

TESTIMONY 1

As we continue to perform our critical roles within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, I am writing to express a concern regarding the ongoing discussions at the bargaining table. Our union, the Classified Staff Union, has been advocating for hourly rate increases to address the cost of living and ensure that our members are fairly compensated for our contributions.

I am reaching out with respect for your stated commitment to equity and employee wellbeing, as well as the stated belief that all employees in our University system contribute to the success of our students. Despite those assertions, compensation for Classified staff has fallen very far behind and while workloads have risen.

A substantial increase in compensation is crucial for maintaining morale and retention within our workforce. As public employees, we are the backbone of our state's infrastructure, providing essential services that benefit all citizens. Fair compensation is not only a matter of equity but also of ensuring that we can attract and retain skilled and dedicated professionals in our public sector.

I have worked here for 14 years, and in that time the CSU contracts have consistently provided increases below the rise in cost of living. The accumulated shortfall means that our Classified staff are now being paid well below the prevailing wages for similar work outside of state government. The impact of these insufficient wages is clearly seen in the difficulties we have filling positions with qualified staff and retaining their service once hired.

I, as well as many of my colleagues, have had to work multiple jobs while employed at UMass Boston because our primary employment here does not provide compensation that covers our expenses. Skyrocketing housing costs mean that often we cannot live near our work, therefore incurring greater costs and the stress of commuting and extending our workday with long commutes. The University encourages us to rely on public transportation, yet the consistent failing of the state infrastructure means that our long commutes are unpredictable. And despite the encouragement, the University does not offer discounts to employees in line with other institutions in the city to make those commute times worth our time. Similarly, having to pay as much as \$300 a month to park at our place of employment often feels like we are being penalized. It is bad for morale, employee retention, and discouraging for our students who are already coming from difficult financial situations.

Rising healthcare costs and general inflation cause anxiety about the inability to support our families. So many of our employee wellness efforts are directed to lowering or managing stress. A better way to serve the staff would be to eliminate stress by providing a living wage.

For instance, many of us have been facing significant financial stress due to rising housing costs, healthcare expenses (which for many of us have doubled in the last 5 years as negotiated by the GIC), and general inflation. These economic pressures are not adequately addressed by the

typically negotiated increases or step increases. Many of us have to make difficult sacrifices to maintain a basic standard of living. This situation is untenable and unsustainable in the long term.

Equity demands that you employ your influence to support your Classified staff in the same way you have always supported the faculty and higher administration. And I urge you to consider the impact of inadequate compensation on the members and the services they provide. By supporting a more substantial cost of living adjustment, you will be demonstrating a commitment to the well-being of your employees and the quality of public services in Massachusetts. We are committed to our roles and deserve to be compensated fairly for our contributions.

I am hopeful we will gain your support in advocating for a fair and equitable resolution to our discussions.

TESTIMONY 2

Good day I am going on my 15th year of employment here at UMass Boston within the CSU family. CSU employees are what makes this university run from the inside out but are treated like they do not matter at times. If the CSU were to go on strike (which is something I know the university would not want) the campus would be in bad shape. I have seen the UMass Boston community go from being run like a private company to being run as corporate entity. Since being employed here I have not seen a satisfying increase in my pay so much that I had to go out and start driving for Uber to help supplement my income. Driving Uber helped with supplementing some things, but overall, it wasn't a long-term answer for my income deficiencies. Having a family and trying to take care of a household was and is hard enough considering the increase in the cost of gas, groceries, parking and add on any other expense that might pop up. It seems like when covid hit that was the only time I got to save any money because I did not have to drive into work or pay for parking each pay period. Each year your health insurance increase eats up any type of increase you might have seen in your check. When it's time for our contracts to be negotiated the university takes its time with agreeing on anything the union asks for. We have gone years without receiving any increase in our pay and when it eventually comes employees are getting a large check that is being taxed at a different rate because the amount is usually 2 plus years of working at the same rate. If the university really cares about the wellbeing of its employees, they will agree to an increase in the wages of employees here. Families cannot survive off a wage that is not in step with the cost-of-living increases. Boston's rent increases, food inflation within this country really is hitting families of color very hard making it increasingly harder to see the light at the end of the tunnel. With the median white household in Boston having about nine times the wealth of the median black household this means they earn about 1.7 times more. I am hoping things can change with this administration to push forward into the future with a positive outcome in negotiations that will benefit the people that are the heartbeat of this campus. I stand in solidarity with my union sisters and brothers. I hope these words do not fall on deaf ears.

TESTIMONY 3

I would love to see the "living wage" approved and ratified just to boost my pension figure. As a forty plus year employee my grade has increased only 2 in that time. My only raise in pay comes from the percentages the union bargains for in our contract. Overtime pay does not count toward your pension figure and who knows what the cost of living will be in 20 years from now.

TESTIMONY 4

As part of the CSU and as a former undergrad and graduate student who earned my BS and Masters in Biology at UMass Boston, I am a loyal member of our campus community. Members of CSU are simply not earning a living wage to continue to live in the commonwealth. I am 36 years old, and I cannot truly afford my share of rent. Based on what I earn now as a full time Grade 14, I will not have the recommended amount in savings to live comfortably and account for emergency expenses by the time I turn 40. In addition, I will be the sole caretaker of my parents and their property, and I can barely afford to live on my own until retirement. I worry for my own financial security as well as my colleagues and I can't imagine what it must be like to earn below a living wage, as we are doing now, and have more mouths to feed and maintain a roof overhead. The members of CSU are vital to the operations of this university, our loyalty to our careers at this campus is evident in our fight to stay but we need wages that reflect the present and future state of living in the commonwealth so that we can continue to work and contribute to the future of UMass Boston.

Thank you for listening.

TESTIMONY 5

I am a member of the Classified Staff Union at UMass Boston and would like to join my fellow union members by contributing my experience to the important discussion of how our wages impact our lives and work. As we all know, many members of the CSU are compensated well below the living-wage needed for a single adult with no children in Boston and the surrounding Boston area. I am a single adult, I do not have children, and my pay is on the low end of the current CSU salary range.

Most administrative workers in my department have the option to work hybrid schedules, however my specific position requires me to be on campus Monday through Friday. Commuting to campus five days per week requires me to live decently close to the area. As a single adult with no children who works full time, I cannot afford a studio apartment within an hour of Boston on my current salary. So as a hardworking young adult, who is also financially intelligent and has minimal debt, I am stuck renting a room in a 4 bedroom, 1 bathroom apartment that I share with 3 other people. 4 strangers sharing small living quarters is not what any full-time working adult wants to call home, nor should I have to.

I'm sure I am speaking for others as well when I say I have fear and anxiety surrounding the cost of living in comparison to my salary. After covering my monthly basic human necessities such as rent, utilities, insurance, transportation to work, and groceries, I am left with very little to put towards other basic needs, such as clothes and (hopefully) savings for the future. In addition to my position at UMass, I have an independent side-hustle that I do part time to help make ends meet. By giving up many luxuries and living the frugal way I do, I am able to get by. However, I live in constant fear of the next unexpected and pricey event that life throws at me. What if I need to get work done on my car? What if I need surgery? What if my roommates need to move? How will I pay for it?

The hardworking employees who are the backbone of UMass Boston should not be living paycheck to paycheck. We show up day after day to keep the University running. We have earned the right to feel secure in our careers and hopeful for our futures, but we cannot feel this way until we are paid a living wage. A University that is "for the times" needs to provide their employees with a WAGE that is FOR THE TIMES.

TESTIMONY 6

I am a single person who loves my job. I have been working at UMB for 13 ó years. I will be at the maximum step soon. (so, no more step increases). I can't really say that I am not making what appears to be a very generous salary, but I have watched rents skyrocket over the years, and each increase in salary takes away any benefit (since the cost of living, and health insurance is rising faster than the pay increases), so I never really get ahead of anything, AND I can't even imagine trying to live on less (My heart goes out to my fellow employees trying to make ends meet on a sub-par income, especially on ONE income as a single person, or as a single parent trying to take care of a family). You should try living off the lowest income and see how far you get.

I spend just over 50% of my pay towards rent, it's been like that for many years now, with many times having to take money out of what little I have saved in order to supplement the shortfall. And now I will be even further behind as I will not get the extra step increase, only what little is approved in the state budget. That will really be hard for me.

I write this and I think you've heard it all before, what do you care, but can you agree that a person not burdened with how to make ends meet every day, is a happier, more productive person, and thus is able to do a better job that makes a company more productive and profitable? A popular saying is "it all starts at the top", but, really, it all starts at the bottom too (the core people who keep the company moving, profitable, successful) the roots of any entity keep the rest stronger and certainly keeps the money flowing into YOUR pockets.

When I think of the millions of dollars (I heard) it took to rebrand this university (new logo) when you could have put the money to better use, higher raises, more contributions to the health insurance and retirement plans. It seems there is plenty of money to be found when it suits your needs.

I will close with this information I found online from an article written by The World Economic Forum: "Paying a living wage is an important investment in human capital, recognizing that employees are the most valuable resource of any company... In turn, living wages should not be seen as a cost but as an investment in long-term return.... Companies are demonstrating that paying living wages is achievable and the right thing to do."

TESTIMONY 7

In the fall of 2007, I returned to UMass Boston to complete my undergraduate studies after leaving in 2001. Back then, I was your typical UMass Boston student. I was a commuter, in my late twenties, returning to school after being in the workforce for a few years and realizing that I needed to complete my degree to make sure I could secure a good future for myself. Shortly after returning, my housing situation fell through due to a domestic situation with a family member. I was fortunate enough to be taken in by the parents of my partner and they allowed both of us to live with them while I finished school, and he worked full time to pay back his own student loans.

While I was a student at UMB, I was employed as a work study student for the entirety of my schooling and was lucky enough to be offered a job with the same department shortly after I graduated. I had accomplished the thing I had come back here to do – I secured (what I thought) was a better future for myself. I graduated with not one, but two bachelor's degrees and I had a job almost immediately after graduation.

I have been working for UMB for over 15 years now, 10 of those years have been as a full-time benefited CSU staff member. When I was initially hired, I was working part-time helping the department cover for another staff member. A few months later, when my direct supervisor moved to another department, I was asked to apply for that job as my knowledge of the position and the department were valuable enough to help to make a smooth transition with little disruption. Several years later, another colleague retired and again I was asked to apply for that position because my department valued the work and effort I put into my job.

I will turn 43 years old next month and after more than 16 years, my partner and I are still living with his parents. Not because they are elderly and need our help, but because **we need their help**. Due to various factors, we have never been financially able to afford our own housing. Our student loans have been our biggest burden and after spending over a decade trying to pay them off, we are struggling to make up for lost time with our savings and trying to build up our retirement funds while in our forties. Our decision to not get married and to not have children was largely based on our financial situation, even though we both have degrees and full-time jobs.

When most people find out that I work for UMass Boston and have a job with the state, they say “Oh, that’s amazing!” but the reality for me is much different. While I am grateful for what I have, I know that I am further behind than where I want to be, and I spend much of my time wondering if I’ll ever get to a place where I feel comfortable and secure with the salary, I am currently making at UMB. I wonder if I’ll ever be able to afford my own house or if I will be at the mercy of others for the rest of my life. I wonder if I will ever have enough money to retire or if I will have to continue to work well into my later years to make ends meet because I wasn’t able to save enough. I wonder if I am one small disaster away from financial ruin. The good future I was looking for has not panned out yet.

I enjoy working here and I enjoy my job, but I increasingly wonder if it is worth it to stay here. After working here for 10+ years, I'm aware of how important employee retention is for keeping things running smoothly and efficiently, especially when it comes to CSU staff members. Every aspect of this University functions because of a CSU staff member. When you don't value your employees, you lose employees, and when you lose employees, you lose valuable connections, resources, and pools of knowledge that you can never get back. When you have staff that can't function both inside and outside of their jobs, not only does it affect other staff members, but it also affects your faculty, your administration, and most importantly, it affects your students.

I recall getting in an elevator in the Campus Center a few years ago shortly after a new semester started. A person in the elevator made a comment about how annoying it was that the students were back. Someone else in the elevator turned around and said "You have a job because of those students. If there were no students, there would be no you." I couldn't agree more. All of us are here **because of the students**. And every single person who is here is here **for the students**.

But the students are also here because of us. There would be no UMass Boston without the students, and without your staff, there would be no students.

We do our part. And we do it with what little resources you give us. So now it is time to do your part and show us that you recognize how valuable we are to UMass Boston. Because without us, there would be no you.

Thank you.

TESTIMONY 8

I've worked at UMass close to 30 years in the trades here. When I came to UMass, I took a pay cut thinking the health benefits and my kid's college tuition benefit would even it out.

For most of the years I had to work a second job part time outside of UMass and did many various side jobs on my own to try to make ends meet. I've seen the price of everything increase except my pay. I see outside contractors coming onto campus every single day knowing they are getting the state mandated prevailing wage doing the exact same job as me and I'm getting less than half of what they are being paid. To me this is discrimination and makes me feel like a nobody and unappreciated. We are licensed tradesmen that still have to go back to school every few years to keep our state license up to date.

We cannot hire people here. I have seen so so many job prospects laugh at us and walk away from job offers here. One guy hours into his first shift here quit when he realized the amount of money is for every two weeks and not one week. This university is only hurting themselves by not paying the ones they should be paying, the ones who would and go the extra mile always when needed.

Thanks for listening

TESTIMONY 9

I have been a part of the UMass Boston community since I was born. My mother worked for the College of Management for over thirty years, and she would always bring me with her to campus. I remember when the cafeteria was still in McCormack and there were still operating pay phones. I remember the comradery and community that was integrated on this campus that allowed a single mother going through a nasty divorce to bring her toddler with her to a place that was safe and secure. To be completely sincere, this campus has been my home my entire life.

My mother was an alumna and started her college career when UMass was still Boston State College. She worked as an 03 for many years before transferring over to PSU. After she had me, although it took her a lot of dedication and hard work, she was able to climb up the ladder swiftly in PSU to make sure I had a comfortable lifestyle. With her stipend, she was able to provide and cater to all my needs growing up. There was very little that I ever wanted for.

Outside of spending my formative years on the campus, I am an alumna of UMass Boston. I graduated magna cum laude with a degree in English and a concentration in professional writing. I officially became a CSU staff member in 2015. Like my mother, I started as part-time staff and slowly moved my way up the ladder by moving to full-time, and then successfully applying for an upgrade a few years ago. With all being said and all that I have done to try and get myself to a financially stable place, none of it has shown any actual benefit to the costs of my livelihood.

In the close to decade of my service as a CSU staff member, I have nothing to show for it outside of my word and my resume. In terms of monetary compensation, I barely have made enough money to survive with my husband. Even with all the changes and the dedication I have shown in my workplace. Even with the step raises, for the work I take on, the pay that is given out isn't even close to substantial to having a stable lifestyle. The work that I have done within my department has been a tremendous feat that is constantly challenging and constantly evolving. The pay that I have been receiving even with pushing the boundaries doesn't cover half of my efforts, never mind the basic means of survival.

I recently had my first baby and the salary I am on is not sufficient to satisfy his needs and the cost of living in Massachusetts. I can't afford any type of childcare and have had to rely on the grace of friends and family for help during this time. Day care? Not in this lifetime. Nanny? HA! Private schools? Not a chance. College fund? Out of the question. Generational wealth? An absolute joke. If something were to happen to me, my son would have nothing to carry him because I barely make enough money to keep us floating - never mind being able to provide him with any kind of savings or retirement funds.

I cannot afford my mortgage. I barely can cover utilities, formula, and groceries. There is little to spare at the end of each pay period. If I wasn't in a double income home, I don't know where my husband, my son, and myself would be at this time.

I was speaking with my cousin about this recently as she too just had her first baby. I was telling her about the pay and how much I make per hour. She was absolutely floored. Where I have served almost ten years in the same place of employment, and it has taken so much of my own personal efforts to get to the salary that I make at this time – she just started working at a new company two years ago and is already making more than me per hour.

Two years of service versus ten years of service is an astronomical difference.

Aside from all the facelifts that have occurred over the years, not much has changed for us as CSU staff that would propel us on a basic human level towards a successful and happy lifestyle. My mom prided herself on her work, and that she was able to be compensated for it justly - both financially and emotionally. My experience as an adult and as a CSU employee on this campus has been the complete opposite from both my mother's story and my childhood experience. That safety and security when it comes to monetary compensation and an understanding community simply doesn't exist anymore. I no longer recognize the campus I grew up on. It certainly doesn't feel like home anymore.

As CSU staff, we all work so hard to keep this university afloat. We give the best of us and the most precious of our time to sustain our university's mission by serving the students. At the end of the day, that is our common goal. If it weren't for the resilience provided by the CSU staff, the university would quickly crumble, and who would pick up the pieces then?

No one can do what we do, and that is a testament to our work ethic.

As a whole, the university should stand strong in the midst of adversity instead of throwing more fuel on the fire. CSU, PSU, FSU, GEO. All of us. We should not be ignored and brushed to the side when most of us have families that we need to take care of. And most of us truly enjoy our jobs and the people we work with.

Everyone should be entitled to fair pay, period point blank. There is no reason why this should be an uphill battle when we as a union have proven ourselves time in and time again. That is just the cold hard facts. From an ethical standpoint, no one should have a blind eye turned to them when it comes to fair wages because of empty handed reasoning. It's an arrogant approach to such a long overdue and necessary change.

Being silenced helps no one and doesn't fix the problem, it just prolongs it.

It is sad after seeing all I have on this campus that the people who put in the most work get the least compensation, recognition, and respect that is so well earned. We as CSU have proven our worth, our skill, our commitment, our loyalty, our determination for a successful university, without fail. Through each trial and tribulation that we have been faced with, we stand steadfast to complete the jobs we set out to do. If management doesn't acknowledge how deep this vein runs, sooner or later, you will have no employees to run this massive orchestration.

Won't that be a comical end to what could have been such an inspiring story.

TESTIMONY 10

I work for the facilities department as a requisitioner as well as a member of the warehouse team. I'm a CSU member at step 2 of the pay scale with a pay grade of 17.

Unfortunately, due to my current wage, I am actively seeking part time work on evenings and weekends to supplement my income. Even with my wife's salary, it is hard to manage our day-to-day expenses and monthly bills. While my wife and I currently don't have children, building a family is something we hope to do in the near future. As it stands, the added cost of having a child would be a burden on us with my current salary, which is part of the reason I am looking to supplement my income with a second job.

While I have only been working at UMass for a little over a year, I can already tell it is a place where I would love to work for the next 30+ years prior to retirement. I truly do enjoy my work, and I feel blessed to have such amazing coworkers and supervisors in the facilities department. It's due to those reasons that I'm looking for a second job instead of a new one. However, if wages aren't increased at UMass and working 2 jobs ends up being too time consuming or the combined income is still not sufficient, then I would have no choice but to leave a job that I truly enjoy doing and a place that I enjoy working, for something new in order to make enough money to support my family.

Please do the right thing and provide a livable wage.

TESTIMONY 11

I am a proud member of the UMB team. I have a family of 3, and I am welcoming a new family member in February. I have struggled to meet our basic needs with my salary for years. This challenge has been a source of great difficulty for me, as providing for my family is paramount.

After dedicating years of service to UMB, it is disheartening to see that our CSU members, who contribute significantly to the organization, are not treated equally and equitably with other unions on campus. I firmly believe that our dedication and commitment warrant fair compensation and equitable leave as a testament to our contributions. Why are we, the CSU members, not given a better salary and only having 12 weeks of Maternity/Paternity/FML instead of 26 weeks?

It is time for UMB management to embrace a new perspective and become an example of an organization that values and appreciates the dedication and contributions of its staff. By providing fair compensation and extended leave, you show that you value us and boost our morale and productivity, which helps establish UMB as a vital institution.

TESTIMONY 12

The classified staff cannot live an affordable life without living wages. Living in the most cities in Massachusetts is exorbitant. For staff with newborn babies, daycare amounts to \$300 to \$400 per week easily, which could require both parents to find part-time work outside of the regular 9-5 jobs. Next, deciding what food to buy and how much has become difficult decision. In the past, a few hundred dollars could fill the trunk of a car; now \$100-\$200 could only amount to few items, paper goods, with a few packs of meat because price gouging appears here to stay with our checks not meeting that challenge. Finally, the cost of lights, gas, cable, cell phone bills, streaming channels, and dressing your family has turned a large majority of the classified staff into the “have nots” involuntarily. The cost of living in this society carries an enormous weight in communities throughout the state.

I am from Boston, but now live in Cambridge. I have witnessed Boston go from affordable to #5 in the list of the most expensive cities to live in. Cambridge is not a walk in the park either. I remember when the inner-city of Boston appeared plagued infested to outside viewers. Then gentrification, moving city folks out of the city, showed its ugly head so that outsiders can revamp the city to their needs and push the cost of living in the whole city through the roof. Now families and students must pay the equivalent of a mortgage \$2700-\$4000 a month for apartments. The cost of rent amounts to \$32k a year, and the income needed to live in Boston is between \$90k-\$100k per year. I know; it sounds like I was purchasing a home, which I am not. To buy a home in this state, a down payment must equal \$90k or more with the homes starting at \$500k-1 million dollars. How does our staff meet this cost when our wages do not move the needle to higher income? Not earning enough to stay above water makes the work environment difficult because we would like our position in the university to meet our basic needs.

I have been an employee of the university since the year 2000. I have earned a degree by going to school at while taking care of my family, working full time and part time on the weekends. It has never been my desire to stay in the same position for so long, but work has become stagnant. From the upper tier of the university to office directors and management teams also working in a learning environment, these individuals lack the aptitude or ability to create a learning environment within their offices for staff to move from classified to professional. It is as if those individuals desire to create a caste system where upward mobility offers do not materialize unless you are bootlicker or sycophant of the person controlling the hiring. That is the reason that a lot of classified staff will hear the words “not qualified” by the gatekeepers of positions in the university with the full support of various offices such as Human Resources and the Provost’s office. Unfortunately, management extracts satisfaction by being in opposition to our fellow staff members.

Our upper management has no shame either. I have witnessed individuals having jobs created for them with a new title and increased pay while the whole university was working remote during Covid.????? Who does that? This is just an example of individuals using their influence only for a chosen few and not hiding it. The classified staff is not expecting to make six

figures like a lot of individuals at UMass Boston; I know so because the state website lists all our salaries. But achieving a living wage should be possible for us, just as it is for others. We can all eat, but what we eat and when we eat depends on the people sitting at the negotiating table playing hardball. The playbook that the classified staff uses is obsolete to deal with the university and when negotiating is not a two-way street. Our university is full of personalities which makes working at UMass Boston sometimes fun and sometimes difficult to manage.

As classified staff and a Black man, I remember when I first came to work at UMass Boston. It was friendly and family environment. The campus was old but alive; the environment in the offices seemed seamless, meaning that individuals did not wear their titles as shields to warn off staff and students. The attitude in the university was not always us vs them. The university continues to be a place of learning and achievement, not so much for the classified staff. As we watch the world change, we do not witness growth in our work environment nor our pay. The negotiating team for the university is not blind to world news or the media that cost for everything has risen and continues to rise. We are demanding a living wage because regardless of what the upper management the classified staff continues to bring a blue-collar ethic to our jobs and the university. UMass Boston should show us that it is willing to invest in its staff.

TESTIMONY 13

Facilities is a service-oriented department, but there is a growing sense of frustration and dissatisfaction among staff, students, and other customers regarding its service levels and maintenance operations. Many customers feel that issues are often resolved through personal relationships with facilities staff, rather than through the formal reporting system in place. Customers interviewed perceive that senior leadership is more responsive to deans, department heads, or senior administrators, which adds to their dissatisfaction. Additionally, the facilities department does not publish clear service level standards, making it difficult to hold management accountable for their performance.

There is a need for a systematic process to identify and meet the needs and expectations of customers, including staff, faculty, and students. Enhancing student experience should be a primary goal. To address these concerns, management should introduce an annual campus-wide customer satisfaction survey.

In the Boston area, rapid growth in the building sector and rising material costs have made it challenging for facilities management to maintain effective cost control and compete for qualified staff. Low wages and hiring freezes have contributed to staffing shortages, which in turn result in delays in responding to emergencies and addressing building maintenance issues.

Recent campus expansion, including the addition of two new buildings—the Science Building and the U-Haul facility—has significantly increased activity. However, staffing levels have not been adjusted in over 12 years to accommodate this growth. Given that the campus operates 24 hours a day, it is essential to have adequate staffing to meet these operational demands.

Recommendations

1. Facilities should update and implement clear service level agreements (SLAs) for all customers—staff, faculty, and students—to ensure that customer satisfaction becomes a priority.
2. The Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance must provide additional funding to ensure that the necessary levels of service are maintained across the university's 2,000,000 square feet of industrial space. The financial strain on facilities operations, including cuts to operating funds, is forcing the department to choose between educational needs and infrastructure maintenance.
3. Adequate funding is needed for capital repairs, operations, and maintenance. This includes essential repairs to heritage buildings, mold and water remediation, and addressing building infrastructure issues such as:

- Outdated equipment - Concrete and substructure failures
- Fire protection services (pumps, valves, compressors)
- Hazardous maintenance equipment (lifts, ladders, scaffolding)
- Aging power plant and cooling systems, including 20-year-old chilled water machinery

The facilities department faces significant challenges due to underfunding and insufficient staffing. Without proper financial support, the university cannot maintain its infrastructure or adequately respond to the growing needs of its campus. Increasing wages and staffing levels would help attract qualified personnel and ensure that the university's facilities can operate efficiently.

Facilities personnel, including administrative and support staff, should not be overburdened with the work of multiple roles just to complete their daily tasks. A well-funded and properly staffed facilities department is essential to the success and enjoyment of the university community. Thank you for your time.

TESTIMONY 14

Good morning, my name's Richie Russo. I've been a licensed Master plumber in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for 15 years. I've been a UA Local 12 Boston, Plumber and Gasfitter for the past 10 years and I am a new CSU member. I'm a single income father of four. I've been working at UMASS Boston for almost 3 months. You can say "what does this guy know, he just started". Well, let me give you a glimpse, with a fresh pair of eyes that just came from the real world, into what licensed tradesmen in facilities are up against, what they've been up against for the last decade.

The very first job interview I had on ZOOM with management was interesting.

Immediately after initial introductions they said, "we just want to let you know up front the job only pays THIS MUCH". I was in disbelief, at the same time I realized, they can't keep people, and people hang up the phone right after they hear the pay is almost 40% below even the median wage of a licensed plumber in the state of Massachusetts. I was then assured that the benefits were worth it. The problem I'm finding, is every benefit comes out of the wage that is already almost 40% lower than the median average. The time off, has to be accrued over years for any quality of life, and at this rate I'll be taking those days off to work somewhere else just to the cost of food and utilities. The step raises are literal pennies every YEAR. I'll be retired or dead before anything can be impactful. What, chase a pension, of a percentage, of a wage that's obsolete now, never mind in twenty years. And on top of it all get Windfalled by the government on my Social Security.

This pay is the literal equivalent of a non-union 2nd year apprentice in the Commonwealth right now. But you're not hiring apprentices. You can't, not for this scope of work. Here's the posted job description: **(READ JOB POSTING)**. You need licensed, experienced tradesmen, with a vast knowledge of multiple systems across the board, whether it be plumbing, HVAC, electrical, carpentry, or UPO. These aren't entry level positions. UMASS is not training anyone nor adopting a puppy, in fact, it's the opposite. Management depends on the licensed tradesmen's expertise in their fields to not only make informed decisions but to even have someone legally working on these highly specialized systems according to code.

Now, to even the untrained ear, does this sound like a job description deserving of a 2nd year apprentice wage? (PAUSE) Yet, management's been allowed to do this for years, and it shows.

How does it show?

In 2018, there was a third-party study of UMASS Boston's Facilities Management conducted by APPA, the Association of Physical Plant Administrators. It's about 100 pages long, but here are a handful of excerpts. "Members of the review team were selected to comprise higher education facility managers who are experienced in managing complex institutions comparable in size and complexity to UMASS Boston" which includes, amongst others, Executive Director, Plant Operations at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and the Executive Director of Facilities Management at the University of Colorado at Denver.

"it is essential that there be efforts to optimize operations and reduce or eliminate discretionary or unnecessary expenses. (Is everybody sitting down for this one?) There is a relatively heavy reliance on outside contracting of core services in the Dept of Facilities. There is NO comparative data to support this approach." Shocking right? Management tells us they can't afford to pay us a living wage, but they can pay 4 times the amount to subcontractors making prevailing wage, to pull from the same work-orders as CSU licensed tradesmen, whether it be changing a light bulb, installing a water fountain, or painting a wall on a DAILY basis.

"A common theme throughout this report is the fact that staffing levels, particularly in the maintenance trade groups, are DRAMATICALLY low for the size and complexity of operations at UMASS Boston...Attrition via retirements and high levels of turnover have had negative effects on staff morale and overall productivity."

"Hiring and Retention: Needs attention"

"The turnover of employees within DF has fluctuated based on the difficulty to recruit and the restrictions of the current step ranking system. The grade/step system limits the department's ability to craft promotional opportunities or other financial incentives to retain staff.

And finally, "During interviews, the review team got feedback that recruitment and retention in DF is "completely broken".

So again, I ask you, to the untrained ear, does this sound like a winning strategy? Or is it the literal definition of insanity. This report's closer to a decade old, new faces, yet all the same game. I can only imagine what this report cost the taxpayer btw. I could've saved you a lot of money and just said pay people what they're worth or even remotely close to it and you'll retain them.

To management, it's nothing they don't know or haven't read before, and yet they sit there so comfortable trying to defend these wages. Why are they so comfortable? I'll give you a hint, it's not the chairs. (PAUSE) It's because everyone single one of them is making well above the median average for their respective professions. Some are even making 60-90% above.

What does that mean? It means they can't just leave here and find another job that pays the same. Meanwhile any CSU licensed tradesmen can leave here today and find a job that pays 40% more, STARTING. You would think I'm exaggerating with these numbers. Look them up for yourself within the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. Some of management are making what surgeons make, while they pay the rest of us like peasants. I LITERALLY brought home more money home on Unemployment than I do working full-time here. Just to be clear I'm not coming from a point of envy or looking for sympathy, it's quite the opposite. Pay people what they're worth.

Management asked me "Hey Rich, how ya liking the job?" I like the job, it's my scope of work, but this pay is fiscally unsustainable. "We'll could you do side work?" How many jobs do you have to work to support your family? A license Master plumber in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts maintaining a (READ job posting) has to work two jobs just to survive. Make it make sense.

I've never seen such an underlying disdain for blue-collar licensed tradesmen in all my life. The same blue-collar licensed tradesmen that were here, working and maintaining this facility during COVID while everyone else was in the safety of their own homes. The same blue-collar workers that were considered "essential". The plumber, the electrician, the carpenter, the HVAC tech, the Utility Plant Operator...we can't work from home. This campus does not maintain itself. If it sounds like it's management vs us, that's because it is. This is the unfortunate culture management has created with these wages.

One of the first "priorities" handed over for bargaining by management was "Strategic Priority 4: Enriching Our Human Core" (READ ATTACHMENT)

You can almost choke on the audacity. This is nothing but empty rhetoric.

There is nothing in these wages that resembles "quality of work-life" or a "Human Core". The only thing these wages resemble is exploitation. No, no, something significant has to happen and it's beyond overdue. Pay people what they're worth or even remotely close to it. What is "remotely close to it"? Every licensed tradesmen should be started at Grade 26 Step 4 AFTER they complete their probation. If this sounds outrageous to you, this is the hard pill you need to swallow, especially in academia: Our trade licenses are worth more on the open job market than a lot of your 4 degrees, not all, but a lot. This statistical FACT needs to start being acknowledged. It's your decades old wages that are outrageous.

Beacon Magazine had an amusing cover recently. The Chancellor, the "New Era" for UMASS Boston. The same guy who makes \$540k a year and has not one, but three reserved parking spots on campus. Does the Chancellor pay for parking? This "New Era" needs to begin with "New Wages".

TESTIMONY 15

My name is Lauren Owens. I have worked for the university for 30 years. I started at 19 years old. I grew up on this campus. Two of my aunts worked here and encouraged me to apply because after I graduated High School because I had no idea what I wanted to do. I've been here ever since. The students and the people I work directly with are the reason I have stayed all these years.

My last upgrade was in 2003 from a 15 to a 17. I think I may have been one of the first ones to be upgraded to a 17 in CLA. I have been at my top step since 2008. 16 years only receiving the state increases. In those 16 years there were some that were 0% & 1%. from 2016 -2023 my pay went up by \$7,386, that's about \$40.00 per pay period, an average of .72 cents per hour. My parking in 2016 was \$600 in 2023 it was \$1,405.53. My car insurance went from \$903 to \$6000. Health insurance went from \$3,939.59 to \$5,544.52. Just those 3 instances, I am negative \$799.40. That doesn't account for the record high inflation, taxes, gas... Let's go a little further back – in 2009 my health insurance was \$124.66/pp \$2,556.51/year – 2024 it is \$263.80/pp \$6,098/year. More than Double and we now have higher deductibles, higher co-pays, which add on to our everyday expenses. My pay hasn't doubled, but everything else has more than doubled! How could I work for an institution for 30 years and my take home pay is going down? It's time that longevity and loyalty is recognized.

I moved to the Classics Department in 2006. Throughout those years I went from being a buyer, watching over the budget and making sure the department stayed in the black, to doing every aspect of managing the department. We have also increased in size, more faculty and students and added the Department of Religious Studies on to ours. We have added and grown a graduate program, and a summer intensive Latin Conventiculum that attracts teachers from all across the country. We have gone from using a data base for accounting and purchasing to using People soft and Summitt. We went from submitting our course schedules on paper to learning another new system, WISER, where we enter schedules, enroll students and assign if we are having final exams. We have had to learn and add new student hires into the HR EPAF system. We have seen the elimination of other colleges and had to take on those responsibilities. Most recently, I've been given another role of "property manager". I need to keep track of all computer inventory and property passes in my department. I could go on and on but these are a few examples.

I first realized I was way under compensated when a professional staff friend in enrollment management applied for a business manager position in an academic department. She sent me the job description and said it sounds like a lot. I read it and realized it was only a portion of my

responsibilities. That department has 3 administrative staff, 2 professional and 1 classified, to spread the same work I do out.

I began doing my research on other areas. A small program in my area has 2 professional staff splitting the work that I do. I also learned within another department, a larger department, a person who is doing scheduling, payroll, advising is a professional staff, although this person has a large volume of students and staff, she does not have nearly the amount of responsibilities I have.

I am the only administrator in my department and all the responsibilities fall on me.

It has been two & ½ years since I submitted my first upgrade request since 2003. I was told that it takes a while for HR to get back to staff, so don't expect to hear anything for months. To my surprise, a little over a month later I received a letter denying my petition. Not only was it a denial, but my name was spelt wrong, it had the wrong job title. To me it showed how little effort he put into it. My chair asked for an appeal and was ignored. We emailed numerous times and finally we had an "appeal" meeting 5 months later. There was no intention on hearing me out or changing his mind. We were told by Mr. Simpler, "you people get comfortable around here, if you want more money apply for other jobs." If I'm overworked the dean's office should hire another person. I said, So, instead of compensating me for the work I do, you'd rather the university spend more money and hire another person? He said that wasn't what he said. It was exactly what he said. He also repeatedly told me I was in the "administrative assistant description" but I have an email, from HR, saying they don't have job descriptions, and my title is a Buyer II. I was then told the only chance of being upgraded was to do a reclassification into PSU.

I didn't want to change unions, but I decided to play along. I originally asked for a CSU grade 20 knowing another admin had just been upgraded. When matching up my job duties to job descriptions, I match up with Business Operations Manager (PSU) job posting. If you compare the job descriptions posted and responsibilities of them, I am doing at minimum level grade 20 CSU, but I am closer to level 32 with the descriptions posted by Human Resources. I also have additional duties that can be found in other PSU Jobs. After putting in time and effort submitting the reclassification, HR came back saying "the job" is a grade 28. He graded me – not the responsibilities. It would mean no additional compensation. When I reached out to the PSU union, they looked it over and said there were TOO many responsibilities, these responsibilities should be divided, and it was definitely higher than a grade 28. This man in hr, who hadn't even worked at the university for a year, making double my salary, was playing with my livelihood!

I decided to take baby steps. I took a grade 18 job description, matched it up with my responsibilities and added additional responsibilities I have. Mr. Simpler was now gone from HR, but the same game continued. I was turned down again. Even after matching my responsibilities up with a grade 18 job posting. On December 5, 2023, my chair emailed Mary Flaherty, and you Mickey, asking to appeal this decision as soon as possible (before the end of Fall term). We are now into the FA 24 term and still no appeal hearing. I still stand by I should be higher than an 18, but as I was told by Mr. Simpler – they do not have any job descriptions in HR. It's time to update those grades to correspond with our responsibilities.

This alone shows the inequality on campus. People coming in need a higher starting wage, we need job descriptions, and we need a career ladder. Bottom line, we need more money, and we need people in HR to do the right thing!

Other employees have been upgraded numerous times in the past 5 years. Staying in the same department, same type of work, but the responsibilities have evolved as mine have. I have not asked for an upgrade in the past 21 years, I should have years ago, but here I am now asking to be appropriately compensated for the work I do, and to compensate others, who like me have been stuck having more and more responsibilities added to our positions.

CSU Admins do not have one job title. We wear many hats.

We are:

Business & Operations Manager

Administrative Manager

Program Manager

Scheduling Manager

Financial Manager

Graduate Program Coordinator

Program Coordinator

These titles don't even begin to describe the amount of responsibility that goes along with it, and it's time we have appropriate grades and titles.

I'm going to shift to my homelife. I had my kids in 2004 & 2005. They are both in college now. My son goes to Bridgewater State and wants to be a High School English Teacher. My Daughter is in her first year at UMass Amherst and wants to be a physical therapist. I live in the town I grew up in. My house is 3 houses up from the home my husband grew up in. As I've told one of our newer faculty members, us Massachusetts people don't move far. My kids have chosen to stay close by too. I am lucky my son chose to commute. As we all know the cost of

education has raised exponentially. Food, household necessities, health costs, medications, car insurance, and parking. It has raised so much that the raises I have received over the past 10 years has not kept up.

It's time for CSU to be part of the overhaul. All the other unions have been acknowledged and worked with. It is now our time. What we are asking for is a fraction of what was granted to other unions.

About 10 years ago the CLA Dean's office started having Department Administrators Meetings. At one of the first meetings, we went around the room and introduced ourselves. What it showed was the admins had been with the university either over 15 years or under 5. There was no in between. The Associate Dean Hartwell commented on it asking what happened in between those years. People are not staying. The cost is too high to work here, and the pay reflects it. Walking in the door you already have to pay \$120.00/month for parking or pay for other means of transportation. The Boston areas cost of living is through the roof. We need this change to happen and happen now!

Longevity needs to happen too. Having the years of service and institutional knowledge makes us invaluable employees.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

TESTIMONY 16

IT IS TIME TO STEP UP TO MANAGEMENT!! The Reclass Project has told management that the lowest living wage for any CSU employee needs to be \$62,483 and not a penny lower!

That is the cost for a single adult, no children, living in or around the metropolitan Boston area and of course, if you are a single parent of one or more children, that salary clearly needs to be higher to support your family.

I, Christine Boseman Burns, am "standing with agreement with our CSU Members/Employee/ members that's close to retirement.

As an Administrative Assistant II and working at UMB for 33yrs, I've had the opportunity to work as an classified staff employee, I've work at other departments that allowed me to learn, take classes in the day and at night, and experience more job professional duties that's required within.

I've been working as a grades 13/ steps were low due to my first hiring rate, grade 15/ step 14 for 27 yrs, and now my grade 17/ step 14 for 2 yrs.

As an CSU employee and "Union Member" it has taught me what any employee should receive for his/her legal rights to earn for their living. UMASS Boston has taken our union into negativity since I've started in 1990. As a classified staff member and doing my daily job duties, being helpful with co-workers, attending meetings, and having the opportunity to take UMB classes, and I received a BA in Labor Studies. Although this opportunity was given it didn't help change my "funding", health insurance, or safety while working.

Human resources, chancellors, statehouse, and board of trustees has always denied classified staff union members our funding increase in pay. we've had to fight within bargaining every 1 - 3 years. the issues that we've addressed now to the above we're still asking, fighting, and bargaining for the same issues for over 30+ years of our lives. for our funding, kids, housing, rentals, medical and prescriptions, food, childcare, job duties, and safety while working.

AS an CSU Staff Member the feeling is nothing that "A STAFF MEMBER" do in his/her job isn't acknowledge, appreciated, or granted full funding that we've EARNED!

Enough is enough... We've earned our full increase in funding, lower our health insurance, better our safety working areas, lower the parking fees, and better our asking within 2024-2025 bargaining agreement.

TESTIMONY 17

I am writing this letter today in support of the Unions proposal for wage increases and an updated pay scale.

As a union member I can attest to the fact that the current pay scale and delay of raises through the years has had an adverse effect on all union members, across all the unions at UMB.

As a union member who has surpassed step 14 on the pay scale I can be certain that the raises that we do get, when we get them 6-12 months past the contract end date, are not meeting the standard cost of living increases.

A couple examples of this that are specifically related to UMB are health insurance increases and the current bargaining for an increase in the cost of parking. Each year the GIC bargains with health insurance companies for cost, and what the university will pay and what the employee will pay, and every year the cost goes up, and usually co-pays, deductibles, and cost of prescriptions go up as well, yet for those of us at step 14, our pay does not go up unless the university bargains a pay raise and actually pays that raise on time. Which means there are a lot of us on campus that effectively take a pay cut, and the raises that we do get, they do not make much of a difference in our pay checks. The current bargaining to increase the cost of parking will just take more money out of our paychecks will affect not only CSU members, it will affect ALL staff, faculty and students, many of which are already struggling.

Additionally, many CSU members are working without a job description that adequately reflects their job duties with years old titles that are completely inaccurate to their actual position, which also effects what grade level they are paid at. Adding to that, there have been CSU positions that people have resigned or retired from and are done away with, leaving the employees who stay to pick up more duties and not be adequately compensated for them.

Outside of the university employees are struggling with basic cost of living, everything has gone up – housing, food, commuter expenses such as gas or public transportation, clothing, utilities – and yes, this is a fact of life that the cost of everything goes up, however, no one who works a full-time job should be struggling to pay their bills.

No one on this campus should need to consider using a personal day because they can't afford to put gas in their car.

No one on this campus should be going into medical debt because they have a disabled child at home.

No one on this campus should have to decide between keeping the lights on or buying food.

No one on this campus should have to have a part time job in order to pay their bills.

Yet, many CSU member are.

CSU employees are the backbone of this university, we keep the lights on, we keep the buildings warm in the winter and cool in the summer, we make sure that the bathrooms work properly, when something is in need of repair it is a CSU member who fixes it. We are the front facing staff that takes on all of the administrative tasks of the departments and offices and makes sure that our supervisors and directors have everything they need to do their jobs effectively. We are the staff that knows the names of all the students who come to our offices, whether it's advising, counseling or the Ross Center, we help the students get what they need to succeed in their academic careers here at U. Mass Boston. We deserve to be paid a living wage; we deserve fair compensation for our work.

Those of us with longevity at the University no longer get guaranteed yearly step raises after 13 years (step 14), which means we are at the mercy of the University to bargain fairly AND timely, so that we are not waiting months for our pay to increase, while everything else that we need just to survive is increasing.

TESTIMONY 18

Last winter my department encouraged me to apply for a position reclassification because *they* believed I was working above and beyond my existing job description. Despite their support, we still had to jump through hoops for months on end before I was finally approved in late Spring. I celebrated by going to the food court and treating myself to a sandwich which cost about \$11 I think, instead of the usual slice of pizza I get for about \$3.50 at the time - it's now gone up to about \$3.70.

And while I was grateful to have gotten this upgrade - *especially* when I know how many of my fellow CSU members have been unjustly denied reclassifications - that gratitude was quickly replaced by panic, because that very same week I was informed that our landlord would not be renewing our lease when it expired in August.

The average cost of a 1-bedroom apartment right now is roughly \$2,750. In 2023 my base pay at this University was about \$43,800 - which comes to about \$3,600 a month, meaning housing costs alone would cost me about 75% of my paycheck.

I'm fortunate enough that my wife and I were eventually able to scrape together enough to secure an apartment - but it was not an easy process. Our applications were denied at six different apartments. This was emotionally demoralizing, mentally exhausting, and financially crippling - we burnt away what little savings we had on application fees and my credit score plummeted from being run so many times.

One broker gave us a chance to provide an explanation for why our credit scores were so bad, because he wanted to give us a chance to explain any extenuating circumstances that might convince the landlord to approve us despite the numbers on the page. I knew the question came from a place of good intentions, but it honestly broke something in me, because I simply didn't have an answer - I work hard every day and it's still not enough, just about every penny I earn goes towards meeting my basic needs.

The apartment we did finally manage to secure has clear signs of mold and pests, just like the apartment we had been in previously - and I can't help but notice the parallels to the state of the buildings on this campus. I spend my days in Wheatley Hall - where signs on the water fountains warn people that water isn't safe to drink, where there are known air quality issues, where we have mice in our offices on a regular basis, where soggy ceiling tiles and mysterious drips are a regular occurrence - and then I go home to my apartment with so many similar issues.

This is the reality that the wages this University pays us forces CSU members to live with. I can't help but feel outraged every time this University has the audacity to call itself "health promoting" - whose health are you promoting? Because I sure don't feel like it's mine or the health of my fellow CSU members.

I got married last October - a year later I see no way we'll ever be able to afford a home, able to afford to have children, able to build a life of any sort if we continue in our current financial situation.

I'm tired of spending all my energy just to scrape by. A university is supposed to be a place that builds people up and empowers them to dream of improving themselves and their world - I wish I could say this has been the case for me at this University, but instead every time I get a paycheck and have it immediately disappear on bills, I feel hopeless.

Despite *all* of this, I love my job. I love the students and the colleagues I work with, I love the programs we run and the events we host. I love the energy of this campus - I just wish this University loved me back in the same way.

I look around at some of my fellow CSU members who have been here for decades and wonder how they've managed to last all these years - and I understand it's because things haven't always been this way. There was a time when this University actually paid its employees high enough wages to not only survive, but to *live*.

That's all I'm asking for, and that's all we're asking for - please bargain with us fairly and honestly, so that we can afford to continue showing up here to do our jobs, and still be able to go home and live full lives.

TESTIMONY 19

Hello, I'm Isabelle Ribeiro Antoine. I have been a CSU member since 2015 and employed by the university since 2012. I love my time here serving UMB students and faculty. It's been a positive contribution to my professional growth.

However, since the pandemic the cost of living has risen. I have been struggling greatly financially. I have had to move into my mother-in-law's basement which is mold infested.

I had no choice but to live there while pregnant and for the first year of my baby's life. Sadly, this took a toll on my health and wellbeing. The solution I found to get out of this living situation was to use my retirement funds.

I have also had to use my retirement funds to pay off some pressing debt. Unfortunately, I still have debt, and I am still paying my retirement back. Because of this I cannot make contributions to my retirement savings at this time.

I have also had to stop driving into the university because I cannot afford to pay for parking. I currently have multiple tickets to my name, due to not affording to pay the parking daily rate. Because my entire paycheck goes to paying bills, there is nothing left over for my family or even the parking fees.

Please give us healthy living wages so staff can thrive as well. Thank you.