

Candidates for 2019/2020 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 a 150-word statement.

Vice President – special election, Vote for One

Caroline L. Coscia, Senior Lecturer II, Political Science

The past three years I've had the privilege to serve as a grievance officer, on the elections committee and bargaining team as well as FSU Executive Committee parliamentarian. Each position provided insight into FSU operations specifically the need of continuously ensuring processes are followed, transparent and communicated in a timely manner. It is important that Tenured, Pre-Tenure, Librarian and NTT unique needs are known, acknowledged and any FSU action reflects the impact on each.

The challenge under Janus is to maintain membership. The FSU must be able to respond to 'What is the added value of my membership?' We must provide members a reason to remain a member. This requires balancing the desires of some who see the FSU as contract focused while others desire being more community active. I ask for your support to make the FSU a union for all as we move into a post Janus reality.

Tenured Faculty – Vote for Two

Jeffrey Melnick, Professor of American Studies

Our university is in crisis—but it is a crisis ignored by the President's office and some campus administrators. In my current term as a member of the FSU Executive Committee it has become clear to me that our faculty union must lead the campus in fighting the effort to impose short-sighted austerity measures on our students, staff, and faculty. As the first person to serve in the newly-created role of FSU Communications Director, it has become clear to me that we must do a much better job of communicating with allies on campus (the professional and classified staff unions, the graduate employee union, undergraduate students) and off-campus (local and state legislators, members of the media, etc.). If I am re-elected I will dedicate myself to doing this work of coalition-building as we continue to fight to defend the embattled urban mission of the university.

Tenured candidates continued on next page

Sylvia I. Mignon, Professor of Sociology

In 27 years at UMass Boston, I directed the criminal justice program, the BA and MA in Human Services, was associate dean of the College of Public and Community Service, and am now in Sociology. I am a seasoned clinical social worker with management, administrative, and advocacy experience. It is time to re-focus our attention on building a diverse, student-centered campus where decisions emanate from support for the urban mission, and priority is given to excellence in education. I stand for promoting social justice and equity for students, faculty, and staff to improve overall morale. Our union needs to relentlessly oppose the parking fee increases, especially for students; continue our fight for increased funding from the Commonwealth; oppose administrative decisions to enlarge class sizes without the input of faculty; promote equitable compensation for female and male professors; and work collaboratively with our sister unions.

Arthur Millman, Associate Professor of Philosophy

The FSU is at a critical point in its history. The financial pressures on UMB are intense and we need to resist attempts to make faculty, staff, and students bear an unfair share of the burden of balancing the budget. Respectful treatment of the faculty is indispensable for effective teaching and achievement of the goals that we all share for students. The FSU now needs to intensify its efforts to communicate with its members, involve them in policy making, and persuade all members of the bargaining unit that it is in their interest to support the Union. The FSU must strengthen its collaboration with the other unions on campus and with students. I would like to help with the tasks of consulting widely and achieving consensus on how to achieve our goals. I bring decades of experience at UMB in teaching, in service work, and as a former department chair to these tasks.

Alex Mueller, Associate Professor of English

I first joined a union in 1997 as a high school teacher and have been a supporter of unions ever since. Despite our many victories, I have witnessed steadily increasing attacks on public educators lead to our current privatization crisis, which compels me, and I believe all of us, to seek responsible and efficient means of collective action against our eroding working conditions. This means that we must insist on a more democratic union, one that makes transparent our methods for achieving our goals, including strategies for collective bargaining and responses to budget cuts. To establish a university culture that values labor, it is imperative that we work with our colleagues in the classified and professional staff unions in our efforts. And most importantly, we must pressure administrators and legislators to appropriate state funds to our campus. To do otherwise is to abandon public education itself.

Non-tenure track – Vote for Two

Tracy Brown, Senior Lecturer, ESL Center in Academic Support Programs

My affiliation with UMB started as an undergraduate in 1985. I was active in student organizing around the Writing Proficiency Exam and fee hikes. I did my graduate studies here and was hired to teach as NTT faculty in 2007. I have been active with the NTT caucus of FSU and Save UMB. Over the years, I've seen many changes that make me question the institution's commitment to the urban mission. I know that my NTT colleagues are some of the school's most diehard defenders of that mission, and I would be honored to represent their interests on the FSU Executive Committee. I see a strong union as essential to fight at the state level to win back funds that have been pilfered from the public sector through tax cuts for the rich, and, at the campus level, to make sure our institution does no harm to faculty, staff and students.

Joseph Ramsey, Lecturer, English and American Studies

I am running for re-election because I want to continue the work we've begun: to make our union more democratic, more equitable, and more responsive to the threats we face. Over the past two years, I have worked tirelessly with colleagues to make positive changes within the FSU, while building strategic bonds of solidarity with UMB staff, students and community. As author of numerous Ex Com motions and initiatives, I have worked to increase the participation, transparency, and relevance of our union, while making sure that the concerns of NTT faculty are never left behind. In the Coalition to Save UMB, I continue to help build campaigns on behalf of UMB's public and urban mission, in the face of unjustified parking fee hikes and other barriers to access. I welcome your collaboration as we strive to defend and improve our working conditions, so we can better serve our UMB students.

Pre-tenure – Vote for One

Meghan E Kallman, Assistant Professor in the School for Global Inclusion & Social Development

I would use service on the Executive Committee to contribute to building strength, vision, and a sense of collective among faculty. If elected, I look forward to working on major issues affecting both our students and our faculty: ongoing cuts to Higher Ed and the many implications of that, research support and leave, and issues related to parking. The challenges we face are particularly acute because we are public sector workers, and I believe a union is one of the most effective tools we have to ensure a supportive and safe learning and teaching environment for our students and ourselves. I believe deeply in our mission as an urban public research institution, and I look forward to working with colleagues across the university to sustain and enhance UMB's work.