

# THE PULSE

JULY 2011

## EXTRA, EXTRA: ON-CALL GRIEVANCE SETTLED!!

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PSU-BOSTON

You might have heard a collective cheer go up on Friday, June 4, 2011 when approximately 43 UMass Boston employees opened their pay stubs to find that they had finally received pay due them for years of being on-call. At a labor/management meeting on June 13, the PSU and management signed an agreement that correctly identifies our members who are (or have been) on call and paid them retroactively for their on-call work going back to 2007 – a total award of about \$600,000.

In the Contract Spotlight in the last edition of *The Pulse*, we reported to you about the ongoing grievance regarding on-call employees. If you recall, our contract defines on-call employees as those employees who are required to respond “to calls” – emergency phone calls or emails – in their “off hours.” Under Article 18.3 of our contract, these employees were supposed to have been compensated for the time that they were on-call.

Over the past ten years, we were hearing from more and more members who were expected to be on-call, but none were being compensated for it. The union set out to identify who in our bargaining unit was on call. We developed a survey and distributed it to our members. By the time we culled the list, we had over 40 members who were then or had been on-call, and NONE of these people had been properly compensated!

The union engaged in a lengthy campaign to change that. After multiple meetings with Chancellors, consultations with management, membership petitions, grievances and other member actions, we were able to get agreement with management about most employees on call and establish the protocol for getting them compensated going forward.

But there were still major issues. There were quite a few on-call PSU members whose departments were not yet acknowledging their on-call status and we were still fighting for retroactive pay for all members who had been on call in the past without compensation. As we contin-

ued to work on these issues, the mid-June arbitration date for our class action grievance was fast approaching.

As we prepared for arbitration, we continued to work with management to see if we could resolve the matter. And after much effort from both sides, we signed an agreement that we feel good about – identifying on-call employees and giving them their due back to January 2007 or to when they started being on-call after that date. The agreement also puts processes in place to correctly identify and compensate on-call employees going forward. And it includes a “not-on-call” memo which will go to all staff who are **not** on call, so there will be no confusion about whether or not you are expected to respond to calls or emails off hours. Once that agreement was signed, management worked quickly to calculate and pay out the monies owed to our members, resulting in that collective cheer on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June.

This was a big deal! This agreement comes as the result of a lot of hard work, organizing, advocacy and perseverance. Leading the way for the PSU were our President Tom Goodkind and Vice President Anneta Argyres, who have worked tirelessly on this issue for several years. They couldn't have done it alone. The involvement of our members in documenting their situations and advocating for their due was critical to keeping the pressure on and helping move the issue toward settlement. A team of folks on the management side were also invaluable in making this happen: Maggie Peterson-Pinkham, Kim Howard, Mark Preble, and Jeff McCue worked diligently to make this happen, and when the agreement was settled, they and others in Human Resources worked quickly to get the pay to our members. We also want to thank Chancellor Motley for hearing our concern and frustration when we were not making progress on this issue and doing what he could to get the parties to the table to make this happen.



## WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD AREA REPS

The PSU has worked to bring together members to enforce our contract and to support students and fellow workers. We have taken stands for public higher education and public services. To do all these things, we have relied on an informal network of active members to keep union leaders updated on what is happening at their workplace and to communicate issues and news to co-workers. We know that this network is uneven in what gets to you and what gets back to leadership.



One of the “strategic priorities” the Chapter Board identified at its retreat this year is to find ways that we can improve our communication channels. One step in that has been the creation of this newsletter, but we’re eager to find ways to improve two-way communication. To do that, we are kicking off a campaign to establish a body of Area Representatives—something that is provided for in Article VIII our union by-laws.

In short, the plan will be to “divide” our unit into different areas composed of about 25 PSU staff members whose work areas are located near each other. We expect that there will be about 25 such areas covering the Harbor Campus and ICI downtown.

Each “area” will be represented by one Area Representative. The Area Rep’s main task will be to facilitate communication between our union leadership and our members. Area Reps would get to know the union members in their areas, welcome new hires, share info about the union, forward questions from members to the leadership, encourage members to complete surveys, sign petitions and help direct members who may have issues to the appropriate officer or grievance committee member. Area Reps will not be stewards and won’t be expected to handle grievances. As we head back into contract negotiations next year, the kind of two-way communication network that the Area Rep network would provide will be more critical than ever.

We will kick off the campaign in the fall and will work with members to set up meetings to discuss this further and elect Area Reps. Until then, it’s not too early for you to be thinking about whether this is something that interests you or whether you know someone you would like to nominate in your area.

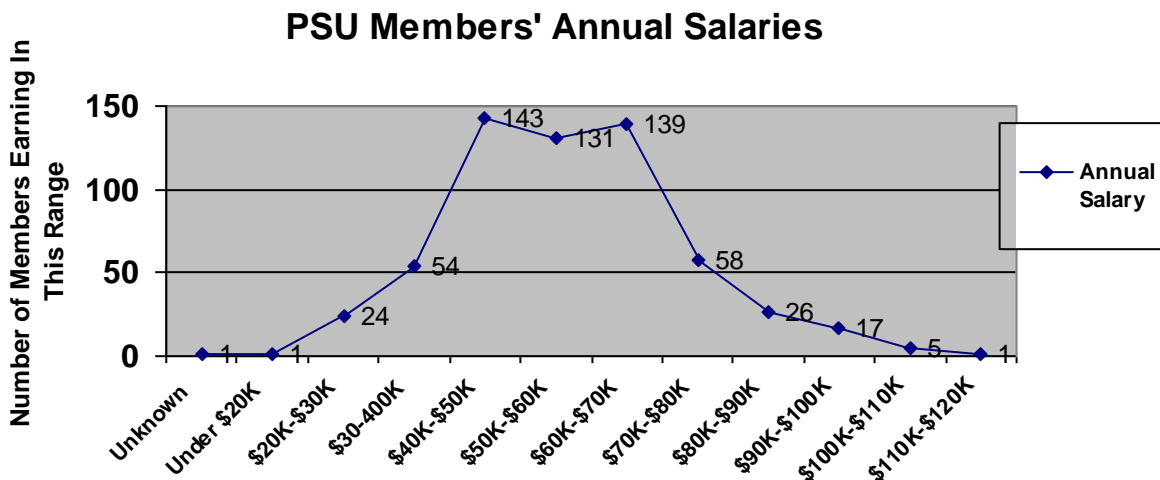
We believe this Area Rep system will be a great asset for our union. We’ll need your involvement to get it up and running.

## PSU-UMB: GETTING TO KNOW US

**Membership:** PSU UMB had 611 members as of 1/27/2011. 90% of these work full-time, or 37.5 hours/week

**Gender and Ethnicity:** 2/3 of membership is female and 2/3 is white. 11% of members are Black, 9% are Asian and 3% Hispanic, with ethnicity for 12% of members not specified.

**Annual median salaries** for all PSU UMB members is \$56,000. Incomes range from \$19,526 to \$115,330.54.



Data compiled by Mary Jo Connolly for the PSU

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

We are pleased to report that at final count 278 PSU members submitted applications and were approved for Professional Development funds this year. That's about 45% of our membership in Boston.

We received applications for a variety of purposes, including conferences, professional memberships, University College and other courses, periodical subscriptions, computer software, research assistants, training programs, and electronic equipment. The most popular request was for iPads.

At last count, the total amount of money approved for this round of professional development was approximately \$136,000.

A few reminders for those of you who were approved:

- Don't forget to spend your money! Last time we had to nag folks to actually follow through and use their funds.
- When you are spending, remember that you must use your pd funds for the purpose for which you were approved. You can't switch to something else after the fact.

- Make sure to follow the instructions for reimbursement/purchasing. You should have received an email with instructions from HR. If you didn't get it or misplaced it, we've posted the instructions on the PSU Boston website: <http://psu-umb.massteacher.org>
- The amount you spend on equipment or other items will be imputed to your taxes, but the goods belong to you — not the University.
- When you submit for payment, make sure you submit the **original** receipt.

We'd like to hear from you about whether this kind of program is something that you value. If we have the funds again in the future, do you think that this kind of professional development is a good use for them?

Last, but not least, a special shout out goes to Heather Batherwich in HR who went above and beyond to make this happen. Next time you see Heather, tell her thanks!

## COMING SOON: PSU MEMBER SURVEY

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR A SURVEY MONKEY COMING YOUR WAY SOON.



The PSU is looking for your feedback on some of the different issues facing UMass Boston—how best to address the anticipated budget shortfall, what cost saving or revenue enhancing measures do you support, what you think about the University's strategic priorities? We are eager to hear your ideas about these concerns and think together about how we as a union can work together to address them.

To that end, starting in July 2011, the PSU will circulate a confidential, online survey to all our members. It will only take a few minutes to fill out and your answers will help to inform us better about your concerns and ideas! We hope that you will be on look-out and take time to respond!

## WHAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT SECTION IN OUR CONTRACT?

What's the most important section of our union contract? (You will be tested!) This may surprise you, but we would say that the most important section of the contract is the **TABLE OF CONTENTS**.

As our union president is fond of saying, unless you suffer from insomnia, it's unlikely that you will plow through the entire 100+ pages of densely worded text that make up our contract. That's fair. Leave that for the negotiating team and the grievance committee. But as union members, it is important for all of us to know the range of things that our union contract does cover and one good way to get a sense of that is by reading (it won't take long) the "table of contents."

Your assignment: Go to your contract, read the Table of Contents and let us know what articles or sections you'd like to know more about. Send your ideas for future **CONTRACT SPOTLIGHTS** to [prostaff.union@umb.edu](mailto:prostaff.union@umb.edu).

If you haven't already picked up a printed copy of our contract, you can request one by emailing us at [prostaff.union@umb.edu](mailto:prostaff.union@umb.edu) or you can find the contract on the PSU Boston website: <http://psu-umb.massteacher.org>

## A PROACTIVE RESPONSE TO WORKPLACE BULLYING

### By Peter Terres

*Peter is a Professional Staff member in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences and a member of the PSU Grievance Committee.*

Bullying has come into the spotlight recently with the tragic teenage suicide in South Hadley last year. This event spurred legislative action, journalistic investigations, articles, and school system initiatives to prevent bullying and the damaging impact on our children.

Bullying in the work place is no less harmful. A 2007 study found that 37% of surveyed workers reported being bullied, and 12% reported witnessing bullying; the combined total of the workforce directly impacted by acts of bullying was just over 49%. Bullying damages those targeted, the morale of co-workers and everyone's productivity. Yet we behave as if it is normal; workplace bullying is described as the hidden epidemic. Corrective actions have been taken: legislative initiatives have been put forward, awareness campaigns have been conducted, and workers themselves are creating protective responses. For example, some workers have a code and surround the colleague that a bully has targeted for harassment or other mistreatment refusing to continue their work until the bully apologizes.

But to date our response to workplace bullying has been reactive. I am not content to wait until the bully misbehaves; rather I intend to build a collaborative respectful work environment in which bullying is seen for the destructive, self-serving, manipulative power play that it is.

First, an important semantic point; the term "target" is used because the bully selects prey strategically; often a more productive, more creative colleague. The motivating intention is negative and self-serving. The malicious behavior is cleverly masked; errors are targeted to create a veneer of respectability. The objective is not to correct, but to intimidate and control.

#### The bully's battle plan and adrenaline dependency

The bully's tool is fear. A confrontation is set up, designed to frighten and control the target and everyone in the vicinity. An ambush is one preferred technique. The bully plans to exploit "the flight or flight" reaction, a well documented biological phenomena. The trap consists of the dilemma; "Stand and fight a battle that you are not prepared for or run away broadcasting your status as prey."

The bully leverages the biological reaction in two ways. First, he or she uses the adrenaline rush they experience, to sharpen their own performance. Second, they monitor their target's response and orchestrate their attack to use the target's the adrenaline rush against them. We have all heard colleagues say, "I was so shocked I was speechless. I just could not respond." This reflects more on

the malicious nature of the bully's attack than on the target who was set up. Yet the bully struts like a conquering hero and chides the target for weakness.

The bully cynically uses fear and entrapment to gain control and power. He or she declares victory with self-serving sound bites such as, "If you can't take the heat stay out of the kitchen." The bully dreams of being the Wizard of OZ controlling the workers and the organization with smoke and mirrors. It seems likely they are adrenaline junkies, who use the ambush to get the high.



For much too long we have gone along with the bully's self-serving cynical view. We do not exploit the bully's blind spot. Many people are unaware of another biological reaction to emergencies and danger; perhaps because we tend to neglect and ignore our better nature. There are, in fact, numerous examples of positive self-sacrificing behavior in the face of danger and threat. When we hear about these we believe they are unusual and describe them as heroic, unbelievable, or extraordinary. But those who act admirably in the face of danger will say when asked, "Anyone would do what I did;" because it is a natural reaction!

#### Three examples of positive action in the face of danger or great fear

These examples taken from events related to the first week of May 2011. The first in the form of a question: What was a surprising problem many Americans faced that frightening day after September 11, 2001? This follows the announcement of the death of Osama bin Laden.

The second example involves the CBS broadcast aired on 60 minutes Sunday, May 1, 2011. Describing her ordeal in Egypt, Lara Logan told how the battery failed and her camera lights went out. A mob of men then ripped her out of the hands of her bodyguard and camera crew; ripped her clothes off her body and carried her away trying apparently to rip her limb from limb. She was able to escape this gruesome, brutal attack when the frenzied mob ran into a chain-link fence and dropped her body into the laps of some Egyptian women. These women saved her life by covering her body with their own; protecting her from the violent, frenzied mob. The Egyptian women did not fight, freeze, or flee. Their response was positive and protective.

Just a few days earlier NPR aired a story of an Alabama family caught by a tornado. A mother and father grabbed a bunch of pillows, covered their pregnant daughter and lay on top of the pillows to hold them in place, protecting their daughter and unborn grandchild as the storm tore their home apart brick-by-brick. What caused this protective behavior?

And the answer to the question in the first example: The problem that surprised many Americans on September 12, 2001 was that

## BULLYING CONTINUED

they had to wait weeks before they could donate blood! They knew that most of the victims of the cowardly attacks the day before were dead. Why did they call the Red Cross to donate blood: Who needed blood? Fear was in the air, not airplanes; but where was “fight or flight?”

The natural biological positive reaction is a fact, compassion, self-sacrifice and positive action occur naturally in emergencies and frightening situations. Human beings even sacrifice their lives for total strangers without thinking or planning. The behavior is innate, nor is it limited to our species; documentation and legends tell us that animals suckle and rear human children. For example, Romulus and Remus, founders of Rome, were reared by a wolf. This is the bully’s blind spot. The bully, self-absorbed and obsessed with power and control, does not plan for positive behavior: self-sacrifice, collaboration or compassion.

### Two Action Steps to Redress the Bully’s Devastating Impact

I have two concrete suggestions based on my analysis of the weak points of the bully’s strategy. The first is to mobilize your own positive natural response in the face of the threat; the second is to build a stronger community by acknowledging contributions of the broad range of co-workers who contribute to our mission. The first suggestion is to be used during the bully’s intimidating attack; the second at any other time once or twice a day.

The bully plans their attack and expects you to fight or to run. He does not count on the fact that you have a third natural response to protect someone or something. As soon as you see the attack coming, find someone or something to protect, other than yourself. Suggest that you move to another location so that the students or co-workers do not get frightened. Move a vase of flowers out of the way so they are not overturned. It does not matter what you protect, as long as you do not try to protect or defend yourself at this time – you will do that later.

The second thing to protect or preserve is their words, exactly what they are disturbed about: their worries, their concerns, their ideas for improvement. This will work if you are by yourself when the attack is launched. In this case you tell the bully that because this is so important to them that you want to get it right, so you want to record it verbatim, meaning word-for-word. Pull out a pad of paper and start recording what they are saying. Stop them if they are going too fast, tell them it is not clear if there is a gap in the logic, ask them to repeat themselves if you miss a word. If this makes them frustrated, suggest that you record the conversation. Ask if they want you to go get a tape-recorder.

It is important that you do not attempt to protect yourself, explain yourself, or tell your side of the story at this time – you will do that later. Your purpose here is to protect their words, their concerns, their ideas. Neither should you try to improve on their ideas, and you will be tempted. The bully will use your ideas shamelessly and claim them as their own. This is not the time to cooperate with the bully but to preserve their ideas and words. The bully will dredge up the most hateful material they can find. They will try to make you feel useless, but act like you are performing a very useful task for them. to every problem. Our complex institution cannot be controlled by one individual. Imagine one person being able to

teach every course taught in just one department. This does not even consider public safety, payroll, admissions or maintenance. We are inter-dependent; unable to do our work without each other. We take this for granted, and the bully uses it against us. I am asking you to make a conscious effort twice a day to acknowledge someone at UMass Boston who facilitates you in doing your job.

Go beyond thank you. When you decide to acknowledge a colleague, do so deliberately:

- 1) Tell the person what they did as specifically as you can (Tell what action they performed that made the difference.) For example, “Thank you for the email you sent 15 minutes before the meeting started;” instead of, “Thanks for the reminder.”
- 2) Tell the person why it made a difference. For example, “I was preoccupied with another project, and your email gave me the time to pull together the materials for my presentation;” rather than, “I owe you.” The purpose of this suggestion is to slow each of us down so that we are mindful of the support network of colleagues who do make a difference in our work environment; and it also serves to explain to colleagues how they are contributing to our accomplishments and success.

*. Mobilize your own positive natural response in the face of the threat; build a stronger community by acknowledging contributions of the broad range of co-workers who contribute to our mission.*

Acknowledgement is not a panacea; it is a suggestion. You may have other ideas; please try them. We can all wait for our turn to be ambushed or attacked or we can take proactive action. Whatever you decide to do, it will be best if it is individual-to-individual and specific. Parties and pep-rallies are popular, but they lack focus. It is easy to pretend at parties, but difficult in person. As we build a more collaborative norm for our workplace, the bully will have a more difficult time selling the self-serving intimidation. Then harassment and ambushes will be seen as crude and uncivilized as coughing, without covering your mouth, in a crowded room or leaving the restroom without washing your hands.

Bullying is a very serious issue in the United States. It is literally a life-or-death matter in our workplaces just as it is in our schools. We have a great deal of work to do, but one very important and effective thing that you can do today is to take some direct action to help build collaboration, mutual respect, and mindfulness in our community of UMass Boston. Once we all begin to realize how we contribute to this community, we will be more aware of the times others tear it apart for their own self-serving purposes.





## UNION LEADERS SPEAK OUT AGAINST STUDENT FEE INCREASE

When the UMass Board of Trustees met on the Boston campus on June 8, 2011, members of the faculty and staff unions joined Fund UMass Boston, PHENOM members and other members of the University community to speak against the proposed (and now approved) student fee increase and to encourage the Board to think about (and push for) alternative ways to address the budget shortfall facing the University.

PSU Boston President Tom Goodkind challenged the false choice between more cuts and higher fees and called on the Board and University to exert leadership in finding ways to fund public higher education, including progressive tax reform. (See his full remarks on the following page.)

Catherine Lynde, President of the Boston Faculty Staff Union, suggested that some of the budget crisis is of our own making, with a disproportionate percentage of resources seemingly going to high level administrative appointments. (See her remarks below)

**We'd like to hear your thoughts on the subject. Please send your comments to us at [prostaff.union@umb.edu](mailto:prostaff.union@umb.edu).**



### REMARKS BY CATHERINE LYNDE, FSU-BOSTON PRESIDENT

The following comments from Professor Catherine Lynde, President of the UMass Boston Faculty Staff Union, were presented at the Board of Trustees meeting by Professor Heike Schotten.

The University's deficit can obviously be closed with a combination of additional revenues and cost savings. I'd like to speak about what we know about the areas of increasing costs.

Let me take UMass Boston, for an example.

From Fall 2005 to Fall 2011, we see the following trends:

- The number of job titles with "Vice Chancellor", "Provost", "Dean", "Director", or "Administrator" in them grew from 254 to 334 - an increase of 32%.
- Full-time faculty grew from 445 to 525 - an 18% increase.
- Student FTE numbers grew by 34% increase, student headcount by 30%.
- Finally, the number of classified staff decreased from 341 to 331 - a 3% decrease.

I note, in particular, that the upper-level administration is expanding at twice the rate of the full-time faculty and that the full-time faculty are growing at half the rate of the student growth.

I assume something similar has happened at our sister campuses.

If so, then part of our budget problem is of our own making, because the university has chosen to commit an increasing proportion of our resources to this kind of administrative staffing.

Where can cost savings be found? Although I haven't worked here, that could easily be done and it would surely be a significant sum.

Let me make clear that I am not suggesting all these additional upper-level administrators should be laid off, (although that would surely solve our budget problems).

What I am suggesting is that it is past time for the university to ask itself whether this redirection of resources has improved the educational outcomes of our students and is therefore worth being paid for with increasing student fees.

**Check out the Fund UMass April 13th Teach-In at**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B8wi3-Gj86A>

## UNION LEADERS SPEAK OUT AGAINST STUDENT FEE INCREASE

## REMARKS BY TOM GOODKIND, PSU-BOSTON PRESIDENT

I'm Tom Goodkind, President of the Professional Staff Union at UMass Boston. Last Friday, our Chancellor spoke of optimism. He said "Optimism means that we live not in denial, but in certainty that we have the power to change for the better, and bring the world with us." And he cited as the basis for his optimism our students, the 3,637 hopeful, excited graduating seniors in front of him on that beautiful day.

It was clearly an optimistic crowd to which Chancellor Motley spoke last week, but I believe it is a deeply pessimistic board before which I appear today. I've been with the University for twenty-five years, and of course I am well aware of ballooning enrollments, new buildings, increased private fund-raising, and growing grants. But the air at the highest levels is thick with resignation, expressed well by the Fitchburg State University spokesman who said on Monday, "...we will continue to move closer and closer to being virtually privatized."

I have heard some suggest that the steady privatization of what could have been a great public higher education system won't make a difference to the students we serve, that even with steady tuition and fee increases we can still provide access to those Massachusetts families who deserve a University education and have nowhere else to go. At UMass Boston I have heard the fantasy spun by master planners that we can hold on to our poor urban students while at the same time devoting enormous resources to recruiting thousands of out-of-state and international bill-payers. I have heard people say that the apparent 25% decline in African-American students at UMass Amherst is unrelated to rising costs and the consequent focus on high-paying out-of-state students.

But the "high fee, high debt" model on which we are building our future is not a solution to the steady withdrawal of public funds—it is a slow death spiral. Even the Boston Globe recognizes that "Either the state should increase the per student subsidy or make peace with the fact that UMass is soon going to be beyond the reach of the very families it exists to serve." And when we are beyond the reach of the families we exist to serve, we will have lost our reason for existence.

It is that **making peace**—embodied in this latest student fee increase—which represents the deep pessimism of this board. Henry Rollins—former singer of the punk band Black Flag—said "My optimism wears heavy boots and is loud." But—with the possible excep-

tion of our esteemed Chancellor—the optimism of our institutional leadership wears slippers and speaks like Oliver Twist asking "Please Sir, can I have some more?"

Since last fall, there's been a piece of legislation at the State House, sponsored by Sonia Chang-Diaz and Jim O'Day, entitled "Act to Invest in our Communities," a piece of legislation which would take a few small but critical steps to rectify Massachusetts' structural deficit brought on by years of irresponsible tax cuts for the wealthy. A relatively minor rectification like this would generate 1.2 billion annually while reducing taxes for the bottom half of Massachusetts households. Yet has there been a single peep from the institution's leadership about this legislation, or the need to generate more revenue from those Massachusetts corporations and individuals who can most afford it? Has there been any hint of willingness to confront the cowards in the legislature who hide behind the so-called "lack of appetite for taxes"?

No, what we get are vague letters to the Globe about "fixing funding models." It seems that our institution's leadership has essentially given up on the fight to keep public higher education public, and decided to make do with whatever handouts we can get from the state, while relying more and more on students who can pay and a "high fee, high debt" model for those who cannot.

Why would a union speak out against student fee increases, when our members' jobs are at stake? For the same reason that Presidents Wilson and Caret denounced in their Globe letter the destructive choice of ever-deeper cuts or ever-higher fees: **we simply do not accept that choice**, even if it appears that the Board of Trustees does. Rather than giving up and conceding to privatization, we think it's time to start creating a new reality. We heard UMass Boston JFK Award winner Alia MacPherson tell us "Do not accept the word 'No' when you are fighting for your destiny." We do not believe the budget has to forever be balanced on the backs of students or the backs of staff, and unlike this board, we do not believe that privatization is inevitable. We are genuine optimists. We believe there is another way, and we believe that the leadership of this great institution—rather than giving up on public funding and our public mission—should lead in the battle to restore both. And we pledge ourselves to join in that effort.



## DEAR MISS MANAGEMENT: THE DEFINITIVE SOURCE OF YOUR RIGHTS AT WORK



Dear Miss Management:

*I've worked here for a little over 5 years and I watch my vacation time accrue each year, but I've never really had the chance to use more than a few days here and there. It kind of seems like it's frowned upon by my boss – there's always this or that coming or a deadline to meet. Frankly, I haven't really pushed to take an extended vacation.*

*Well about six weeks ago, I got a great invitation to meet up with some friends to go camping for 10 days out west this summer. Needless to say, I was*

*psyched. I immediately sent my boss an email, letting him know that I was requesting two weeks at the end of July. Nothing. After waiting a week or so, I asked my boss if he'd received my request and if it had been approved. I told him I needed to make reservations to get the best deal. He told me that he was waiting for other requests to come in and he'd have to sort through them and then let me know. Well, time's a wasting. It's now been almost five weeks and I've not been approved yet.*

*I actually took it upon myself to ask the other people in my area whether they were planning to be away during that time and no one said yes. But one of my colleagues told me she'd heard that our boss doesn't like the idea of us being away for two weeks at a time – just in case something comes up. But as far as I can see, there's nothing special happening at that time that couldn't be handled by others in the office.*

*So now we're coming up on July and I have a spiffy new tent, but no definite answer about whether I can put it to use. What is the deal with vacation? Do I have a right to my vacation time? And what if he says no at this late date?*

Sincerely,

One Unhappy Camper

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Unhappy Camper:

You know what they say about “all work and no play” and, I would add to that sentiment, that in addition to making one dull, all work and no play makes one tired, over-worked and stressed out and generally unpleasant to be around. Vacation time is NOT just a bunch of numbers that accrue on your pay stub. It is time you've earned and time that I encourage you to take.

As you probably know, there is an accrual schedule for vacation time. (You can find it in Article 22 of your union contract.) From what I'm gathering, you've been in the employ of the institution for between 5 and 10 years, so you are accruing 21 vacation days a year. Now it's true that you can keep accruing vacation time, up to

a maximum of 64 days (or 480 hours). But why would you want to do that? Once you hit that ceiling, your vacation time rolls over into sick time (which you might need if you never take vacation) but while you can collect 20% of your sick time if (and only if) you **RETIRE** (not if you quit) you are not getting the full value of it and you're not getting your vacations. Pardon me dear, but duh! You have time coming to you and you should use it.

It seems to me that you made a timely and reasonable request for vacation. According to your contract, your request should be approved **unless** “in the supervisor's opinion it is **impossible or impractical** to do so because of work schedules or emergencies.” I'm not seeing that as an issue here. There's nothing you've told me (and nothing I can see that your boss has told you) that would make it seem impossible or impractical for you to take the time requested.

*It is your supervisor's responsibility to make reasonable efforts to insure that you are granted vacation time so that you don't LOSE it - it being your vacation time, as well as your sanity.*

Therefore, it is your supervisor's **responsibility** to make reasonable efforts to insure that you are granted vacation time so that you don't **LOSE** it - it being your vacation time, as well as your sanity. Since you don't seem to be getting a response, and I dare say you need one soon, I would suggest that you contact the union and let them know what's going on. Seems like a friendly intervention might be in order here so that you can get an answer.

Now, in the unlikely event that at this stage of the game your supervisor comes back to you and says that you cannot take your vacation time (which I dearly hope does not happen) and you get stuck pitching that tent in the South lot, you should know that you may have the right to vacation buy out. Employees who have 3 or more years of service may be eligible for vacation buy-out if one of the following occurs:

- You have a documented request for vacation that was denied and you requested to reschedule your vacation and that is also denied;
- You requested a vacation, did not get a response within 30 days and then you are later denied the vacation;
- You request a vacation, were originally approved and then the approval was later revoked.

In those instances, employees may be eligible to buy out up to one week of their vacation time.

But if it comes to that, and even before it does, I do strongly encourage you to contact your union to get some assistance in getting a straight answer and advice on how to proceed.

And keep in mind that the Chancellor is on record as encouraging us to take vacations, and Human Resources does not like to see staff denied the reasonable use of earned time, so pressure can be brought to bear on a recalcitrant supervisor. *I'll be hoping for happy trails for you!*

Miss Management will be on VACATION in July, but you can still write to her at: [prostaff.union@umb.edu](mailto:prostaff.union@umb.edu)



## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: LUCIA MAYERSON-DAVID

By Jon Hutton

A young woman in Chile met a Peace Corps volunteer and they married. They moved to Boston, and the young woman, Lucia Mayerson-David, began a long, rich and rewarding career at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

At first, she was a student working towards her BA in Economics. She found it very difficult to adjust to the language and culture in Boston, and she wondered why some students had so much harder a time acclimating to new cultures than others. So, once she had earned her BA (*magna cum laude*, by the way, despite the linguistic challenges), she moved on to Boston University to study Socio-Psych-Linguistics. She found some fascinating answers, too, but by the time she finished her PhD work at BU, she was far too busy to defend a thesis. You see, shortly after graduating from UMass Boston, Lucia had been recommended to join the university's new Institute for Learning and Teaching (ILT), so simultaneously earning a master's degree and helping to found the institute she now directs kept her very active, indeed. And while she occasionally regrets her academic omission, her loss has become a great gain for many, many grateful and accomplished people.

After spawning the College of Education (now the College of Education and Human Development) the Institute is now home to The TAG ("Talented and Gifted") program, the ALERTA program, the Boston Writing Project Program and the Hispanic Writers Week program. These programs, while originally focused on specific ethnic and cultural groups, have expanded to encompass all ESL learners, becoming ever more inclusive as time passes, in an expanding variety of extracurricular programs aimed at preparing and supporting young students who ultimately quest for higher education. These programs also recognize that education is an ongoing process, and that learners

need support from a very young age in order to grow into and succeed academically in higher education.

Lucia Mayerson-David has recently been awarded more than half a dozen awards in recognition of her tireless work on behalf of those who can succeed with a little help, including: UMass Boston's own Chancellor's Achievement Award, a place on the list of *El Planeta's* 100 Most Influential People for Latino Culture, a YMCA Young Achievers Award for Excellence, special recognition by the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, a Women of Courage in Education award from L'Allianza Hispana, and the much touted National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award from the White House for the ALERTA Program.

Lucia is thankful for the work that her friends and colleagues do within the PSU. As a member, she recognizes that both she and her programs depend upon that work and support, and she expresses her own support for her union, wholeheartedly. We of the PSU appreciate her educational efforts, applauding and sharing her professional pride, happy to see her get the recognition she deserves for that work, and happy she is one of ours. Thank you, Lucia!



Lucia (left), Project ALERTA participant Noelia Lugo, and Michelle Obama at the 2010 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award Ceremony at the White House in October 2010.

## PSU MEMBER LISA LINK'S ARTWORK PART OF NEW EXHIBITION



Lisa Link, a designer in web services was selected and funded to create a new artwork for the exhibition, "Too Shallow for Diving: The 21st Century is Treading Water" at the American Jewish Museum in Pittsburgh. As part of the exhibit, Lisa interviewed UMass Boston scientists Dr. Sarah Oktay, Director of the UMass Boston Nantucket Field Station (and PSU member) and Dr. Anamarija Frankic, founder/director of the Green Boston Harbor Project to produce digital prints and videos. Show runs May 16 – July 28th 2011. It is free and open to the public.

Check out the reviews at:

<http://www.pittsburghcitypaper.ws/gyrobase/Content?oid=oid%3A96582>

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/11131/1145550-437-0.stm>

[http://thejewishchronicle.net/view/full\\_story/13524738/article-AJM%E2%80%99s-new-exhibition-examines-our-relationship-with-water?instance=secondary\\_stories\\_left\\_column](http://thejewishchronicle.net/view/full_story/13524738/article-AJM%E2%80%99s-new-exhibition-examines-our-relationship-with-water?instance=secondary_stories_left_column)

## PROFESSIONAL STAFF UNION SCRAPBOOK



PSU-Boston delegates gather before the start of the MTA's Annual Meeting held at the Hynes Convention Center on May 13 and 14, 2011.

Back row, left to right: Paul Foster, Tom Goodkind, Sarah Bartlett, Martha London, Linda Perrotto

Front row, left to right: Tess Ewing, Anneta Argyres, Kevin Mullen



After the Annual Meeting, PSU members joined other delegates for a rally at Copley Square



Several PSU members came out to the State House on May 5, 2011\_ to attend the hearings regarding An Act to Invest in our Communities. Pictured here, PSU members Tess Ewing and Anneta Argyres (standing) joined CSU representatives and community members at a press conference.

### PSU-BOSTON/MTA/NEA

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## HELP KEEP THE PULSE GOING!

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition of **THE PULSE**. Special thanks to **Peter Terres** for his terrific article on bullying. We hope other members will be inspired to submit articles, news items, opinions and information that you'd like to share with your fellow PSU members.

The next edition of THE PULSE is scheduled to come out in the fall. It's not too soon to start thinking about what you'd like to see in the next edition. Send those ideas to us at

[prostaff.union@umb.edu](mailto:prostaff.union@umb.edu).

We wish you a happy summer!

