

MSP Board Meeting - February 2, 2022

Board: Marc Liberatore, Eve Weinbaum, Sigrid Schmalzer, Jacquie Kurland, Jenny Adams, Asha Nadkarni, Christine Turner, Jeanne Brunner, Paulina Borrego, Kevin Young, Sandy Litchfield, Prianka, Fareen Parvez, Tristram Seidler, Michael Ash, John Staudenmayer,

Staff: Lori Reardon, Mickey Gallagher

1. **Approval of minutes from previous meeting.** Motion by Jacquie, second by Jennie, approved unanimously.
2. **COVID health and safety.**
 - UMass test pool is coming back 5% positives. We are expecting numbers to rise due to socializing at the beginning of the semester.
 - What is required to accommodate students who aren't in class? Instructors are not required to redo curriculum for students who can't come to class, but we also don't want to incentivize students to come to class when they are sick. We can't require sick notes, but if students don't want to come to class because they don't feel safe (rather than because they are sick) they should request an accommodation. If instructors are being pushed to do multi-modal (i.e., making the course fully accessible for students who can't (or don't want to) come to class, let us know.
 - There is definitely a divide among members (and students) about health and safety issues; some feel we should back off of all mandates (masks, testing, etc.), while others are still worried about young children, immunocompromised family members, or their own health issues.
3. **Bargaining.** Seems never-ending! Over break we continued to bargain, found some areas for agreement, but there are lots of issues still to be resolved.
 - There are still a number of financial aspects of the contract that are unresolved, particularly the addition of merit pay, and an increase in the equity pool to address pay inequities (\$200,000 current amount is not enough.) We are pushing for increases in \$\$ for child and elder care. We also, of course, want raises to be retroactive.
 - Administration has put forward three "top priority" proposals. 1. Increasing time to continuing contracts for NTT faculty (from three to four years), and a more onerous (almost mini-tenure) review process; 2. Move period of responsibility back into August, and waive our right to ever negotiate the academic calendar. 3. They have resurrected the proposal to make all faculty mandatory reporters under Title IX. We are going to have to have this one fight again.
 - There are some areas with movement towards alignment, including specifying workload in bylaws, that clinical hours should count teaching load, mid-career fellowships should be expanded to support associate professors, pre- and post- hire opportunities for new faculty to talk with MSP about hiring packages, etc, prestigious fellowships should be

topped off if they don't cover full salary, and fixing the parking advisory committee, which is very administrator heavy right now.

- There are still a lot of questions about UWW and online teaching/learning. We are waiting for FLIC (Flexible Learning and Instruction Committee) report.
- Upcoming dates for bargaining are being arranged, right now their schedule showed not being able to meet until April, so they are going back to the drawing board.
- Staff unions are getting very close to settling. People just want their raises.

4. **The transition to a new Provost** is going to be a significant change for us.

5. **Move to change AFR/ALR.** This is not an agreement coming from the bargaining table. Instead, the Provost formed a committee to look at this issue. Marc was on the committee, which was chaired by Michelle Budig.

- The committee members were divided about the best approach; these different approaches can be summarized by "burn it down" and have a simpler solution vs. expanding the process "more, more, more". The faculty/librarian survey about the AFR/ALR had a huge response. Basically nobody likes the AFR/ALR. People do so many different things, it's really hard to fit things into the current categories. Faculty do see a connection between the energy they spend on the AFR and merit, but since we haven't received merit in years, making the difficult process more frustrating.
- It seems that the ALR could be fixed by some relatively easy to implement revisions. Our view is that this must be bargained, and we would like to see the process made much simpler, such as a 1-2 page summary of the year, plus an updated CV.

6. **Concerns about Moodle and Blackboard, including "Preview Week".**

- For UWW courses, a week before classes starts students have access to their Blackboard course websites. For University courses, Moodle it has been made available the day before classes start. Now the idea is that University course websites will also be available a week before. Many faculty are not aware that their courses are being automatically opened, giving students a look at the sausage being made.
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- Athletics academic advisors have been granted access to Moodle without any contact with instructors. They can see grades, and what the instructor has given in the way of feedback in addition to the syllabus. As of next year, faculty can opt in or out of granting access to these observers.

7. **Computer replacement fund.** This year many people were denied computer replacement funds with vague messages. Approximately 200 requests were granted, with many denied. Colleges are now depending on Chancellor funds in order to replace computers, rather than the MSP/Chancellor funds being seen as supplemental. People need to have functional equipment to do their jobs, but administration and departments are fighting over who should be paying for computer upgrades. One problem we are aware of is what happens if your computer dies mid-way through the replacement term.

8. **Department visit signups.** Please sign up!
9. **Emily is on family leave**, so Lori will be super busy! There will be a meal train coming from Eve.
10. **MSP reps are needed for Faculty Senate councils/committees** including Academic Priorities, Campus Physical Planning Council, Program and Budget Council, Status of Diversity, Status of Women Council. Let us know if you are interested in serving on these committees, or know someone who would be interested.
11. **New members** - how do we encourage new folks to join MSP. The virtual employee orientations have not worked to connect with new folks. So how are we going to reach these folks? We need to get people connected to the union.