

The Soul of a University

Every negotiation between labor and management raises issues of money, power, and institutional values. Proposals are advanced, compromises are made, and agreements are reached. But sometimes, a chasm opens up so wide and deep that it reveals the soul of an institution. This is one of those times.

The Professional Staff Union has approached bargaining with the aim of restoring and increasing **respect for the work we do**, for our efforts, our time, our talents, our ambitions, our opinions, and our families. Management has come to bargaining with radically different aims: their proposals would reduce our rights and benefits, undermine our union, and make UMass a far less attractive employer just as the economy recovers.

So far, PSU has proposed to:

- 👍 Create career ladders which would enable members to advance based on experience, professional development, and performance.
- 👍 Reduce favoritism and ensure that bargaining unit members get fair consideration for vacancies and promotions before managers rush to fill positions with favorites or external candidates.
- 👍 Ensure that employees who work extra hours earn and can use comp time.
- 👍 Provide means to assess and remediate excessive and unreasonable workloads.
- 👍 Create a minimal system of professional step increases in order to help retain valued staff.
- 👍 Strengthen anti-bullying and anti-discrimination language and procedures.
- 👍 Restore and increase the tuition benefit for employees and our families.
- 👍 Increase equity and job security for our many grant-funded members.

We are preparing additional proposals which will promote flexible schedules and telecommuting, fairly compensate staff who must be on-call for their jobs, improve access to the Sick Leave Bank, increase rights for members facing layoff, increase health care benefits for new employees, prevent outsourcing-related erosion of our jobs, and more.

So far, management has proposed to:

- 👎 **Eliminate comp time** for nearly all professional staff, so there will be no earned time off for working beyond our regular work week.
- 👎 **Eliminate our Salary Administration Program (SAP)**, so there will be no oversight to ensure pay equity, fair job grading, and reasonable promotional increases.

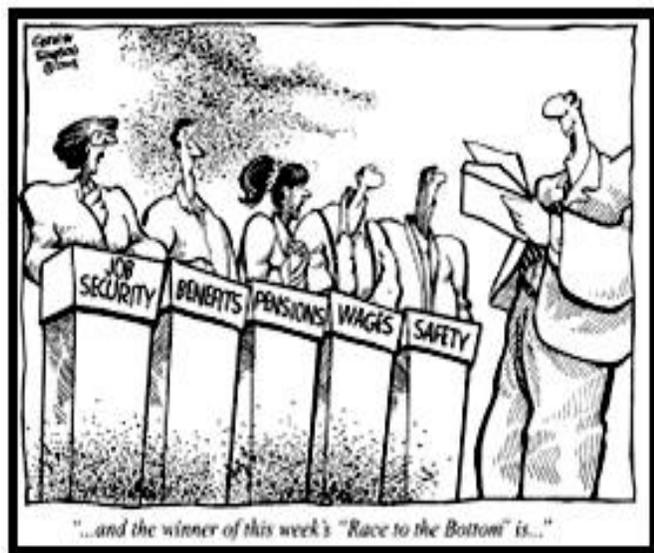
- 💡 **Eliminate on-call pay** for those above grade 32 in Boston and grade 29 in Amherst, so they can be required to be on-call with no compensation.
- 💡 **Reduce tuition benefits** for our spouses and dependents.
- 💡 **Reduce vacation benefits** for new employees.
- 💡 **Reduce sick leave benefits** for new employees.
- 💡 **Weaken hiring opportunities for internal candidates**, and remove most contract language governing searches.
- 💡 **Eliminate the required 90-day notice** of a less-than-satisfactory evaluation for all staff.
- 💡 **Eliminate the required 90-day notice** of less-than-satisfactory performance for an employee during their probationary year.
- 💡 **Decrease access** to Family and Medical Leave (FML) and to our Sick Leave Bank.
- 💡 **Contract a University doctor** to decide whether you're physically or psychologically fit to work.

We lack only one expected proposal from management: **increase UMass Boston's \$6/a day parking fee**, just as campus parking reaches crisis levels.

Down, Down, Down

As press reports of unexplained bonuses and 19.8% salary increases for chancellors exemplify, these proposals are all about **increasing management control and wringing savings out of unionized campus staff**. Some belts are loosened, while others are tightened.

But the proposals are more than that: they are part of the national race to the bottom. While management's representatives at the bargaining table have uttered barely a word—not even a question—in response to our proposals, they have defended their own. And there is a common theme to their defense: *"Employees at other workplaces don't have what you have. Non-union employees don't have what you have."* That is the logic of the race to the bottom, and **PSU will not run in that race.**



WE REFUSE TO RACE TO THE BOTTOM!

If you don't want to run in that race, contact a member of your campus Contract Action Team, your Delegate Council (Amherst), or your Area Representative (Boston). Get some stickers and pass them around. Look for upcoming petition-drives and other actions. Have a great summer, and come back refreshed and ready to fight for your job, your benefits, your compensation, and for the respect you deserve as a dedicated University of Massachusetts employee.

Your PSU Bargaining Team

Anneta Argyres (Boston)

Sarah Bartlett (Boston)

Carl Ericson (Amherst)

Tom Goodkind (Boston)

Claudia Heske (Boston)

David Lafond (Amherst)

Jane Lynch-Gilbert (Amherst)

JoAnne Martone (Amherst)

Tom McClennan (Boston)

Bert Szala (Amherst)

Ilona Trousdale (Amherst)

Richard Yam (Amherst)

Maura Sweeney (MTA staff)

