



Massachusetts Society of Professors Lowell

Representing Faculty and Librarians on the UMass Lowell Campus

MSP NEWSLETTER

Spring 2026

Inside this Newsletter:

President's Platform	Kelly Socia, President	
The Advocates Angle	Adam St. Jean, Vice President	
The Grievance Guide	Edward Hajduk, Grievance Officer	
The Treasurer's Ledger	Johanna Choo, Treasurer	
From the Field	Katie D'Urso, MTA Field Rep	
Contract Spotlight	MSP Communications Committee	
MEET	MSP Communications Committee	
Calendar of Events	MSP Communications Committee	

MSP Presidents Platform

Kelly Socia, Professor

As the academic year moves forward, MSP Lowell is shifting from a period of intensive bargaining to one of implementation, engagement, and long-term planning. The work of the union does not pause between contracts, and one of my central priorities as president is ensuring that our contractual gains are understood, protected, and built upon.

A key focus in the months ahead is strengthening faculty participation across your union. MSP Lowell is most effective when faculty are involved at multiple levels, from committee service and elected positions to attendance at meetings and campus conversations about shared concerns. Increased participation not only distributes the work more fairly, but also ensures that a wide range of faculty voices help shape your union's priorities and strategies over the coming year, especially as we prepare for the next bargaining cycle.

We are also continuing to focus on clarity and consistency in how the contract is applied. Clear expectations, predictable processes, and enforceable protections are essential to a sustainable and fair academic workplace. The executive board will remain attentive to issues that affect workload,

MSP NEWSLETTER

evaluation, and professional autonomy, and we will continue to engage with members as these concerns arise.

One such concern is the increased attempts to push administrative service work down onto MSP faculty through (inadequate) stipends, unclear or invisible job descriptions, appointments to pseudo-administrative positions, or simply pressure to provide additional uncompensated work that goes well beyond any reasonable service expectations. The MSP executive board is committed to ensuring that MSP faculty retain their full contract protections as fulltime faculty, and that departments are not burdened by the siphoning off of faculty time and effort to cover for gaps in administrative capacity. Put plainly, there are more than enough Vice Chancellors, Vice Provosts, Directors, Asst/Assoc Deans, and other administrators to cover the work of the administration, so that MSP faculty shouldn't be pressured to redirect time and effort away from their own teaching, research, and reasonable service efforts.

Importantly, faculty will submit the new Annual Faculty Report (AFR) this month, kicking off the DPC-led process to determine workloads for next year. As a 2/2 is no longer 'earned' under the new contract, tenured/tenure-track faculty who submit the AFR should almost always expect a 2/2 teaching load. Faculty can receive a 2/1 if they also achieve one of the research-related benchmarks, but there are no additional service expectations to qualify, nor do service expectations vary by faculty rank.

To be clear: the only faculty who should be given a 3/2 teaching load by the DPC are those who did not do the minimum level of research and service expected for faculty in their (R1) department, a standard that is determined by the DPC itself. In essence, the new 3/2 load is only for those tenure/TT faculty who would have previously received a 3/3 for doing less than the minimum expectations of the department.

Ultimately, your union's strength lies in its collective nature. MSP Lowell is not defined by any single officer or committee, but by the faculty who choose to be involved and invested in its work, as well as faculty who are willing to take a stand for reasonable, equitable, and non-exploitative work expectations and fair compensation. I encourage you to stay connected, ask questions, and consider how you might participate in ways that fit your interests and availability.

Together, we can continue to protect faculty rights, promote work-life balance, and ensure that our working conditions support excellence in teaching, research, and service.

In solidarity,
Kelly Socia
President, MSP Lowell

MSP NEWSLETTER

Annual Faculty Report (AFR) Information Sessions

To support faculty in completing the Annual Faculty Report (AFR), due **January 31, 2026**, MSP Leadership will be offering **six brief Zoom information sessions**. These sessions will review how to complete the AFR and clarify what information should be included. Faculty are welcome to attend any session that best fits their schedule.

All sessions will be held via Zoom: <https://uml.zoom.us/j/252579725#success>

Thursday, January 22	10:00–10:30 a.m.
Friday, January 23	12:30–1:00 p.m.
Monday, January 26	2:30–3:00 p.m.
Tuesday, January 27	1:00–1:30 p.m.
Thursday, January 29	10:00–10:30 a.m.
Friday, January 30	1:00–1:30 p.m.

We encourage faculty to join one of these sessions to ensure a smooth and confident AFR submission

The Advocate's Angle: MSP VP *Adam St. Jean, Teaching Professor*

If the fall was about planting seeds, the spring is about showing what's growing. And across our union, the work we've done together is beginning to bloom.

Since the fall, we've finalized our integrated Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)—a major achievement that brings clarity and cohesion to our contract. But that's just the foundation. The real work of building union power is year-round, and it's driven by you, our members.

This year, we've expanded the ways you can plug in. New and revitalized MSP committees now offer members a role in shaping bargaining, managing grievances, building legislative power, growing membership, and strengthening communication. These are spaces to lead, to learn, and to build the kind of union you want to be part of. If you've been wondering how to get involved, now is the time: [Join a committee and share your thoughts and/or concerns here](#).

We've also deepened our organizing across campus and the UMass system. As part of the UMass Unions United Lowell coalition, MSP participated in a range of labor league events—from brown bag lunches that brought members across unions together to share concerns and build solidarity, to an International Student, Faculty, and Staff Forum that surfaced challenges facing our international colleagues, and a "History of Labor at UMass Lowell" event that helped us connect past struggles to

MSP NEWSLETTER

future plans. We also joined cross-campus efforts, including a [statement of solidarity with the Professional Staff Union at UMass Amherst and Boston](#).

This spring, we'll come together to celebrate that work—and chart what comes next. Some key opportunities include:

- MTA Union Skills Winter Conference: March 2, in Boston → [Details](#)

Winter Skills is a one-day conference that offers practical workshops on organizing, grievance handling, bargaining prep, member outreach, and more. It's a great space to build core union skills, troubleshoot challenges with peers from other locals, and deepen your confidence as a union leader or activist. Whether you're just getting involved or looking to take the next step, Winter Skills is for you. Join me at it!

- MSP's first Annual Business Meeting is happening May 1.

This is your space to learn more, make proposals, vote on bylaws changes, hear updates from leadership, and shape the future of your union. Whether you're a long-time activist or just union-curious, this meeting is for you.

- MTA Annual Meeting: May 8–9, in Boston → [Details](#)

The Annual Meeting is MTA's highest democratic decision-making body. Delegates vote on your union's budget, elect statewide officers, and can bring motions on any issue. Every local gets delegate seats — and MSP has room to grow our voice. Let's fill our seats this year! Email me for information on becoming a delegate.

- MTA Summer Conference: July 26–29, in Amherst → [Details](#)

Held each August in Western Massachusetts, Summer Conference is a week of union learning, pedagogy, and community. Open to all members, it offers workshops on organizing, bargaining, leadership, and teaching practice — all in a supportive space with educators from across the state. If you want to build your skills, deepen your network, and connect with educators across the Commonwealth, I strongly encourage you to attend.

Our Legislative Affairs Committee is organizing to grow our political voice as faculty. As you know, our raises are effectively negotiated with the governor—not with UMass Lowell. Building our influence on Beacon Hill is essential to strengthening our position at that bargaining table. To help amplify faculty impact, the committee is planning a Legislative Breakfast (date TBD). If you're interested in helping plan or support the event in any way, please don't hesitate to reach out!

We're also investing in long-term infrastructure. MSP's Communications Committee is developing a new, independent website to serve as a hub for updates, tools, and action. We're applying for an MTA

MSP NEWSLETTER

“All-In” grant to fund work on new communication infrastructure that makes it easier to hear from you and for you to hear from us.

And finally, we’re working hard to make sure every department chair and DPC is up to speed on new contract provisions that impact evaluation, observation, and workload assignment. Implementing these changes well is key to defending fair and equitable working conditions. It’s a lot. And it’s happening because of you. Our union’s power doesn’t just show up at the bargaining table—it shows up when we show up. In our departments, in coalitions, in the community, and in the streets. Keep building with us.

In solidarity,
Adam St. Jean
Vice President, MSP
adam.stjean@gmail.com

The Grievance Guide

Edward Hajduk, Teaching Professor

As noted in Article VI of the contract, a grievance is “a complaint by a member or members of the Unit (or by the MSP) brought during the term of this Agreement that an express provision of this Agreement, has been violated, misinterpreted, or improperly applied in its application to the grievant, the grievant, and/or the MSP.” If you think the University is not following the contract, or if you have a problem but you are not sure if it is a contract violation, your union can help. Please reach out to your Grievance Officer (yours truly, Ed Hajduk) at Edward_Hajduk@uml.edu (work email) or ehajduk@mac.com (personal email).

The Grievance Committee and I are happy to assist you interpreting the contract, and if necessary, assist you in getting your problem resolved. That does not always mean filing a grievance, but if it does, we will walk you through the process step by step. Related side note: As noted by Adam in his Advocate’s Angle, the MSP is developing an independent website, which means a dedicated email address for the Grievance Officer will be coming soon.

Speaking of the contract, the Spring 2026 semester brings with it the implementation of significant contract changes. These changes start with the submittal of the new Annual Faculty Report ([AFR](#)) (a.k.a. the simplified old Form 16A) with your CV to your Department Chair by the January 31, 2025 deadline. Your submitted CV can be in any format for annual reporting purposes. It does not need to follow the Appendix A-9 format unless a faculty member is submitting a Promotion or Tenure package.

MSP NEWSLETTER

As mentioned by Kelly in his President' Platform, the submittal of the new AFR kicks off the Department Personnel Committee (DPC) led process to determine workloads for next year. The MSP Grievance and Communications Committees are developing materials to assist Department Chairs and DPC members in the coming weeks on these topics. In the meantime, please reach out to me (Edward_Hajduk@uml.edu or ehajduk@mac.com) if you have questions on these or other contract topics.

Stay safe, happy, and healthy,
Sincerely

Ed Hajduk
MSP Grievance Officer

The Treasurer's Ledger

Johanna Choo, Associate Teaching Professor

Dear Colleagues, this fall MSP welcomed eight new full-time faculty members to our union, bringing our total unit membership to 567, with 519 dues-paying members (91.5% participation). Last summer, I began transitioning our bookkeeping data from QuickBooks to Xero, the accounting software recommended by our auditors; Xero offers a significantly lower subscription cost and eliminates the bank data transfer duplication issues we experienced with QuickBooks. Over winter break, I successfully used Xero together with Track 1099 to issue 2025 1099 tax forms to both officers and non-officers who received stipends, and I look forward to presenting a detailed overview of MSP's finances at our Spring General Meeting. If you know any full-time faculty who may be interested in joining our union, please email me at Johanna_Choos@uml.edu or contact our MSP administrative assistant, Elizabeth Heng, at Elizabeth_Heng@uml.edu.

Best regards,
Johanna Choo

From the Field

Katie D'Urso Esq., MTA Field Representative

State legislative news: Each year, the Joint Committee on Ways & Means holds a hearing to solicit written and oral testimony from members of the public on the annual state budget. The FY27 public budget hearing date has not yet been announced, but based on previous years, we expect it to take place in March or early April 2026. Last year we packed the hearing with educators from pre-K to Higher Ed. This year we want to have even more. To add your name to the list of people preparing to present written and oral testimony use this link:

MSP NEWSLETTER

[Prepare for the March/April 2026 Joint Committee on Ways and Means Public Budget Hearing – Fill out form](#)

Federal government news: Higher education is under attack! Cuts in funding, infringements on academic freedom, uncertainty for international and immigrant faculty and students, it is time to stand together and push back! Join the fight with follow public higher education staff, faculty, and students from across the state **every other Thursday 8:30 on zoom** to strategize, plan, and coordinate on how we can hold our state and our campuses accountable for protecting public higher education during these turbulent times. Use this link to see the meeting schedule and sign up: [Biweekly Public Higher Education Federal Fight Back Meeting · Massachusetts Teachers Association](#)

Thanks,
Katie

Contract Spotlight

Clarifying Faculty Service

Faculty service has been a topic of discussion among Department Personnel Committee Members, Department Chairs and faculty in general since September due to recent changes in the Massachusetts Society of Professors (MSP) and Board of Trustees (BOT) Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Faculty have been asking one another: how service is defined, what types of service faculty are responsible for, and how service is evaluated as they request Department Personal Committee (DPC) to consider their applications and evaluations for various personnel actions, including: sabbaticals, reductions in teaching from 2/2 to 2/1 and other decisions.

These questions may linger and even complicate DPC decisions going forward as they meet to decide on the annual faculty evaluations of junior faculty and their reappointments, on how course credits are counted and on tenure and promotion. Since MSP Leadership has been fielding a wide range of questions from members regarding faculty service, we thought it would be helpful to clarify what our CBA states about your service responsibilities and what your rights are.

"Adequate Service"

In recent years, members of the university management team, including the former Provost, some Deans and others have used the term "Adequate Service" to describe appropriate levels of faculty service when making decisions about workload reductions, eligibility for promotion and other faculty working conditions, yet the term "adequate service" does not exist in the contract. In fact, service is not quantified in any way in the contract, and there is no priority given to any of the three service categories, i.e., service to the Profession, service to the University or service to the Community.

Compelling faculty to report their service to their department colleagues

MSP NEWSLETTER

Some Department Chairs have asked faculty to report their service to their department colleagues in shared documents stating that doing so will result in a more equitable service distribution. According to the contract, faculty are only required to list their service contributions in the Annual Faculty Report. If faculty wish to share their service contributions as such that is their decision; however, you cannot be compelled to do so. Service is not quantified in the contract. There is no breakdown of how much service you should perform in the three service categories. And faculty cannot be disciplined for refusing to report their service. There is also no contractual requirement for faculty to track or perform a certain number of hours of service.

Percentages of Service

Despite a persistent belief that among some members of university management and faculty that a faculty member's workload is broken down into percentages of teaching, service and research for tenure track faculty and teaching and service for teaching faculty, this is not the case. There is no breakdown of percentages between teaching, service, and research in the contract, and faculty are not required to align their workload with such beliefs, especially regarding service.

“Leadership Service”

On more than one occasion, the former Provost referred to a type of service that he called “leadership service,” explaining this type of service is required for faculty to be promoted to full professor, yet this is not true. The terminology “Leadership service” is not found in the contract. For clinical and teaching faculty, Article II Section A.1.5 states in part that “For those seeking promotion to Full Teaching or Full Clinical, in addition to the criteria of excellence in teaching and excellence in significant service along with the evidence listed above, the faculty should have a significant record of accomplishments in instructional effectiveness, curricular innovation, student engagement, and/or institutional service and leadership.” Leadership in service can be counted and reported in one's application for promotion.

Program Coordinators

Members of management over the years have given faculty mixed messages regarding whether or not serving as a program coordinator counts as service. At times faculty have been told that serving as a program coordinator does not count as service. Other times faculty have been told that serving as a program coordinator does count as service. The fact is that faculty serving as program coordinators can count this work as service, even if it has a stipend. Stipends are an acknowledgement that such service related to the position goes above and beyond normal service expectations, which is why there is additional compensation.

Clerical work

Over the past few years faculty have been pressured to perform clerical work as a form of service that is required for the orderly operation of their departments. This clerical work was previously completed by administrators, administrative assistants and staff. Such clerical work has not been

MSP NEWSLETTER

considered service in the past, article XVI Part 1 Section B.1 of the contract states that “During the academic year, a faculty member's responsibilities shall consist of both institutionally assigned activities and self-directed professional work. The former shall be conducted at times and places as may be required by the University (cf. A.1. above) and includes classroom teaching, office hours, advising, and other matters that may be required by the University under established practice in some colleges.” Therefore faculty cannot technically be assigned clerical work that was once the responsibility of a staff member or administrator according to the contract.

However, faculty can be directed to perform such work if their college has an established practice of faculty performing a particular clerical duty. So, despite the fact that having faculty do clerical work is a waste of human capital, faculty must be diplomatic and discreet in questioning any administrative decision directing them to perform clerical work. MSP recommends that if you are assigned such work to ask the person who is directing you to do it the following question: “Should I be doing this clerical work that can be done by others at a much lower pay rate, or should I be doing the work faculty do to keep us an R1 institution?” If the faculty member has evidence that such clerical work has not been part of faculty responsibilities in their college before, they should contact the Grievance Officer.

Union and Senate responsibilities

Work undertaken as a senator, MSP board member or any other union or faculty senate work under article VII.B.2.c(3)(b) of the contract is considered service.

What should faculty do if they are told that they are not doing enough service or not doing the right kind of service by a chair, dean or provost and are even punished as such?

Faculty who are told that they are not doing enough service or not doing the right kind of service should contact the MSP Grievance Officer. Because there is a short window of time limiting the filing of grievances, it is important not to wait in contacting the grievance officer. It is also important to document ALL related communications, and it can be helpful to make a short timeline of related events.

Final Thought

Each section in the contract that explains the nature of faculty service as part of faculty workload and professional responsibilities is prefaced by the words “Including, but not limited to,” which is very important to consider when filing your Annual Faculty Report due to your department chair January 31, because this language allows for broad interpretation of what faculty service is and is not. Finally, service is not quantified anywhere in the contract as a percentage, hours, or in any other fashion, so when a dean, chair, or other administrator asks you to break down your service in such a way, they are violating the CBA negotiated between MSP Lowell and The UMass Board of Trustees.

A Shift toward Faculty Governance

The new contract reflects a shift toward substantial faculty governance. For the classroom observations of faculty, which is part of the annual faculty evaluation of Teaching and Clinical Faculty and untenured Tenure Track faculty, observers will now be chosen by the Department Personnel Committee and Chair, whereas previously the chair conducted these observations. In addition, Teaching and Clinical Faculty who have been promoted to Associate or Full Teaching or Clinical Professors are no longer required to be observed for their annual evaluations. Prior to this contract, Associate and Full Teaching and Clinical faculty were required to have classroom observations once annually.

DPCs are newly empowered in two other areas as well. The first is in making determinations regarding how workload credits are counted for faculty teaching loads, and the second is regarding decisions related to faculty who have applied for a 2/1 teaching load. The process of assigning individual teaching loads was previously only determined by Chairs and Deans. Now, this decision is in collaboration with DPCs, which is especially important in the event that a course's number of contact hours deviates from its associated course credit hours. In cases such as this, the DPC will recommend to the Dean whether or not an adjustment should be made to the student credit hour calculations of a particular faculty member's workload, which could lead to additional compensation for some faculty. DPCs also share decision making capacity with Deans in determinations where Tenured faculty apply for a 2/1 teaching load. Individual teaching loads made by Department Chairs are developed in consultation with DPCs and subject to the approval of Deans.

As MSP Lowell continues to work in partnership with the Faculty Senate and university management, we hope to build upon this more shared decision-making paradigm so that UML can maintain its newly acquired R1 Status.

Your contract questions may be our next Spotlight! We want to hear from you! Contact our MSP Newsletter Editor, John Brown at, jbrown4343@gmail.com

Member Education and Engagement Thread (MEET)

This novel section of the MSP Newsletter aims to connect members through education, engagement, and collective strength that will include information for new faculty and members unfamiliar with MSP Lowell.

MSP Lowell welcomes 4 newly hired Unit Members and four University Librarians to our Campus!

WHAT IS “THE CONTRACT” AND HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

What is commonly referred to as “your union contract” is not the “union’s contract.” It is a legal agreement negotiated with university management, so it belongs just as much to the university management system as it does to our union. University administrators, including Deans, the Provost, and Chancellor all agreed to the language in the contract just as our union did. The contract is a “collectively bargained agreement” or CBA. Ours is officially entered into with MSP Leadership, the UML Chancellor, and the University of Massachusetts Board of Trustees. The CBA governs compensation, workload, working conditions, and other faculty rights and responsibilities.

Our CBA includes legally binding language regarding compensation:

- minimum salary by rank
- schedule for raises (annual cost-of-living increases)
- rules regarding additional compensation
- transparent promotion and tenure procedures

This removes uncertainty and individual negotiating disadvantages.

The CBA also includes legally binding language regarding Job Security & Due Process, including:

- language for faculty reappointment
- language governing layoffs
- protection against arbitrary dismissal
- faculty evaluation procedures

With regards to Workload Protections, the CBA include language governing:

- teaching load limits
- class size guidelines
- office hours expectations
- service and advising responsibilities

MSP NEWSLETTER

With regards to Benefits, the CBA include language governing:

- health insurance
- parental and sick leave
- procedures for course reductions and sabbaticals
- tuition benefits for faculty and family

With regards to Governance & Academic Freedom, the CBA include language governing:

- academic freedom
- shared governance
- protections around controversial scholarship or speech

If faculty are treated unfairly, the CBA provides a formal process for resolving disputes:

- filing a grievance
- mediation
- binding arbitration (in some cases)

To download a copy of the CBA and the most recent Memorandum of Understanding, click this link

<https://sites.uml.edu/msp/contract/>

For answers to more specific questions about the CBA, contact your union representative

<https://sites.uml.edu/msp/about/officers-board-members/> and/or Edward Hajduk, Grievance Officer

Edward_Hajduk@uml.edu

978.934.2621

To become more involved in your union, contact:

Adam T. St. Jean, MSP Vice President

Adam_StJean@uml.edu

978.934.3298



Massachusetts Society of Professors Lowell

Representing Faculty and Librarians on the UMass Lowell Campus

Help Shape Our New Logo!

We're excited to share that we're refreshing our logo, and we want your voice to be part of the process. A short survey is now open to gather your feedback on several new logo concepts and design principles. Your input will help us create a design that best represents who we are and where we're headed.

The survey takes just a few (no more than 5) minutes to complete and asks you to review logos from other unions, share what resonates with you, and offer any additional thoughts. There are no right or wrong answers as all perspectives are valuable in aiding the design process. Please take a moment to participate and make your mark on MSP Lowell's future logo. The survey will be open until February 10th, 2026, so we encourage you to respond soon.

Thank you for helping us create a logo we can all be proud of and working to keep our union strong and vibrant in the new year!

Link to MSP Logo Survey: <https://forms.gle/rGB6fcLih3Ev2nFm9>

MSP NEWSLETTER

Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Time	Location / Details
Saturday, January 24, 2026	MTA Winter Skills Conference	All day	Sheraton Boston Hotel, 39 Dalton Street, Boston. Registration: https://web.event.com/event/efaaa82f-3da8-48d4-acde-df519e23cca0/summary
Monday, January 26, 2026	MSP Executive Board Meeting	12:00 PM - 2:00 PM	Alumni Hall 201
Monday, January 31, 2026	Annual Faculty Report		To Department Chairs
Monday, January 31, 2026	MSP Executive Board Meeting	12:00 PM – 2:00 PM	Alumni Hall 201
Wednesday, February 4, 2026	UML Labor League Coffee & Donuts	11:00 AM	Alumni Hall, Main Room
Monday, February 23, 2026	MSP Executive Board Meeting	12:00 PM - 2:00 PM	Alumni Hall 201
Wednesday, March 5, 2026	UML Labor League Coffee & Donuts	11:00 AM	Dugan, 105
Monday, March 30, 2026	MSP Executive Board Meeting	12:00 PM - 2:00 PM	Alumni Hall 201
Wednesday, April 9, 2026	UML Labor League Coffee & Donuts	11:00 AM	UCC, 490
Monday, April 27, 2026	MSP Executive Board Meeting	12:00 PM - 2:00 PM	Alumni Hall 201
Friday, May 1, 2026	Annual MSP Members Meeting (Lowell)	11:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Lowell
Friday, May 8, 2026 Saturday, May 9, 2026	MTA Annual Meeting		Hynes Convention Center For more information, contact your union representative and MTAGovernance@massteacher.org
July 26–29, 2026	MTA Summer Conference	All day	UMass Amherst. For more information scan the code: 