in which they are allocated, a separate agreement would have to be reached if members are going to have access to the funds this year.

As you may know, the pool of RES Funds is $200,000 per year which is normally dispersed in relatively small sums to faculty to support professional development (after you submit receipts). Much of this money -- often close to half of it -- is not accessed directly by faculty in any given year through this process (though leftover funds are then spent on important things like the library, computer replacement, etc.).

For this year only:

1. $150,000 will be dispersed in the normal fashion/amounts. Faculty will soon be notified by Admin about their specific level of financial support. In short, support will continue as it has in the past -- the same amount per individual.
2. $50,000 will be allocated to anti-racism activities for faculty and librarians.
3. Any remaining money will be dedicated to the Healey Library.

Again, this agreement is only for this year. Negotiations around RES Funds for years two and three of the next contract are ongoing (please share your comments regarding RES Funds going forward).

This agreement reflects our commitment as faculty and librarians – and as a union – to racial justice by infusing resources into anti-racism initiatives on campus. It’s not a perfect agreement, or exactly what we wanted, but it does commit resources to a vitally important effort (we’ll send the final agreement as
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):

For information on the FSU, links to our contract and bargaining updates, and a calendar of events, see the FSU webpage.
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
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Check out the FSU Blog

Please “like” the FSU Facebook Page

Follow us on Twitter at @FSU_UMB
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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Check out the FSU [Blog](#).

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Follow us on Twitter at [@FSU_UMB](#).

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
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)

Sincerely,
Core Bargaining Team

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Follow us on Twitter at [@FSU_UMB](#).
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

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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
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:

Caroline Coscia, Senior Lecturer II, Political Science, FSU Vice President
Katie D’Urso, MTA Field Representative
Jessica Holden, Librarian III, Healey Library
Maria Mellone, Associate Lecturer, Mathematics
Alex Mueller, Associate Professor, English
Lorenzo Nencioli, FSU Membership Coordinator
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

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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For information on the FSU, links to our contract and bargaining updates, and a calendar of events, see the FSU webpage

Check out the FSU Blog

Please “like” the FSU Facebook Page
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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Katie D’Urso, MTA Field Representative
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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
Caroline Coscia, Senior Lecturer II, Political Science, FSU Vice President
Katie D’Urso, MTA Field Representative
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