

Candidates for 2017/2018 FSU Executive Committee

The following individuals have submitted the required paperwork to be a candidate for a position on the FSU Executive Committee. Below is the candidate, their title and 150 word statement.

Vice President (vote for one)

John Hess (candidate for re-election), Sr. Lecturer II in American Studies and English Depts.

Two years ago I was elected to help solve some problems surrounding our contract negotiations, to bring clarity instead of confusion, stability instead of uncertainty by working closely with our President Marlene Kim, our Executive Committee, and the membership. To continue that work I have decided to run for reelection.

Now we have begun bargaining our new contract, but this time in very different and more threatening conditions. The deficit plaguing the university has changed everything, and it will take additional steadiness, vision, and a kind of wisdom drawn from experience to see the FSU through this difficult time. I hope to help provide those much needed qualities as best I can, continuing to work closely with Marlene, the Ex Comm, and the membership to strengthen, grow, and guide us as we move into this brave new world. I hope you will once more put your trust in me. Thanks.

Tenured Faculty (vote for two)

Karen Suyemoto (candidate for re-election), Professor in the Psychology Department.

I have served on the FSU Executive Committee for one term and am seeking re-election to advance the goals of union members and maintain the strength of the unique educational experience at UMass Boston. Higher education will be facing more intense challenges in the coming years, related to maintaining academic freedom, valuing teaching and students, protecting health and retirement benefits, and maintaining unity and equity for all union members across status and experience. I have past experiences with service and organizational leadership within the FSU, the University and in regional and national organizations, including as Chair of various committees, as co-Director of the New England Center for Inclusive Teaching, and as President of the national Asian American Psychological Association. I'm excited about to continue to bring the organizational, relational, and advocacy skills I have developed through these positions to union organization, representation, and advocacy to serve FSU members.

Steve Striffler, Professor in the Anthropology Department

I am running for a position on the Executive Committee of the FSU because I believe we are at a particularly critical moment in the history of UMass Boston, higher education, and the United States. The public sector - and particularly publicly-funded education -- is under attack. Strong unions remain the most significant opposition to this assault. I hope to contribute to a union that will communicate with and mobilize its members; advocate for higher education, the public sector, and working people at the state level; and negotiate the best possible contract for its members. I am the Director of the Labor Resource Center and Labor Studies program, a Professor of Anthropology, have held leadership positions in two unions, and cofounded a Workers' Center. My research and writing focus on labor in Latin America and the United States

Pre-Tenure Faculty (vote for one)

Joseph Brown is an Assistant Professor in the Political Science Department

I am eager to serve on the Executive Committee as a way of building community and collective strength among faculty and staff at UMass Boston. It was a pleasure traveling with the union to the UMass board of trustees meeting in Worcester last summer, and testifying on behalf of pre-tenure faculty at bargaining hearings regarding the proposed junior sabbatical. I realize the power and dignity that an effective union provides. I know how important this union is to the UMass Boston community. I can offer my energy, creativity, and a bit of game theory to the FSU if elected to the Executive Committee. I am eager to give back, and to help us achieve the good outcomes we deserve for ourselves and our community

Jason Rodriquez is an Assistant Professor in the Sociology Department.

I am running for this position because I want to represent the interests of pre-tenure faculty members at UMass Boston. I believe the union can do more to reach out and support its pre-tenure faculty. I also believe our work environment and resources can be better, but we need to build a stronger base of support across campus to make it happen. For example, we should have a semester paid research leave prior to tenure review written into our contract. An effective union is critically important – not just for the faculty but also for our students – as we navigate the unfolding budget crisis and the politically uncertain years ahead. My previous experience as a union member has prepared me for this position. As a doctoral candidate at UMass Amherst, I served on the Steering Committee and the Bargaining Committee of the Graduate Employee Organization UAW 2322.

Non-Tenure Track Faculty (vote for two)

Kathryn Kogan (candidate for re-election), is a Senior Lecturer II in the Psychology Department.

I am asking for your vote as I run for re-election for a non tenure-track slot on the FSU Executive Committee. I feel my long service on this committee enables me to bring considerable knowledge and understanding of important issues facing our union and our university, and to strategize creatively and effectively. Our union, along with unions across the country, will be facing intense challenges moving forward. To respond to these we will need to continue to strengthen the bonds with our membership. If re-elected I will continue to work hard to outreach on behalf of the union and to strengthen transparency and communication with our members. I will also continue to assist in guiding our bargaining team to achieve gains for non tenure-track faculty.

Peggy Walsh (candidate for re-election) is a Senior Lecturer II in the English Department.

I want to continue fighting for our rights and benefits. I am committed to enactment of the "Fair Share" tax reform bill (the "Millionaire's Tax"). Much of what we need (as teachers, parents, consumers of health care services, and future retirees) simply cannot happen unless the State brings in more revenue.

I believe that we must resist the creeping increases of co-pays for health services, and increases in our percentage of our health insurance premiums. The health insurance issue is especially hard on those of us who have retired, but it affects us all. The threat of further non-negotiated cost increases in what was traditionally considered a stable benefit for low-paid government service creates more anxiety at a time when we already have plenty to worry about.

In unity with all you faithful union members who make the phone calls, sign the petitions -making it happen.

Joseph Ramsey is a Lecturer in the American Studies and English Departments.

As a full-time Lecturer completing my fourth year, I was contractually protected from a "pink slip" last May—barely. Many of my NTT colleagues were not. Since then, I have committed to grassroots organizing on this campus, alongside fellow faculty, staff, and students. Already an active member of the NTT Caucus, I helped launch the "Save UMB" campaign against the budget cuts, and have become an organizer of the Multi-Union and Student Organizing Committee. Now more than ever, upholding UMB's mission as Boston's only public university requires an engaged faculty that realizes its collective power and builds alliances with other concerned communities, on campus and off. I aim to help build a democratic, equitable, and energized Faculty Staff Union that is responsive to all its members' concerns, that fights to improve our working conditions, and that protects the learning conditions that all of our UMB students deserve.