

MSP Chronicle

The Massachusetts Society of Professors | Representing Faculty & Librarians on the UMass Amherst Campus



From the President's Desk

By Eve Weinbaum, MSP President

What a busy semester! The MSP office is always hectic, but this semester we seemed to be doing even more: workshops, trainings, committee meetings, bargaining preparation, troubleshooting, problem solving, grievance handling... Your MSP officers, board members, and staff are working hard for faculty and librarians. Special thanks to our outstanding staff: Lori Reardon, Emily Steelhammer (on leave), Liam Gude, Alisa Brewer, Heather LaPenn, and Mickey Gallagher. Thanks also to our new bargaining team: Asha Nadkarni, Kate Zdepski, Marc Liberatore, and Jacquie Kurland. They are a terrific group and we are all looking forward to winning an excellent contract together next semester.

The fall semester ended auspiciously: we concluded our first contract negotiations session for the 2020-2023 agreement, with a solid set of ground rules and a good plan for the next few months. Our current contract ends on June 30, and our goal is to finalize the new agreement before that expiration date. Based on many conversations with our MSP leaders and members, we have identified a long list of key priorities. Our Executive Board has created five Bargaining Support Committees – the support committees are charged to discuss their issue, do some preliminary research, learn about what our peer institutions are doing, think

about our bargaining principles on the issue, and to help mobilize support, including arranging member testimony at negotiations when that becomes necessary. Our Bargaining Support Committees are:

- *Online education* – Kate Hudson and Steve Brewer, co-chairs
- *Climate justice and sustainability* – Madeleine Charney, chair
- *Racial and gender equity* – Joya Misra, chair
- *Holistic teaching evaluation* – David Gross, chair
- *Teaching professor track* – Marc Liberatore, chair

Please let us know if you'd like to join any of these committees in progress – we are always looking for more participants to share the work and to contribute your good ideas.

In addition to these more complex issues that require a committee effort, we have a comprehensive list based on the priorities we heard from members, including: merit pay to cover 2017-20 as well as 2020-23, improved dental/vision/hearing benefits, non-tenure-track faculty workloads, librarian



SAVE
the
DATE

Higher Ed: Powered Up 2020
January 10 & 11, 2020
Springfield Sheraton Hotel
(See article on p. 6 for information)

Promotion to Full Professor
Workshops
February 2 & 3, noon-1:30 pm
162-175 Campus Center

PMYR Workshop
March 2, noon-1:30 pm
904-908 Campus Center

Have an upcoming event enhancing MSP's mission you would like MSP to announce? Contact the MSP office at: msp@umass.edu (413) 545-2206

working conditions, and more. All of these will be in our proposals at the bargaining table this coming semester.

As we have heard the issues our members have brought forward, the underlying problems have become even more clear. State funding for public higher education has been cut by 31 percent per student since 2001. We are all doing more work with fewer resources. As a result, the administration has expanded the student body while hiring fewer tenure-system faculty – and we all suffer from the expanded workload of teaching, advising, committee work,

(continued on p. 5)

Carrying Forward Dan Clawson's Powerful Legacy

By Sigrid Schmalzer, Professor, History Department

In the last days of his life, Dan Clawson was doing all the things we depended on him to do. He was organizing at the annual MTA convention, campaigning for EDU (Educators for a Democratic Union), and mobilizing UMass faculty to defend academic freedom. His unexpected death on May 7 dealt a terrible blow that we continue to feel, especially when the organizing gets hard.

On October 13 of this year, MSP members gathered with Dan's family, comrades, colleagues, students, and at least one of his teachers for a public memorial. It was a chance to remember Dan through stories and photographs. It was also a chance to remember that we still have one another—and to discover the breadth and strength of the community that Dan helped build.

We heard from a former student who said with the greatest sincerity that Dan had saved her life. We heard from a former teacher who asks his "inner Dan" for advice and from a faculty member in Sociology who testified that she and department colleagues ask "WWDD" when facing a difficult challenge. We heard from a K-12 teacher recruited into EDU by Dan over lunch; looking at all the red EDU shirts out there, she marvels, "Dan had sooo many lunches."

Dan's daughter, Laura, underscored that all of the traits we loved about Dan

as a scholar, a teacher, and an activist were even more present in his family relationships: "You're right about who he was, and that was the person he was down to his core."

Do more, do better.

Dan was fierce in his pursuit of justice and deeply kind in caring for people. As former colleague Deirdre Royster recalled, "Dan was with me when we decided to create a Labor section in Sociology, but only if we were going to use some of our time and resources to do some protesting beside workers... We were going to do it if that was going to be *how* we were going to do it." She thinks of Dan "as a scholar who was part of an underground railroad of sorts, because there are so many people whose careers he helped and whose ideas he nurtured."

Former MSP president and current MTA vice-president Max Page also emphasized the way Dan nurtured activists to grow the movement: "He loved his squad in EDU, even as he warned, incessantly, that we always expand the

circle... If you are one of the people in the room right now thinking, 'But *I* was the one who was really close to Dan, the one he was super invested in, his *real* collaborator,' you would all be right." Former MTA president Barbara Madeloni explained, "We love each other because of how he brought us in... with persistence and love and a sense of what is possible when we care for each other."

In her closing remarks, Dan's wife, Mary Ann, shared an insight that should inspire those left to follow in Dan's footsteps. "The growth of his ability to reach out to people, to include them in struggle, to infuse them with purpose, to give them ways to act collectively in the service of their own best impulses"—all this had developed over the course of decades. He "couldn't have done this twenty years ago." Twenty years from now, none of us will be Dan Clawson, but if we grow as he did, we will be able to carry forward his legacy.

When Dan died, Mary Ann asked Laura, "What do we do?" Laura replied, "Do more, do better." Mary Ann, Laura, Dan: We will.

Thanks to Sut Jhally, an edited video of the memorial service is available here: <https://vimeo.com/user7937926/review/367934595/a58f1b16of>. ■



Dan at the center of a campaign, as usual, at the 2018 MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates.

Member Profile: Lisa Modenos, University Without Walls

Chronicle: Tell me about your path to UMass.

Lisa Modenos: I came here 20 years ago this fall for grad school. I was a bright-eyed, terrified grad student, non-traditional in a million ways, a high school dropout, a first generation adult student who unexpectedly ended up loving college. I had a mentor who was spectacular and said “you should go to grad school” and I said “okay”. After I earned my PhD in Anthropology I worked at various places for a few years and then found myself here at UWW. Before UWW I pieced together adjunct jobs here at UMass, Mount Holyoke, Skidmore College, Assumption College, and Holyoke Community College. It was a tough life to have to piece together. The worst was one semester where I taught at UMass, Assumption and HCC teaching Intro to Cultural Anthropology at all three, while still working at a restaurant on the weekends.

C: Tell me about what you do here as a faculty member.

LM: I am a faculty advisor at UWW. All the core faculty here at UWW are lecturers and we also advise our students. We have a very specific model for teaching and advising that includes faculty advisors as well as professional academic advisors. I teach our core UWW courses which are geared towards adult learners who have returned to college. They each have individualized degree plans, and advisors help them through the system and help them figure out next steps. I also teach a junior-year writing course in which students write a portfolio based on their experience. We assess it for college level credits. UWW is awesome in a lot of ways but especially we give credit for lived experience.

C: Is all of your teaching online or is some of it face-to-face?

LM: We teach 100% online. We also offer some blended classes which are still 100% online but the faculty will also hold classroom sessions once or twice a month for those students who still need the face-to-face experience.

C: What about advising, is that face-to-face or online?

LM: A lot of it is virtual. We use Zoom conferencing, the phone, email and also face-to-face advising if folks are close enough to us. We have students across the globe – I’ve gotten up at five in the morning to talk with someone. That said, most of the advising is via email. We individualize each student’s degree plan after reviewing their transcripts and their lived experiences. These are mostly adult learners who have jobs and lives and families and heavy responsibilities, so it’s also a lot of personalizing the learning experience and talking them through stuff. Almost half of our students are first generation. Many tried college back in the day and it didn’t work, and a lot of them carry with them the internalized baggage that they failed. But it’s not their failure. It’s the failure of the larger system and it didn’t work for them. For that reason we



do a lot of personalized proactive advising, and we are proud to tell them that this time the timing is right.

C: What is your vision for UWW?

LM: The vision for UWW is to maintain its legacy and keep doing what we’ve always done since 1971. UWW started in 1971 as an experiment to give access to education to folks who might not typically have access. Specifically it was designed for working adults, giving them credit for the knowledge that they gained in life. That is the “Without Walls” part: integrating that knowledge from their experience outside of the walls of academia, incorporating it into their degree credit. We want to maintain what we have always done. We have rolled with the punches over years of changes and shifts, and we are proud to say that we have always remained student-centered and student focused. We follow our students’ lead – and evolve accordingly, but our changes are always with their educational and personal needs in mind. UWW has followed what our students needed and our graduation rates prove that the pedagogy and the advising models work.

C: Given your heavy use of online instruction and advising, would you say that UWW provides a model that the University or other institutions could use as a template going forward?

LM: UWW is the adult degree completion program for this campus and has been since 1971. We have our own pedagogy, philosophy, and mission statement that are not just about access to education but also success, especially for adult and non-traditional learners. We happen now to be a hundred percent online, so a lot of folks think that UWW is the online program, but it’s so much more nuanced than that. So we could be a model if “online” incorporates the infrastructure, the mission, and the support for our students that UWW has offered and continues to offer.

(continued on p.4)

Launching an MSP Retiree Member Program

By Emily Steelhammer, MSP Staff

The MSP and some of its recently retired members launched an MSP retiree membership program this semester. Faculty and librarian retirees have come together out of the desire to help the MSP continue its longstanding work to enhance public education while also staying engaged with the union, the UMass community and each other. The group, which has over two dozen members so far and well over several centuries worth of retired faculty experience, includes those who retired last year back to those who retired in the 1990s.



Some of the MSP retirees who recently met for lunch and planning.

Members include some of the original founders of the MSP, who, at the first two retiree member meetings, recounted their experiences of the fight to organize and form the MSP in 1976. They told stories about knocking on the office doors of fellow faculty members to talk to them about the importance of a union and disrupting Whitmore to get the administration's attention. It is a direct result of the organizing of these retired founders that our faculty and librarians enjoy many of the benefits they have today! After hearing these incredible stories, the group decided that an oral history project was needed so that we can

collectively remember all of the great gains that MSP has made over the years and how we got there.

In addition to an oral history project, there were many other ways that retiree members were interested in being engaged. Many retirees who were MSP activists wanted to continue their work in lobbying both for public education and for improved retiree benefits. The group was also interested to hear that MSP will be starting bargaining for a successor contract and some volunteered to help with bargaining support.

Another project the MSP retirees are undertaking is working with the Retired Faculty Association to provide a workshop and resources for current faculty to help ease the transition to retirement. We want to hear from you - what things would you like to know as you approach retirement? Are there certain topics (benefits, social life, emotional effects, etc.) that you think would be especially useful for us to cover? Please send your suggestions to: msp@umass.edu. ■

(Lisa Modenos, continued)

C: Tell me a little bit about your involvement with MSP and MTA.

LM: I am in solidarity with both MSP and MTA, but outside of paying my dues I haven't really participated much. I very much support everything they do and I'm grateful for what they have done for us.

C: Were you involved with other unions before you joined MSP?

LM: I grew up in a big, fat extended family of working class immigrants in New York City. Everyone was blue collar or pink collar. My mother was a receptionist; no one was in a union. I dropped out of high school at 16 and worked retail for almost a decade before I decided to go to college. (A little shout out to remind everyone to be kind to retail workers this holiday season because it is no joke working retail this time of year.) As a bright-eyed, bushy-tailed, terrified grad student, as soon as I got a Taship, I joined GEO. For the first time in

my life I had dental insurance. I actually called my mother and told her "I have dental insurance!" I remember thinking that this is the most spectacular thing in the world – there are these people who already did something, all this work for me, and I just show up and benefit from it all! They're going to take care of me. That was my first ever experience with a union and I was so unbelievably grateful for it!

C: To your mind, what are the most important aspects of MSP as far as you're concerned?

LM: What I appreciate is that MSP maintains the perspective of what's important for faculty amidst all the back-and-forth that they do with the administration. MSP still understands what it means to be faculty and the importance of teaching. I really appreciate the willingness, the energy and the steadfastness to keep up the fight on our behalf and ultimately on behalf of our students. ■

Toward a Less Regressive MTA Dues Structure

By Dave Gross, Emeritus Professor, Biochemistry & Molecular Biology

At the 2018 MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates, I moved a New Business Item (NBI) to change MTA's dues structure from a flat fee as we have now to one that is less regressive. The NBI was amended slightly and was approved. The NBI says that it moved "That the MTA Board of Directors establish a committee composed of MTA members to design a more progressive, revenue-neutral dues structure for the MTA and its locals. The committee shall have no fewer than five or more than **nine** members of whom a majority shall not be members of the Board of Directors or the Executive Board. There shall be representation on the committee from full- and part-time members, ESPs, **PreK-12** members, and Higher Education members. The committee shall produce a proposal no later than **December 31, 2018** to be voted upon at the 2019 Annual Meeting of Delegates." (Bold type shows the amended portions.)

An MTA task force was formed in October 2018, chaired by me and Annetta Argyres, the President of the UMass Boston Professional Staff Union. We did not succeed in producing a proposal by the end of 2018, but we have since made some progress in preparation for the 2020 Annual Meeting of Delegates.

Two MTA Bylaws changes will likely be proposed for delegates to the 2020 Annual Meeting to consider. One addresses a problem mostly found in the Higher Ed locals: new members who join off cycle during a quarter now pay full dues even if they don't become members at the start of a fiscal cycle. Also, the MTA fiscal quarters follow NEA fiscal quarters, and these "quarters" are uneven in size (that is, they aren't all 3-month chunks). We plan to regularize the quarter system which will help to address some of this problem and also to set the start of the quarters to more closely match the common start times for K-12 as well as higher ed. We also will include language that will start the dues assess-

ment when a new member enrolls in the union as opposed to the current language that sets first dues being owed at the start of employment.

The second Bylaws change will address current language that fixes the dollar amount for dues for full- and part-time members based on their employment status (that is, teachers are treated differently than educational support professionals, etc.) MTA Legal has determined that the current wording of the Bylaws sets the required dues levy for each individual, and that any other dues amount cannot be collected from the individual. The goal of the second Bylaws change will be to allow, but not require, MTA locals like MSP to charge variable dues amounts to individual members so long as the total collective MTA dues amount remitted by the local equals the amount that would be owed if the flat rate approved by Annual Meeting was assessed. That will allow locals, if they choose, to charge less to members who are on the lower end of the pay scale and to charge more to those on the higher end of the pay scale. The precise way in which a local chooses to do that is up to the local.

The Dues Task Force plans to continue working on a major Bylaws overhaul that would result in a much simpler, less regressive dues structure than what we have now. One possible solution would be to remove all language differentiating full- and part-time positions and employment status, replacing it with language that assesses dues based on members' salaries. It turns out that only one other state association, the Michigan Education Association, assesses its dues based on individual salaries. All other state associations assess a flat dues rate. Such a substantial Bylaws change will require considerable research and vetting by the MTA staff, MTA legal, and the task force before such Bylaws changes can be brought forward to Annual Meeting. ■

(President's Desk, continued)

and service that results from reduced resources. One of our most important demands this year will be to reverse the trend toward contingent faculty and part-timers, and instead to hire significantly more tenure-system faculty and full-time librarians over the next three years. We will need everyone's participation as we mobilize to insist on excellence in education and the faculty-student ratios that our students deserve.

At our MSP General Assembly this

month, our special guest was State Representative Mindy Domb. As a member of the Joint Committee on Higher Education, Representative Domb is well aware of the impact of under-funding of the education sector and the urgent need for more resources for UMass. We discussed student debt, the need for building repair and renovations, support for capital investments, equity for adjuncts, health insurance and the GIC waiting period, and the ridiculously

convoluted process for funding our collective bargaining agreements. Representative Domb shared strategic advice for advocacy around these issues and pledged to work with the MSP on our legislative agenda. We appreciate her leadership and look forward to working together with her and her staff this spring!

In the meantime, we are all ready for a very well-deserved break. Enjoy your holiday season and I wish you a 2020 full of peace, joy, and justice. ■

Higher Education: Powered Up 2020

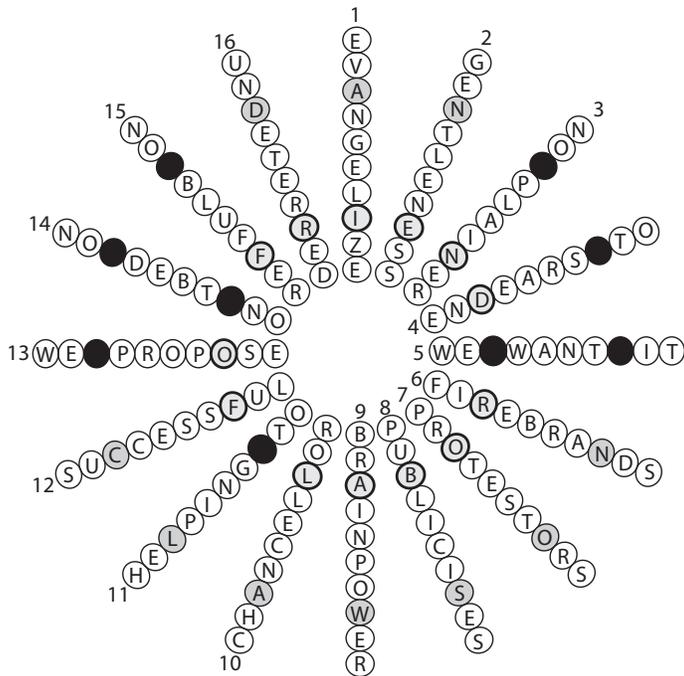
On Friday, Jan. 10, MTA members can attend Higher Education: Powered Up 2020, which will focus on creating a successful campaign strategy around public higher education issues. This conference will give higher education locals the opportunity to join forces with other unions that represent classified and professional staff, faculty, librarians, grant-funded workers, and graduate and postdoctoral student employees. Together, members of the MTA, AFT, AFSCME, SEIU, UAW and other unions, as well as student organizations and allies, will hold discussions and workshops related to the Cherish Act, contract bargaining and comprehensive campaigns, as well as critical issues in higher education, including early college enrollment, privatization, full-time employment, the impacts of increased online education, student debt and the austerity narrative. The dinner program will also include a keynote by Caitlin Zaloom, author of *Indebted*.

On the following day, Saturday, Jan. 11, members can participate in a wide variety of workshops related to the



core activities of unions at the Union Skills Winter Conference. Offerings center on the next steps in the Fund Our Future campaign, including the Cherish Act, negotiations, contract enforcement and organizing, communications, employee rights, current issues, professional matters and more, including a number of workshops specific to higher education members.

The venue for this conference is the Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place hotel. For more information and to register, visit the Events and Conferences [link](#) at the MTA website. ■



Partial List of Mackinac Center Non-Profit Funders, 1993-2011

Foundation	Amount Don	Years
Aequus Foundation	\$4,500	1-2010 ⁽¹⁾
Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation	\$	1-2010 ⁽¹⁾
Beach Foundation	\$	1-2010 ⁽¹⁾
Bradley Foundation, Lynde and Harry	\$1,096,000	8-2015
Brandon Foundation, David A.	\$	2001-2010 ⁽¹⁾
Bretzlaff Foundation, Hilda E.	\$1,000	2001-2010 ⁽¹⁾
Broad Foundation, Eli & Edythe	\$27,500	2001-2010 ⁽¹⁾
Castle Rock Foundation	\$	2003-2011 ⁽⁷⁾
Charles G. Koch Foundation	\$	2005-2009
Chase Foundation of Virginia	\$	2005-2009 ⁽⁷⁾
DaimlerChrysler Corporation Fund	\$	2001-2010 ⁽¹⁾
Dart Foundation	\$	2001-2010 ⁽¹⁾
DeVos Foundation, Daniel and Pamela	\$85,000	2001-2010 ⁽¹⁾
DeVos Foundation, Dick & Betsy	\$175,000	2001-2010 ⁽¹⁾
DeVos Foundation, Douglas & Maria	\$120,000	1995-2010 ⁽⁷⁾
DeVos Foundation, Richard and Helen	\$180,000	2001-2010 ⁽¹⁾
Doherty Foundation, William H.	\$205,000	1998-2011 ⁽⁷⁾
Donors Capital Fund	[\$3,203,500 @]	1998-2010 ⁽⁷⁾
DonorsTrust	\$7,600	2007-2013 ⁽⁷⁾
Dow Foundation, Herbert H. and Grace A.	\$3,215,000	2004-2010 ⁽⁷⁾

THESE ARE THE PEOPLE EMAILING TEACHERS TO SAY "QUIT THE UNION"

THESE ARE THE PEOPLE FUNDING THEM

ANY QUESTIONS?

Since the Janus decision, you may have gotten an email from an organization called MyPayMySay asking you to quit the union. As the email shows, this organization is funded by the Mackinac Center from Michigan.

Who funds the Mackinac Center? That's right — Betsy DeVos and her family. Have a look..

THE MSP PUZZLE

I guess that the Danagram puzzle from the previous issue was just too difficult. There were no entries and thus no winner. The solution is shown above, and you can see that the grayed circles say "DAN CLAWSON FRIEND OF LABOR".

This month your task is to decode the cryptquote below. Letters in the original quote have been replaced by code letters, for example "a" could represent "b" and "m" could represent "s". The first reader to submit the correctly decoded quote and the author's name by January 31, 2020 will win a UMass dining coupon. Your hint is that the quote references the labor movement. Send your entry to MSPpuzzle@gmail.com. Open to MSP members. Decision of the judge is final. You can't win unless you enter!

"Zrto h who etbbk daj erhe rt vae spur ersajvr rhsg zasc, hkc rpw: 'Zrakt?'" ~ Gao Whsfjpk



MSP members at the Red For Ed Day rally for public education in Springfield on May 17, 2019. That's the school bus that brought members to the rally.

MSP in Action



PreK-12 and Higher Ed MTA members rallying at the Red For Ed Day on May 17, 2019 in Springfield.



The Hall of Flags at the Massachusetts State House during Higher Ed Advocacy Day, March 21, 2019. MSP and MTA participants breaking for lunch.



The chow line at the MSP General Assembly, December 11, 2018.

Photo credits this issue include Eric Berlin, Steve Brewer, Dave Gross, Lori Reardon, the MTA web site and the UWW web site.

Text for the Higher Ed: Powered Up 2020 article from the MTA web site.



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