

Union News

• FROM THE FACULTY STAFF UNION •

A Year of Organizing

BY JENNIFER BERKSHIRE, UNION NEWS EDITOR

When members of the Faculty Staff Union gathered outside of the Chancellor's office on March 11, they came armed with chants, signs and a single question: what happened to the money that was appropriated to pay for faculty and staff raises? The demonstration, which resulted in Vice Chancellor Ellen O'Connor coming out to speak to protesters, was just the latest in what is shaping up to be a season of organizing.

Mary Oleskiewicz, an associate professor of music and an FSU Executive Committee member, says that she joined approximately 100 other faculty and staff members because, like 6,000 other UMass employees, she was promised a raise that UMass now says it can't afford. "We're trying to get to the bottom of what happened to that money, but this is about something bigger," says Oleskiewicz: accountability. "It's about the university lying to us about money that we've earned, even as top administrators somehow end up with huge raises."

A total of 24 unions on the four UMass campuses negotiated new contracts last year, agreements that included some \$13 million intended for faculty and staff pay raises. Initially UMass administrators argued that the state legislature didn't provide money for the increases. But Ellen O'Connor, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, gave the protesting union members a different explanation. "She basically told us that the university spent the money," says Oleskiewicz.

Heike Schotten, an associate professor of political science, captured the moment on the FSU's new Twitter feed, @FSU_UMB, part of an effort to share with members across campus, the union's role in holding administrators accountable. "We were able to document in real time a very interesting exchange be-



CHRIS FUNG, ANTHROPOLOGY, SENDS A MESSAGE TO UMASS BOSTON ADMINISTRATORS. (PHOTO CREDIT: AMY TODD.)

tween faculty and the administration, including quotes from both sides," says Schotten. In addition to providing a record of the administration's changing account, Schotten says that the union's social media campaign offers another way to press the university to do the right thing. "UMass is interested in using Twitter to garner positive publicity for itself, but the best way to do that is to honor their agreement. In the meantime, if they want to take this to Twitter, we can take it to Twitter."

FSU President Marlene Kim anticipates a spring filled with actions like the one outside of the Chancellor's office. "We're going to be making our voices heard and our presence felt on a weekly basis until this issue is resolved," says Kim.

Continued on page 6.





Letter from the President

Dear Colleagues:

It is my pleasure to serve as your FSU President. Here is an update on some important issues.

Bargaining

We completed bargaining on most issues in the fall. The major elements of the new contract include:

- Raises of up to 3.5% per year over three years (split between a 2.1% cost of living and 1.4% merit).
- Benefits for all half-time NTTs (there is no longer a waiting period).
- Promotions for NTTs by FTE, not calendar year accumulations.
- Continuous employment for NTTs with 3 years FTE service instead of priority lists.
- Increased research funds and salary anomaly funds.
- Just cause after 5 instead of 10 years, flexible sabbaticals, continuing appointments, and a PMYR for librarians.
- For details on this and the entire contract, go to the FSU website.

We did not finish bargaining for distance learning, CAPS, the research intensive semester for junior faculty (giving junior faculty a sabbatical or reduced teaching), among other issues. If you are interested in being on the bargaining team to negotiate any of these issues, let us know ASAP.

Contract Implementation—There is enough money in the budget for our raises but the university plans to spend it elsewhere

Both Deval Patrick and Charlie Baker sent our new contract to the legislature saying that enough money had been appropriated for our raises in the current budget. The House has passed language validating our contracts. The Senate recently validated them as well, and added \$2.2 million and tuition retention to their version of the bill. It will now be fleshed out between both the House and Senate. Governor Baker will have to agree on the additional money to have this appropriated.

The university has repeatedly told us that it will honor everything negotiated in our contracts except our raises and additional contributions to our health and welfare fund unless supplemental funding is passed by the legislature. It is unclear if the additional \$2.2 million will be enough for the President's Office to finally agree to pay our raises. Most recently, Ellen O'Connor at UMB acknowledged that something has to be done regarding our raises and that they are hoping to resolve this issue before July 1, even if additional money is not provided by the legislature.

Ellen told us that they had expected additional appropriations from the legislature for the raises in our contracts, so instead of paying for our raises out of the \$519 million allocated to the university, which was enough to pay for our raises, they planned to spend the money on other items—hiring new faculty, paying down the debt, and additional financial aid for students. We will continue to work across unions statewide to insist that we receive our negotiated raises. Here are some upcoming events we are organizing to tell the university to pay our raises:

April 1, 3:15 pm. ISC ribbon cutting.

April 8th, 9:00AM, Board of Trustees Meeting, Worcester. Be a silent presence while the unions tell the Trustees to tell the President and Chancellors to pay us our raises.

President's Letter continued on page 7.

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Please send letters to the editor, comments, questions and suggestions to the Faculty Staff Union.

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Union News is a publication of the Faculty Staff Union at UMass Boston.

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Photo credit page 1 and 3: Amy Todd

Photo credit page 6: Gary Zabel

Photo credit page 8: Alison Murray

For past issues of Union News, a list of union officers, information about the union contract and other matters visit the website: www.fsu.umb.edu

Design by Raphael Brickman
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Report from the Non-Tenure Track Faculty Caucus

BY URSULA TAFE, POLITICAL SCIENCE, FSU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The NTT Faculty Caucus is an informal group of dedicated NTT faculty which meets on a monthly basis during the semester. Since its formation, the caucus has been a powerful force in improving the employment and working conditions of NTT faculty at UMass Boston. The caucus has been instrumental in securing union status and related benefits for NTT faculty, educating faculty on their employment rights and responsibilities and showcasing NTT faculty scholarly and artistic achievements. The caucus has also fought for and achieved viable retirement options for NTT faculty and navigated them through the complex maze of ORP to SERS transfer.

Among the regular participants in the caucus are executive committee members, grievance officers, bargaining team members, representative from the CLA Senate and the Master Plan Committee as well as rank-and-file activist members. Caucus members often act as ad hoc liaisons for their respective departments and programs.

In the Fall of 2014, the caucus established working groups on class size and Senior Lecturer promotion. The caucus also served as a forum to update members on the status of contract negotiations and the vote on the Collective Bargaining Agreement by the full FSU membership. This Spring, the caucus has turned its attention to organizing for the fair implementation of the new contract. At our



CAROLINE COSCIA (LEFT, CAUCUS CHAIR AND GRIEVANCE OFFICER, POLITICAL SCIENCE) LISTENS TO TONY VAN DER MEER, AFRICANA STUDIES. (PHOTO CREDIT: AMY TODD.)

February meeting, 22 members of the caucus volunteered to help in the on-going all-union organizing campaign to pressure the administration to fund and implement the contract and to settle a fair contract with the PSU.

Caucus members also had a spirited discussion about the administration's failure to promote NTT during the current period of "contractual limbo." Our next two meetings will turn to strategies for ensuring that NTT promotions not be held in abeyance pending implementation of the new contract.

Especially at this crucial time, NTT faculty, regardless of rank, discipline or union experience, are encouraged to attend caucus meetings and contribute to agendas and organizing efforts. To accommodate our Tuesday/Thursday faculty, the next meeting of the NTT caucus will be held on **Thursday, March, March 26th at 3:30 to 5:00 pm in M - 2- 207**. the next meeting is tentatively scheduled for **Friday April 24th 4:15-5:30 pm**. Please check your email for the exact time and location and draft agenda. ■



NTT FACULTY CAUCUS MEMBERS MEET MONTHLY TO DISCUSS WAYS OF IMPROVING THE EMPLOYMENT AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF NTT FACULTY AT UMASS BOSTON. (PHOTO CREDIT: AMY TODD.)

Get to Know Your Contract: How Bargaining Works

LORENZO NENCIOLI, FSU STAFF

How does our contract become our contract? For some FSU members, this question brings to mind the old adage about laws and sausage: best not to know how either is made. And while the details of the process may be of interest only to the select few members who serve on the bargaining team, there are 3 basic elements that all members should be aware of: bargaining, ratification, and legislative approval of the contract.

Bargaining

The FSU, in conjunction with our sister chapter at Amherst, the Mass. Society of Professors (MSP), chooses members to serve on the bargaining team prior to the expiration of the current contract.¹ Around this time, we begin the process of polling members for bargaining priorities. Once those priorities are established, we begin to formulate proposals and bargaining principles which we then present to the administration.² The administration in turn presents the FSU/MSP with its proposals. Bargaining begins by January 15th and, if all goes well, ends prior to the end of the spring semester. By this time, the parties have reached a tentative agreement on new contract language. The process now continues to the next and most straightforward step.

Ratification

Now that agreement between the union and administration bargaining teams has been reached, the members of the FSU/MSP then have to vote to ratify the new agreement. A vote is conducted and, if the majority of the bargaining unit members voting cast a favorable vote to ratify, the contract becomes official. If a majority of those unit members votes not to ratify the contract then the parties must go back to the bargaining table and renegotiate until the agreement is ratified by a majority of unit members casting a vote.

¹ The MSP and FSU are two chapters of one combined local called the Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC). There is one contract for the combined local that is bargained together.

² 'The Administration' is the Board of Trustees, who are our official employers. However, the Administration bargaining team is typically comprised of representatives from the President's Office as well as administrators from both the Amherst and Boston campuses.

Legislative Approval

Since FSU members are state employees the legislature must vote to allocate state funds needed to underwrite the economic terms paid by the state. This is how it works: the Board of Trustees submits a request to the Governor for funding of the economic parameters of the new contracts ('funding' in this case refers primarily to the negotiated raises). The Governor then submits a proposed bill to the legislature which includes the funding for the contracts. If the bill passes, it goes back to the Governor, who would then sign it into law and disperse the monies to the Board. The Board in turn will fund the negotiated raises.

But what happens if the Governor does not submit the contracts to the legislature for approval or if the legislature votes against funding of the contracts? That's where things get complicated. Technically, if the contracts are not approved (or validated as it is sometimes called) via the legislative process then the state can ask the Board and FSU/MSP to renegotiate the entire contract from scratch. However, many state contracts, including the FSU/MSP contract, have language requiring that the state only has to approve the cost items in the contract (that is, the raises) in order for them to be valid. This means that all elements of the new contract apart from the economic parameters will be valid and in full effect. The raises for the contracts would then have to be approved via a separate appropriations bill. If that happened, the FSU/MSP would have to shift from the contract negotiation process to the political process: union members would have to rally together to push the legislature to approve an appropriations bill for the raises. ■

If you would like to learn more about the contract negotiations process or you have an interest in serving on future contract negotiation teams, please contact the FSU office.



Stay in the loop and up-to-date by 'liking' the FSU on Facebook. To find us, search for Umass Boston Faculty Staff Union.

MTA's Legislative Agenda Reflects New Priorities

INTERVIEW WITH ART MACEWAN, MEMBER, MTA GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE, CONDUCTED BY NEWSLETTER EDITOR JENNIFER C. BERKSHIRE



You're on the MTA's Government Relations Committee, which is emphasizing a new, more grassroots-driven approach to the union's legislative work. Fill us in on the background.

The change reflects what I'd describe as a real desire to get the membership more engaged in the union's activities. While I think that the MTA has been quite democratic, it's very hard to make the democratic processes work with 100,000 people. There's a lot of inertia and a real bias towards getting things done, which means you do them at the top. I don't see it as a corruption of democracy but as a kind of pressure that wasn't fought against hard enough. The new president of the MTA, Barbara Madeloni is very intent on changing that. In the past, the legislative agenda was very much guided from the top. It didn't fully engage members as much as it might have.

Does that mean that members have had more of an opportunity to shape the union's legislative priorities than perhaps they did in the past?

We sent out a call to the membership to ask them: what should the legislative agenda be? We got something like 150 responses, some of which were off the wall. For example, one said we really need to do something about people talking on their cell phones while driving. We also got a lot of concentration on a few important issues. Some we couldn't do anything about, like Social Security provisions. Members were also invited to attend a meeting where they could share suggestions, and individual committee members also held meetings with their constituents. It's my impression that there was much more emphasis on engagement and the soliciting ideas than in the past.

Let's talk specifics. What sorts of issues made it onto this year's agenda?

There are three categories: the schools our children deserve, amplifying and protecting teacher voice, and the wellbeing of our communities—the idea being that education takes place in a context, which is why we're pushing the living wage and the indexing of people's pensions.

It sounds great, but how do you realize an ambitious agenda like that at a time when teachers unions seem to be under assault from all sides? In other words, is this a dream agenda or something that could actually be realized?

There was an issue that kept coming up, which was the extent to which we should focus on the practical vs. the extent to which we should focus on what we want. The two aren't always the same and that causes tension. I think that there was a strong influence of the argument that it's important for us to use the legislative process to lay out what we want. Practical is good—you've got to get what you can. But it's important and desirable to try to push beyond that. I think that in the end we came up with a good combination of both. The living wage bill, for example, really impressed me. There were all sorts of things in the living wage bill that I would never have thought of: a \$15 an hour wage that would cover state employees, contract employees and would be indexed, not just to inflation, but to other rising living costs.

Do you see the legislative agenda as part of larger changes that are in the works?

I think things are changing but that change is slow. There are two measures of success. Getting bills passed and engagement. The goal here is to try to transform the MTA into more of a grassroots lobbying force. The MTA has followed a practice in the past of emphasizing lobbying by professionals vs. the membership. I think that the progress on this isn't going to be "tomorrow you're going to see masses of people down at the statehouse," but there can definitely be some step-by-step changes in engagement. Of course, we face some big political hurdles. Everything that Governor Baker says, he reiterates "no new taxes" pledge. Many of the things we're calling for cost money. Most progressive legislation costs money. ■

Art MacEwan is Professor Emeritus of Economics at UMass Boston and a former president of the FSU.



UMASS EMPLOYEES PARTICIPATE IN THE “CAMPUS ON THE COMMON” EVENT. AS UMass OFFICIALS AND AN ASSORTMENT OF DIGNITARIES COMMEMORATED THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UMass BOSTON CAMPUS, WORKERS CALLED ATTENTION TO CUTS AND GIVE-BACKS BEING DEMANDED OF THEM.

A Year of Organizing, continued from cover

The faculty and professional staff unions held an event they billed as “Coffee with Keith” on March 18th, encouraging members to enjoy donuts—and an explanation from Chancellor Motley (a no show) as to the missing raise money and the status of a still-unsettled contract with the Professional Staff Union.

Weekly actions are planned throughout the spring. For more details, see the President’s Letter along with weekly email blasts from the FSU.

The recent campus protests are only the latest in a year of action by FSU members, events that drew coverage in the *Boston Globe*, the *Lowell Sun* and the *Boston Metro*. In the fall, the FSU, along with sister unions across the UMass system, fought back against the university’s demands for “take-backs,” including caps on sick time and vacation days. Some 30 union activists attended the Board of Trustees meeting, holding signs and wearing stickers that read “UMass Unions United to Protect Our Rights.” Members also presented administrators with petitions bearing the signatures of thousands of UMass faculty and staff. “If you treat people well, they do a better job,” FSU President Marlene Kim told the trust

ees. That’s a message that FSU members will continue to take to UMass administrators regarding faculty and staff raises.

And when UMass officials and an assortment of dignitaries gathered in downtown Boston to commemorate the 50th anniversary of UMass Boston, FSU members were there too. “Campus on the Common” brought more than 100 UMass employees together to call attention to cuts and give-backs being demanded by the same administrators who were touting the school as a place to “realize the American dream.”

FSU member John Hess, senior lecturer in the English department, says that the ‘Year of Organizing’ will continue until university administrators honor the agreement they made. “The Vice Chancellor tried to reassure us that the university is on our side. They want us to go to the legislature for a special appropriation, but that’s a dodge,” says Hess. “Intellectually, we’ve won the argument so far. The question now is ‘what are they going to do?’ And can we pressure them into doing the right thing?”

Five months after FSU members ratified the 2014-2017 contract, it has yet to be funded and implemented. The FSU, in solidarity with other campus unions, continues to pressure the administration to fully fund and implement the agreements that it bargained in good faith on behalf of its members. ■



UMASS BOSTON STUDENTS SHOW THEIR SOLIDARITY WITH FACULTY AND STAFF MEMBERS WHO’VE BEEN PRESSING UMass ADMINISTRATORS TO HONOR THEIR AGREEMENT. (PHOTO CREDIT: GARY ZABEL).

President's Letter, continued from page 2.

Postcards: Sign a postcard to the Trustees to tell them to pay our raises. Contact us if you are willing to sign a postcard and/or distribute them to your department to help in this effort.

Your Health Care Benefits Costs Have Increased

The Group Insurance Commission approved changes that will shift costs for GIC health insurance coverage to subscribers beginning July 1. These changes mean higher out-of-pocket expenses for your health care benefits. Unfortunately, we do not bargain our health care benefits; these are established by this Commission, and it is too late to change these. These higher costs to you have resulted from budget shortfalls largely due to chronic underfunding by the state, as well as increased claim costs. For details see <http://www.mass.gov/anf/docs/gic/pdfs/2015ratesheet.pdf>. Details regarding the percentage change in your specific plan, are available here.

To make matters worse, your cost share of health care premiums will increase unless we stop this...

In his budget, the Governor proposed to increase the share of the premium you pay. The premium splits which apply to current retirees differ depending on the date of retirement in a range from 90/10 to 80/20. Governor Baker proposes that employees who retire after July 1, 2015 contribute 25%, for a split of 75/25.

Stop your share of health care premiums from increasing!

- Attend the MTA lobbying day on Thursday, April 2nd, 9:30 AM at the State House in the Gardner Auditorium to tell legislatures that we oppose these proposed increases, and that with the increases in co-pays and deductibles, these increased premium costs will be a hardship for our families.
- Testify or send testimony on any aspect of the budget, including how state cuts have affected you, including this higher share of premiums for employees, on Monday, April 13 at 11 am at the State House. Testimony is limited to three minutes. If you have any questions contact the FSU office.

Early retirement

Unfortunately, the Governor's early retirement incentives do NOT include higher education employees.

Salary anomalies

Thanks to Zsusa Kaldy and Lusa Lo for serving on the FSU salary anomaly committee. You will be receiving a letter notifying you if you were considered, and if so, if you will receive any back pay. These will be for AY 2011/12 – 2013/14.

2:2 in CLA

The FSU is conducting an evaluation of the 2:2 in the College of Liberal Arts. Contact us if you have comments on how this has worked, suggestions for improvements or changes, or if you want to help us with this evaluation.

Research and Educational Support Funds

You should have received a letter from the Provost informing you how much you have to spend. You must submit reimbursement requests and receipts to your Dean's Office by June 1, 2015 to receive this money.

Academic Analytics

This is a new software program the university will use to compare departments and programs at UMB to other departments and programs nationwide regarding cost, student success, student completion rates, and program success. The Provost has assured the FSU that it will not be used to evaluate faculty, but since these may be used to eliminate or change programs and degrees, faculty should be involved in how it is implemented to assess departments and programs.

ORP to SERS

The state is still processing the paperwork for these, so if you haven't heard anything, don't worry. Information on this process and help in estimating your calculation if you think it is too high is at http://www.massteacher.org/issues_and_action/ongoing_issues/orp.aspx

Elections of FSU Executive Committee Members

Elections will be held this spring, in April. Slots for Non-Tenure Track Faculty, Tenure Track Faculty, Tenured Faculty, as well as the office of Vice President are open. This is a great way to be involved in your union, and it requires meeting once a month during the academic year to make decisions that affect your colleagues. This work counts as university service in your workload. Contact us if you are interested in running.

Interested in Helping Us with Communications?

The FSU is looking for an assistant editor to help with the newsletter. Position comes with a small stipend. Also wanted: members to assist us with social media, writing articles for the newsletter, and to work on all other elements of FSU communication. Let us know if you are interested.

The FSU is now on Twitter! Follow us @FSU_UMB.

Got a problem, question, or want to help on any of these issues? Contact us at fsu@umb.edu ■

Sincerely,

Marlene Kim

FSU President

Economics Department

Marlene.Kim@umb.edu

Join Us!

State Budget Public Hearing

Monday, April 13, 2015 Beginning at 10 a.m. Gardner Auditorium, State House, Boston, MA

We are seeking FSU members willing to testify on the impact of how cuts to the GIC and higher education affect members and the community.

FSU Annual Meeting

The FSU Annual Meeting will be on April 30, 12-2 pm, in the Chancellor's Conference Room, Quinn 3rd floor. We will serve lunch.

MTA Annual Assembly of Delegates 2015

May 8 – 9, Boston, MA

The FSU is seeking volunteers to serve as delegates. For more information contact the FSU.

2015 NEA Annual Meeting and Representative Assembly

June 26 - July 6, Orlando, Florida. If you are interested in attending, please contact the FSU.

MTA 2015 Summer Conference

August 2 - August 6, UMASS Amherst

The MTA will be offering a series of professional and labor related workshops. If you are interested in attending or learning more, please contact the FSU.



MEET THE NEW GRIEVANCE OFFICERS

The FSU has three new non-tenure track faculty grievance officers. **Caroline Coscia**, Lecturer II, Political Science; **Ellen Frank**, Lecturer I, Economics; and **Tracy Wallach**, Lecturer I, Management and Marketing. Congratulations to all and welcome aboard.

For more information about the grievance process, including grievance forms, visit <http://www.fsu.umb.edu/>



CAMPUS UNION MEMBERS PAID A VISIT TO THE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE TO URGE UMASS ADMINISTRATORS TO "KEEP THEIR WORD" AND FUND THE RAISES THAT WERE AGREED TO IN CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS. (PHOTO CREDIT: ALISON MURRAY).