

## Candidates for FSU Executive Committee, Spring 2026 Election

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

### President – Vote for one

**Jason Rodriquez**, Professor. Sociology.

I am running for FSU President because our union makes UMB a stronger institution for faculty, librarians, staff, and students. Since joining UMB in 2015, I have taken on many FSU roles, currently as Vice President. Together we have won stronger contracts, defended each other when our rights were violated, and built solidarity with other campus unions. My vision for FSU is a member-driven union that builds power where we have leverage: improving resources, holding the administration accountable, and strengthening engagement across all colleges. UMB has been recognized as an R1 university and a national leader in access, a credit to the incredible work we do. A priority of my presidency will be ensuring that the administration provides support for research, teaching, and service that matches our workload. The FSU is our union; it protects our rights. Let's work together to make it as strong as it can be.

### Non-Tenure Track Faculty – Vote for two

**Tony Vandermeer**, Senior Lecturer III. Africana Studies.

I am running to serve on the Executive Committee because now, more than ever, we need faculty to be active and stand united to protect our common good. Over the years, the union has fought to ensure that Non-Tenure Track (NTT) faculty are treated equitably. At present, the administration is challenging the service provision for Senior Lecturer IIIs. With what Associate Lectures are paid, many are unable to pay the average rent for an apartment in Boston. There are many more changes that are necessary, and I want to continue making things better for all of us—the entire campus community. I served on the Bargaining Committee for the 2000-2023 contract. In our negotiations, I asserted we stand on 3 points: 1) A new rank for Senior Lecturer III with a \$6,500 increase to base pay; 2) An increase for Associate Lecturers from \$5,000 to \$5,350; and 3) An investment of \$25,000 from the administration for funding of Racial Justice Initiatives. We won all three!

**Karen Grayson**, Senior Lecturer II. English.

As an executive committee member since 6/24, I have developed a greater appreciation for all that FSU does for our faculty and librarians. I admire how the unions continue to join forces and struggle as one for our collective well-being. My experience with FSU has deepened my commitment and my motivation. I believe we will all benefit from clarifying our vision, refining our communications and calls for solidarity across campus, and making visible the many actions taken by FSU to protect our rights and possibilities as we continue to build community, relationship by relationship. No to targeting and retaliation! No to increased costs for parking and health ins! Yes to community-based solutions! Yes to protections for our international colleagues and students and to actively standing in solidarity with our immigrant communities! A strong FSU is an essential partner in the process of becoming an anti-racist and health-promoting university.

**Monique Fuguet**, Senior Lecturer. Mathematics

I am so proud to have been part of the team of faculty and librarians fighting to maintain our shared vision of transparency and democratic values, and write to tell you my motivation for doing union work is only strengthened by the galling absence of leadership from our top administrators on this campus, while we do the work of confronting ongoing attacks to higher education and civil liberties. Standing together must be the way forward, if we and our students are to survive and thrive. I remain committed to prioritizing transparent decision-making within our union, even while our campus leaders--including the Provost and Chancellor--demonstrate ever more autocratic tendencies. If you reelect me to represent you on the FSU Executive Committee, I will continue to be a voice for equity, inclusion, shared governance, and anti-racist transformation in matters of vital consequence to us as under-valued and under-compensated educators.

**Tenured Faculty – Vote for two**

**Helen Poynton**, Professor. School For the Environment.

UMass Boston became a high access R1 university because of the dedication and sacrifice of our faculty. Now as R1, expectations for research have increased, but time commitments to teaching and service have not decreased. At the same time, we are living under an increasing authoritarian government that is targeting our immigrant students and faculty, threatening academic freedom, and slashing funding for environmental and social justice research. I believe that collective action through our union is our best defense against these attacks. For the last 15 years, I have been on the periphery of the FSU, attending meetings occasionally and helping to organize events such as the Teach-In on academic freedom last April. I am running for the Executive Committee so that I can be more involved, bring more science faculty into the union, and fight for things we thought unions won a century ago.

**Andrés Fabián Henao Castro**, Associate Professor. Political Science.

I have been an active member of the FSU since I joined UMB in 2014, and already served in the Executive Committee as a pre Tenure representative between 2015 and 2017. Since then, I have always advocated for a more democratic and participatory union, committed to open bargaining, clear and frequent communication of its policies and deliberations to its members, and with an intersectional view of labor issues that includes a more holistic understanding of the material conditions under which we are structurally compelled to do our work. My experience last year, while supporting the union as a member of the Contract Action Team, has convinced me that the democratic empowerment of our members is the best response that we have, to guarantee the public mission, autonomy, and shared governance of our university.

**Librarian – Vote for one**

**E.K. Lee**, Librarian IV. Healey Library.

I am nominating myself as the Librarian Representative on the FSU Executive Committee. I have been an FSU member since 2020 when I started my position at UMass Boston. As a librarian, I have witnessed how librarians have gained greater recognition and support over time through librarian representation within the FSU, and I would like to contribute to that ongoing meaningful work. I have also been a consistent observer of bargaining sessions, and my involvement with CAT in Spring 2023 further demonstrated the significant work, care, and advocacy the FSU

invests in making UMass Boston a better workplace for all members. These experiences have motivated me to become more actively involved. I would be honored to contribute to this work and to represent not only librarians, but all FSU members.