



*From the*

December, 2009

# FACULTY STAFF UNION

Volume 1, Number 1



# Union News

## Dear Colleagues,

**W**ELCOME TO UNION NEWS, our new-format newsletter from the Faculty Staff Union (FSU). There are several items of interest here: a contract update, information on the financial situation at UMB, details about the new sabbatical policy, the status of CCDE contract bargaining, and more. We're imagining a regular newsletter focused on FSU's activities and other union-related issues at UMB and in the Commonwealth.



On November 4th, the FSU and other unions on campus held a meeting to discuss the effects of the recession on UMB's budget and its potential impact on UMB and its employees. Over two hundred union members attended. We told members that the hole in UMB's budget for this year (FY 2010) was filled by the federal stimulus funds (\$19.3 million) and the student fee increase (about \$6.4 million). The Governor's recent cuts were covered by UMB's \$6 million reserve fund. Leaders of the three Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) unions, the Classified Staff Union, the Faculty Staff Union, and the Professional Staff Union, as well the graduate assistants' union, GEO, Graduate Employee Organization, United Auto Workers, Local 1596, spoke about the crisis. A lively discussion with rank and file attendees followed.

The big problem will be next year, FY 2011, when there will be no federal stimulus funds. UMB could have a \$9 to \$14 million deficit. This could be filled by increased state tax revenues, by enrolling more students (beyond the 14,000 we have now), by increasing on-line teaching or by reducing expenditures. In the short run, we should ask such questions as: where would we put more students and who would be teaching and advising them?

The "elephant in the room" around our budget problem is the shrinking support the Commonwealth provides to public higher education. This support has declined from bad to abysmal in the last few years – even relative to other states. Many in the UMass administration think we should accept the increasing "privatization" of our university and find ways to raise funds on our own. The FSU and the MTA disagree. We are continuing to advocate for increased support from the legislature by emphasizing that an educated workforce brings economic benefits to the Commonwealth, an educated citizenry brings civic benefits, and affordable education offers opportunities to more people. Changing the minds of legislators and reversing the downward trend of public higher education funding will take hard work and political action from our members.

On another note, the FSU and the Provost's Office held a training session for chairs and program directors in October. We talked at length about the seniority rules regarding course assignments for non-tenure track faculty and the new programs in the contract. I would say it was very successful and well received; there were about three dozen people in attendance. These discussions should lead to fewer conflicts about course assignments. More of these sessions are being planned.

This newsletter, and our future newsletters, is organized and edited by Dorothy Nelson (English), a long-standing, active member of the FSU. We call her our Communications Director, and thank her for the good work you see here.



Regards,  
*Catherine Lynde* (Economics)  
President, Faculty Staff Union

## Bargaining for Continuing Ed. Faculty

*John Hess, English and Kathy Kogan, Psychology*

**M**ANY GAINS HAVE BEEN WON for continuing education faculty in recent years bringing people's benefits and pay scale more in line with the main unit (the main unit refers to all faculty members who teach regular, 'day' courses). The bargaining committee for Continuing Corporate Distance Education meets regularly, aiming towards a new contract for the years 2009 – 2012. We are currently in negotiations with the university for improved working conditions and monetary rewards.

Ten years ago (1999) non-tenure track (NTT) faculty organized to gain health insurance, and to improve our standard of living and working conditions. That campaign was a turning point for NTT faculty after years of teaching without these benefits. As a result of the efforts of many tenacious union members, non-tenured and tenured, and members of the administration, a career as an NTT lecturer will never make you rich but will not leave you in penury and could provide you with a pension.

After we won benefited status for NTT faculty in the main unit, we turned our attention to the separate contract for Continuing, Corporate, Distance Education unit (CCDE). We entered into negotiations with the university once our local, the Faculty Staff Union (FSU) won the election to represent CCDE faculty. Our initial goals were job security, proper class assignment procedure, and monetary rewards equal to the day programs. Since the first contract was settled in 2002, our goals have been refined, and as a result of bargaining, the benefits for CCDE faculty have become more aligned with the main unit.

Job security was improved with the establishment of priority lists, one for fall and spring, one for winter and one for summer. Courses are assigned according to the individual's position on the department's priority list, a published document. The uncertainty over whether one would be teaching the next semester was largely removed for CCDE faculty, who now have contractual protection. Another major gain for CCDE faculty is that for fall and spring semester, once people reach benefited status, they are essentially entered into the main unit. This means that CCDE instructors are paid according to the main unit scale for fall and spring courses. This is an enormous achievement. For those people, CCDE courses, once excluded from counting toward a pension, now count. Alas, summer and winter instructors receive the basic CCDE per course salary of \$3950. We are working on increasing that salary.

Money has always been a problem, but the FSU has been able to secure regular if unspectacular salary increases for both main unit and CCDE faculty, including a \$150 bump in per course salary for all CCDE faculty who have taught 24 or more courses.

The bargaining team regularly updates faculty by email and will continue to hold open meetings to receive input from members. We hope to improve our financial rewards, to clarify the course assignments and priority pools, and to make the language of the contract more comprehensible. Although things are far from settled we can promise that when we have finished our work with this contract, CCDE faculty and FSU members will have a readable contract to examine before we all vote on ratification.

## NON-TENURE TRACK CAUCUS: COMING TOGETHER AT BROOKLINE MEETINGS

*Kathy Kogan, Psychology and  
Amy Todd, Anthropology*

**A**PPROXIMATELY SIX YEARS AGO, A GROUP OF NON-TENURE TRACK (NTT) faculty, began holding off-campus meetings on Friday evenings at Kathy Kogan's place in Brookline. Some had worked on the successful campaign to secure health insurance for adjunct faculty. These meetings continue to offer a relaxed environment to discuss common concerns about our work at UMB, boost our spirits, inspire us to continue to improve conditions for faculty working outside the tenure system and increase our integration into the university community.

Born in the spirit of a grass-roots organization, the NTT faculty caucus functions in an advisory capacity to the Faculty Staff Union (FSU). Our meetings address such issues as retirement benefits, inclusion in university governance, fairness in course assignments, and initiatives to increase our visibility within the University. Through the caucus, Hidden Treasures was developed and launched in the Spring of

2009. The event, which showcases the creative, scholarly and teaching achievements of NTT faculty, will be repeated in April 2010, drawing from NTT faculty throughout the university with Provost Langley's enthusiastic support.

Faculty who attend the meetings range from senior lecturers serving on the FSU Executive Committee to new instructors with little or no union experience. Most participants are from the College of Liberal Arts. We are eager to include faculty from other colleges on campus. Here is the link to join the caucus wikispace. It works best if you use your UMB email.

<http://nttfaculty.wikispaces.umb.edu/>



Colleagues enjoy dessert at a Brookline caucus.

# Mike Capuano, Forceful Advocate for Public Education

## MASSACHUSETTS TEACHERS ASSOCIATION ENDORSES CAPUANO FOR SENATOR

*Phil Chassler, American Studies*

OUR UNION, the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA), has endorsed Representative Mike Capuano for Democratic nominee for the Senate seat to replace Ted Kennedy. The party primaries will be held on December 8. The winners will run in the election for the U.S. Senate on January 19. On October 17 the MTA Candidate Recommendation Committee conducted separate interviews with Martha Coakley, Alan Khazei, Stephen Pagliuca, and Capuano at a hotel in Framingham.

In my capacity as a member of this committee, I can vouch for the out-

come of these interviews although I am pledged not to divulge the details. Capuano, of all the candidates, spoke most forcefully for public education. He supports key MTA issues like more funding for public education and he is unambiguously opposed to non-union charter schools and teaching to test. In addition, he was one of the few congress persons who voted against the invasion of Iraq (he also voted against the Patriot Act). After several years of debate at annual meetings, the MTA voted two years ago to oppose this costly and disastrous war. Capuano struck me as feisty, confident, and knowledgeable — worthy of your vote.

He is much more “on point” in person than he may appear on TV or at other nerve-wracking venues.

This committee also usually interviews candidates for state senator and representative as well as other statewide offices. For the coming election for the U.S. Senate all the candidates were invited although only the Democratic candidates chose to be interviewed. The candidates were given written questionnaires to complete concerning their stands on MTA issues. Committee members read their responses. Our in-person interviews were based on the candidates’ answers.



### NEW FLEXIBLE SABBATICAL POLICY

THE NEW CONTRACT INCLUDES A change in the UMB sabbatical policy. Previously, tenured faculty accumulated credit toward a sabbatical for each year of full time work, which allowed a sabbatical semester at full pay every seventh year. Under the new policy this credit can now be applied to a sabbatical that would be taken when opportunities arise rather than specifically only during the seventh year. The sabbatical payment would vary with the number of credits; thus a sabbatical taken in the fifth year would lead to a salary of two-thirds of your full salary for a semester, and a sabbatical taken in year fourteen would lead to a full year at full pay. This new policy also prevents the loss of future sabbatical credit if a sabbatical is put off beyond the seven years.

### CONTRACT UPDATE

WE AGREED TO A THREE-YEAR contract starting July 1, 2009, and, as you know, we haven’t seen the salary increases negotiated in that contract. The Governor forwarded the approved contract to the legislature but the supplemental appropriations bill that would have funded our raises now languishes in the House Ways and Means Committee. We may be asking for some help to pry that bill loose.

### *Some elements of the contract that have been implemented:*

- ♦ The University Salary Anomalies Committee has begun its work.
- ♦ We will soon receive official notification of our individual allocation of Research and Educational Support Funds (formerly, Professional Development Funds). These funds are made available from the unspent funds from the previous year, so we had to wait for the administration to figure out the size of the rollover. The amount available for each FTE is \$225.00 for all faculty and librarians on the payroll as of September 15, 2009. Each faculty or librarian will be able to submit requests for up to 150% of their FTE allocation; (\$340 for a full-time faculty or librarian) by Monday, February 1, 2010. The funds not requested by that date will be made part of the Healey Grant Program to be awarded this year. By the way, the deadline for applying to that program is mid-January, 2010; there’s no specific date on the website. We hope you will start now to plan your use of the funds so that you can use them as soon as you get official notification. Remember that you need receipts to get reimbursement.
- ♦ The extension of the use of the Sick Leave Bank for care of a family member under the Family and Medical Leave Act is in effect.
- ♦ We are setting up the rules for the financial awards under the new non-tenure track Scholarship Incentive Program that we negotiated under this contract.
- ♦ The Labor/Management Distance Learning Committee, charged with negotiating a variety of important issues concerning distance education, is established and began its work. Several Labor/Management Committees are now established to make recommendations on a phased retirement system, on a research intensive semester for tenure track faculty, and on various non-tenure track matters.

# Unionism Works When Unions Work

## A DISCUSSION WITH LORENZO NENCIOLI, THE FACE OF THE FACULTY STAFF UNION

*Dorothy S. Nelson, English*

**L**ORENZO NENCIOLI WAS HIRED as Membership Coordinator in the fall of 2005 by the Faculty Staff Union on the recommendation of Rachel Rubin, former President of the FSU. Among other things, he runs the union office, processes the membership forms, deals with dues issues, maintains data bases and email lists, and keeps track of the union budget and expenditures. In addition to administrative tasks he was given the broader charge to involve more members in the union. We talked in the union's seminar room at the end of the university's catwalk on the second floor of the Quinn Building.



Lorenzo explained his primary hopes for this job. "I want members to have an understanding of what the union does, just how much work people do on behalf of the members. I try to speak with as many of the members one-on-one as possible. I worry that some people just think that nothing happens. This worry may be allayed by my being here. I give a face to the union."

One of his plans is to look at the list of new members each year, contact people and ask how they feel about being part of the FSU. Are they excited about joining the union or opposed to unions? "The charge is to build something up," he says emphatically. He also sits in on bargaining sessions for the current contract (2009 – 2012) which has yet to be implemented, and he attends the bargaining sessions to improve parity for Continuing Corporate Distance Education (CCDE) faculty.

People come to him for many reasons. Grievances, of course, are a union matter. Lorenzo is familiar with provisions in the contract and can direct people to the right resources. He wants people to know that you can get advice from experienced grievance officers without making your concerns public.

We talked about the fact that non-tenure track faculty are the most active in the union. He suggested that some tenured faculty may think they don't need a union because they see themselves as professionals with adequate pay and benefits. He challenged those views: "Think about what it would be like if there wasn't a union. What if wages were cut for all employees in a budget crisis? These salaries are negotiated. Without collective bargaining agreements there would be nothing to prevent the state from cutting salaries."

Should the FSU play a role in alerting members to other labor issues in addition to local concerns? Lorenzo's response to this question underscores the approach he takes to his position with the FSU. "One of the best ways to get people to think about unions in general is for them to realize that their union is working for them and that their dues are working for them. People need to have a positive view of their union to have an interest in the broader union issues. If we make the union work we make unionism work."

Contact: Lorenzo Nencioli ([fsu@umb.edu](mailto:fsu@umb.edu)) 617-287-6295

## 2009 MTA HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE PROFESSIONAL ISSUES IN MASSACHUSETTS PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

Friday December 4 (evening) and Saturday December 5  
Sheraton Framingham Hotel and Conference Center  
1657 Worcester Road  
Framingham, MA 01701  
1-508-879-7200

To view program highlights and register on line go to Massachusetts Teachers Association website or call MTA Higher Education at 800-392-6175 ext. 8236.

Important Message from the MTA

## THINK BEFORE YOU INK!

**P**ETITIONS ARE NOW being circulated that call for cutting the state sales tax from 6.25 percent to 3 percent. This proposal could slash \$2.5 billion from the state budget. The results would include cuts to public education, layoffs, and reductions in public health programs and local police and fire protection.

Other petitions that could undermine public education are circulating as well.

The MTA asks that we carefully read any petition we are asked to sign and consider its impact on public education and other important services.

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

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

Email: [fsu@umb.edu](mailto:fsu@umb.edu)  
Phone: 617-287-6295.

For a list of union officers, information about the union, contract and other matters please visit the FSU website: <http://www.fsu.umb.edu>