

MSP Executive Board (with Department Representatives)

October 21, 2020

Board. Marc Liberatore, Kate Hudson, Eve Weinbaum, Steve Brewer, Christine Turner, Michael Ash, Clare Hammonds, Jen Adams, Kevin A. Young, John Staudenmayer, Paulina Borrego, Prinaka Srivastava, Jeanne Brunner, Dean Robinson, Maciej Ciesielski, Jeremy Smith, Sigrid Schmalzer, Fareen Parvez, Caleb Rounds

Reps. Joshua Michal, Om Prakash Dhankher, Pablo Visconti, Louise Antony, Luke Bouvier, Luis Marentes, Laura Ciolkowski, Jacquie Kurland, Carolina Aragon, Ezra Markowitz, Toussaint Losier, John Hosp, Heidi Bauer-Clapp, Bradley Baker, Deborah Keisch, Neal Katz, Yi Feng, Lorraine Cordiero, Adena Calder, Karen Kurczynski, Laura Attanasio,, Shelly Peyton, Rodrigo Zamith, Steve Eyles, Christine Hatch, Jasmine Kerrissey, Kevin L. Young, Tom Roeper

Staff. Lori Reardon, Emily Steelhammer, Mickey Gallagher, Heather LaPenn

Approval of minutes from 10/7/2020. Maciej Ciesielski made motion, Seconded by Christine Turner. Approved unanimously.

Updates

AFRs. Last meeting's last question was about AFRs: we talked with provost and the deadline to submit them has been postponed until the end of December. The deadline extension email went to deans but maybe wasn't forwarded as a number of people didn't receive the notice.

UMass Budget. Good news from the state legislature last week - level funding continues until December 1. Governor's proposal last week ("revised house 2") increases our budget compared to last year by about \$2.5M (compare with chancellor's budget which has a \$37M cut). State balanced budget by CARES, reserves, etc. \$39M more for campus than chancellor had predicted. Still working on advocacy with the legislature, most things are level funded. Unions have met with more than 50 legislators, including hearing of higher ed committee. Swamy was at the Faculty Senate on Thursday, still sounding dire warnings.

State Legislature Races. Advocacy happening in state races. MSP is part of WMALF, we had a town hall last night, Eve talked about higher ed (as did candidates). There is the chance to elect some really good folks, including Jake Oliveira in Belchertown/Ludlow who was a Phenom intern a number of years ago.

MTA phone banking for Biden/Harris campaign. Talking to educators in other states. We'll send an all-unit for more information on how to participate.

Spring Planning

- Chairs asked to submit courses that need to be taught face-to-face. There are about 100 more courses on this list than in the fall, which we've been told means about 2,000 more students. First years invited back. 40-60% capacity for res halls. At least one F2F course for each first year student.
- Testing seems to be going well. Concern that faculty aren't being informed if a student is in their class who tested positive (due to FERPA). Could students sign a waiver that would allow faculty to be notified if one of their students tests positive?
- Is there a requirement for self-quarantine? And how is that being enforced? We're also hearing that students aren't showing up for testing and it's unclear how this is being tracked. Carol Barr said that she's been personally calling students to tell them that they need to get tested. Can we make it easier to get tested? It's a haul to get to the Mullins Center. Some large universities are testing waste water from dorms to identify hot spots. Can there be testing offered at apartment complexes? (Baby Berk COVID).
- How many courses would be needed if all first year students need to have at least one F2F course? Seems like a lot...
- Pressure for more junior lecturers to say yes to teaching F2F.
- Are international students included in the plan for spring?

Coordination with Staff Unions

- The staff unions are filing charges with the State Dept of Labor. Extremely upset by the process of furloughs, especially the long-term furloughs and cuts in the hours. There are five hundred 03 workers still employed on campus, while other folks are being furloughed.
- In academic affairs there have been a number of departments who wanted to rehire a staff member using RFT or gift \$\$\$. Administration first said it wasn't possible because the unions wouldn't allow it. Then they said it wasn't "fair" in an environment of "shared sacrifice" if some people were allowed to come back. WGSS was successful in reversing cut in hours to their staff member by making the case that work of the staff member was essential.
- Conversations among unions is about how to better collaborate - unions are concerned that there will be more cuts/threats. Three topics:
- A "Bring Them Back" campaign - to bring back everyone furloughed or had their hours cut by January 1, no more layoffs, no more furloughs. Would be aimed at administration, but also legislature, and the UMass system.
- Green New Deal - investments in sustainability to reduce emissions. Public messaging campaign around UMass Green New Deal. Lots of good jobs, UMass could be a model.
- Mutual Aid - want to make this public as we begin handing out support in order to shame the administration. There is over \$25,000 in the fund. We're focusing on grocery store gift cards because cash is hard to distribute. Some faculty are targeting their gifts to be dispersed to staff in their own departments. We are asking people to donate to the MSP fund as it can provide assistance to staff outside of academic units who are the hardest hit.

Reports Back from Department Meetings

- Concerns about faculty being urged to discuss mental health with their students
- Faculty frustrated that it doesn't seem like faculty have had much input in the changes to the academic calendar.
- Concerned that there are departments where a number of faculty didn't put in for workload adjustments.
- Also hearing that faculty didn't put in for them because of the context of furloughs and not wanting to put their departments in jeopardy by requesting too many workload adjustments
- Delays to grant award processing

Report from Western Mass Area Labor Federation

Kevin Young - we are part of WMALF. Passed resolution calling on unions to prepare for Republicans and Trump refusing to recognize vote results. Ways unions could be involved. To prepare for and enact a general strike to ensure a constitutionally mandated peaceful transition of power. Contact Kevin kayoung@umass.edu if you're interested in discussing more. Recent article writing by Barbara Madeloni

<https://www.labornotes.org/2020/10/unions-are-beginning-talk-about-staving-possible-coup>

Membership Meeting Planning

- 10/29 at Noon. Ideas for format for Membership Meeting (topics, speakers, etc.)