



University of Massachusetts
Boston
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Boston, MA 02125-3393

University Governance
Faculty Council

https://www.umb.edu/faculty_staff/faculty_council

Monday, April 4, 2022

1:00-3:00

Zoom Webinar

Minutes for April 4, 2022

Members present: Joel Fish (CSM); Priscilla Gazarian (CNHS); Margaret Hart (CLA); Rafael Jean (CLA); Sharon Lamb (CEHD); Lusa Lo (CEHD); Kibibi Mack-Shelton (CLA); Jeffrey Melnick (CLA); Pamela Nadash (MGS); Dimity Peter (CEHD); Neil Reilly (CSM); Heike Schotten (CLA); Eduardo Siqueira (HONORS); Eve Sorum (CLA); Betsy Sweet (CLA); Michael Tlusty (SFE); Phil Troped (CNHS); Roberta Wollons (CLA); Kevin Wozniak (CLA)

Members absent: Matthew Bell (CSM); Kui Du (CM); Sommer Forrester (CLA); Maria John (CLA); Werner Kunz (CM); Kiran Verma (CM); Kai Zou (CNHS)

Representatives present: Marlene Kim (Representative to the BoT); Michael Mahan (PSU); Chidimma Ozor Commer (GEO); Steve Striffler (CLA)

Representatives absent: Undergraduate Student Government (TBD); Graduate Student Assembly (TBD); CSU (TBD); DCU (TBD)

I. Approval of the Agenda

VOTE: Voice vote

Approved unanimously.

II. Motion to approve the March minutes

- The BoT Rep. requested the updated agenda item be included in the draft. There was also a question about whether the notes were included from her previous request. The Chair explained that the changes were made and that the updated agenda item was included on the agenda.

VOTE: Voice vote

Approved unanimously.

III. Chair's Comments

- There was discussion about the student evaluation process and sending emails about elections since several faculty were not receiving the emails.
- The Dean of Students will host a workshop about students having a voice in administrative reviews processes concerning the Student Code of Conduct. She encouraged FC members to let her know if they want to be involved.

IV. Reports – 10 mins maximum

a. Chancellor – Marcelo Suárez-Orozco

- The Chancellor reported the new mask optional and welcome policy. While there has been a slight increase in cases in Boston and on campus, at the moment this is not concerning. He noted that if cases continue to rise, they may revise the mask mandate based on national/state/city public health guidelines. He thanked the McCormack Graduate School for hosting the event with Dr. Jha.
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- The Chancellor explained that April is a very busy time of year for admissions and that new student deposits are up this year. There were 1,800 total visitors for the Welcome Day. He thanked faculty and staff who helped coordinate such an important event. He also explained that while summer enrollment has been a bit slow, fall is on par with last year.
- The Chancellor provided an update on air quality in the Wheatley Building. He noted the report about air quality indoors and explained that the small number of classrooms in the Wheatley report helps them continue their efforts in that building. He thanked the union colleagues and noted that the team has short-, medium-, and long-term plans to improve ventilation in Wheatley. There will be a listening session on this with the Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance. Further details will be communicated via email. He noted that the Facilities Department will be available for any immediate concerns.
- He announced that the winner of the 2022 Manning Prize is Dr. Hugh O'Connell, from the English Department.

DISCUSSION:

An FC member asked about the air quality in Wheatley based on the FSU meeting and the concerning carbon dioxide problem in the rooms since filtration cannot fix this. The Chancellor noted that the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance will go over all of this at the listening session. He also noted that the Administration bought air cleaning boxes to get in front of the removal of viral particles.

b. Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs – Joseph Berger

- The Provost referenced all strategic planning information that went out via email to the campus community and wanted to draw attention to the mission and vision statement. He hoped that all saw the updates and echoed that they were proud to be an urban public research university. The focus of the statement conveys ideas that are complementary to the type of university UMass Boston is. He informed the FC that he would send further updates and information.
- They have communicated payroll and NTT budgets for FY23 to all academic affair offices and worked to remain balanced across academic affairs. They did some redistribution of the CAPs

budget that will go towards academic departments. He informed the FC that they sent out guidelines and processes for tenure reviews. They recognize that the pandemic has continued to create stress and uncertainty in planning for the future and faculty careers.

- He provided an update on the ongoing Dean searches. There were four finalists in the College of Management search. He thanked everyone and hoped to complete the search soon. They will be announcing the finalists for the Manning School of Nursing and bring those people onboard as quickly as possible. The searches for Dean of Library and Dean of the College of Education and Human Development are ongoing.

DISCUSSION:

An FC member asked about the searches in Africana Studies and why the Provost's Office made the decision to cancel this search for a second time. The FC member was confused about it because of the mission statement's anti-racist and health promoting emphases. Faculty requested information on how this fits into the larger picture since there seems to be a contradiction with having only 1.5 faculty in the Department. The Provost responded that they are working on this due to a history of internal challenges and they are moving forward. He noted that part of the budget is going to the Department as well as the Trotter Institute. The FC member wanted to reiterate that Africana Studies is a functioning department and to put forth the idea that it isn't functioning is a myth. She did not agree with the perception promoted about this.

The Provost responded that he didn't intend to merge the Trotter Institute and the Department. He and the University are invested in supporting the Africana Studies Department to the fullest extent. The FC member asked about the twelve finalists and the Provost responded that there seemed to be miscommunication, but the decision was made by the Dean and the Provost. They will make decisions for more senior positions in the future.

An FC member asked about ongoing hiring lines and when that would be communicated in the financial updates. The Provost responded that this is still ongoing.

An FC member asked about clarity on the budget and how it is divided as well as the revision of the Student Code of Conduct. The Provost responded that this is ongoing and more information would be communicated later.

An FC Rep. asked about the travel contractor and if UMass Boston should use this on our campus. She also asked about an early learning program at Dartmouth and Lowell and whether or not our campus was asked to be a part of that or if UMB should be a part of it. The Provost responded that the campus does have access to this through Terra Dotta and he could send out information on this. The early college initiative is a UMass System program piloted right now at Lowell and Dartmouth. UMass Boston is deciding if the campus would like to be part of it. UMB would have the opportunity to participate in the future if we decided to. UMass Boston is also looking to start its own early college outreach that is more specifically tied to the Boston Public School system.

e. Representative from the Faculty Staff Union – Steve Striffler

- SEE APPENDIX.

DISCUSSION:

An FC member asked for advice regarding what employees should do for individual offices and departments as a result of the air quality report in Wheatley. The Rep. responded that he believed it should be up to the Administration to take care of it for a number of reasons.

An FC member asked about the raises. The FC Rep. shared that they would discuss this and offer further information at the FSU meeting.

There was discussion of facilities requests and how understaffed that office is.

f. Representative from the Graduate Employee Organization—Chidimma Ozor Commer

- SEE APPENDIX.

V. Motions from the Academic Affairs Committee

Motion 1

Moved: that the faculties recommend to the President and the Board of Trustees that the listed students and any additional candidates who upon completion of all requirements for graduation and the maintenance of good standing be awarded the degree of Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science.

Motion 2

Moved: that the UMB administration require Facilities to provide forthwith electronic access to all doors leading to and from the Campus Center garage elevators, specifically the doors associated with access to the single elevator leading to the UL and LL handicapped parking spaces.

VOTE: Voice vote on Motion 1

Approved unanimously. MOTION CARRIES.

VOTE: Voice vote on Motion 2

Approved unanimously. MOTION CARRIES.

VI. Resolution from Marlene Kim and Joel Fish

RESOLUTION ON TEACHING EVALUATION MODALITY AND SUPPORT AND AFFIRMATION THAT DEPARTMENTS CHOOSE TEACHING MODALITY

Whereas many students do not complete online teaching evaluations since the change to online evaluations only approximately two years ago, and

Whereas the sample size from these evaluations can be very low and the results skewed on teaching, and

Whereas fewer comments and thus qualitative information are obtained from these results, and

Whereas these evaluations are used not only to help instructors teach better but also in our promotions review, and

Whereas, everyone has an interest in having high response rates and better evaluations, and

Whereas, departments are the units who decide on how to evaluate teaching, and

Whereas, some departments are unhappy with the low response rates and low qualitative outcomes and want to go back to paper or in-class evaluations or otherwise increase response rates, and

Whereas the university reported to Faculty Council on December 6, 2021 that Gradescope could resolve these problems but information on this has been inconsistent and this software cannot be used for teaching evaluations yet because it does not yet compute department averages and frequencies of responses, and

Whereas the solutions the university proposes to increase response rates for online evaluations are not tenable for all faculty in all classes in all departments using the current online software available (some classes don't meet before these evaluations are due in some cases; classes cannot obtain computers for all students in classes, which are necessary for completing these evaluations; some students do not have smart phones to complete these evaluations), so the problems of low response rates, skewed results, and lower quality assessments continue, and

Whereas the Academic Technology Committee (ATC) recommended that "ALL course evaluations be completed using either Evaluation Kit or Qualtrics—hence no paper evaluations" (ATC power point presentation to faculty council on December 6, 2021), but that these software fail to meet the needs of all faculty and all departments as discussed above, and

Whereas Provost Berger affirmed in Faculty Council on February 7, 2022 that departments choose how to evaluate teaching, including the modality of teaching, so that departments decide whether to use paper or online evaluations and not the administration, but

Whereas departments cannot use paper evaluations today because the university eliminated this possibility and option, and

Whereas the Provost's office has been diligently and commendably worked with IT to put into place a paper evaluation through Gradescope by working with Gradescope for the spring 2022 teaching evaluations so that departments can use paper evaluations again if desired for spring 2022 and calculate instructor, class, and department averages, but this is taking longer than expected,

Be it resolved that the Faculty Council affirms departments' ability to decide on how to conduct teaching evaluations, including the modality (such as using paper evaluations), and

Be it further resolved that the ATC reexamine their recommendation, be informed of the problems some faculty have been having with the online evaluations so that they are informed that the two mechanisms that they recommended are unsatisfactory for all faculty and departments and should not be the only two recommended (and that the Gradescope paper options be evaluated as a recommended option), and

Be it further resolved that the university IT department investigate and offer mechanisms that will allow for paper and other in-class evaluations for teaching that resolves the problems above should departments want to use this and that they work with faculty and departments who are reporting these problems so that these problems are indeed resolved; and

Be it finally resolved that Faculty Council encourages the efforts underway so that such mechanisms be available to departments and faculty by early April 2022 and the support provided to departments so that departments can use this option if desired and that the university inform all faculty and departments so that departments who want to use paper evaluations and this new software/mechanism may do so in Spring 2022.

DISCUSSION:

There was discussion based on a recent email that went out about evaluations and how there will be additional evaluation assistance and that departments will be able to use paper or other systems. It was clarified that IT has the capabilities to support two systems and paper, but the department could come up with their own process if they choose to do so. There was discussion as to whether it was necessary to vote on this since it seemed to be resolved. The motion sponsors decided to postpone this until the ATC committee of the FC take it up and if need be, they will vote or withdraw.

VOTE to table the motion: Voice vote

Approved unanimously. MOTION TABLED.

VII. Motions from the General Education Committee

from the Distribution and Diversity Subcommittees Motions 1-6:

1. Moved: That CINE 304, Understanding Television, be approved as satisfying the Humanities Distribution.

WISER Course Description: This class focuses on television's evolution as a cultural practice from a historical and theoretical perspective. Taking a humanistic approach, it examines the nature, institutions, technologies, aesthetics, and socio-political functions of commercial and public-service broadcast television. Further, it scrutinizes contemporary technological and cultural changes, such as the rise of digital and transnational television phenomena, questioning how television formats, programs and institutions are influencing and influenced by major shifts in global mediascapes.

General Education Capabilities: Verbal Reasoning (Critical Thinking) and Critical Reading and Analysis

2. Moved: That Cinema Studies/Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures/Arabic 352L, Middle Eastern and North African Cinema, be approved as satisfying the Humanities Distribution.

3. Moved: That Cinema Studies, Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, Arabic 352L, Middle Eastern and North African Cinema, be approved as satisfying the International Diversity requirement.

WISER Course Description: This course focuses on how Middle Eastern and North African films have reflected, perpetuated, and criticized national ideologies, as well as how themes of individual and collective identity, memory, and trauma have been represented by filmmakers. By exploring how films have told stories about socio-cultural conflicts, we will open further questions about the place of cinema in nation building and in the formation of historical narratives. The course's specific theme varies from semester to semester, depending on the national contexts being studied. This course satisfies the International Diversity requirement. As such, questions of Race, Gender and Culture (national or regional origin, ethnicity, religion, language, or sociolinguistic identity) are integral parts of the course. Taught in English. CINE 352L and MLLC 352L and ARABIC 352L are the same course.

General Education Capabilities (for Distribution proposal): Verbal Reasoning (Critical Thinking) and Critical Reading and Analysis

4. Moved: That History 186, Road to Black Lives Matter, be approved as satisfying the Humanities Distribution.

5. Moved: That History 186, Road to Black Lives Matter, be approved as satisfying the U. S. Diversity Distribution.

WISER Course Description: This introductory course documents the mistreatment, abuse, and violence inflicted on African Americans in the U.S., starting with the Atlantic slave-trade up to present times. Organizations like *Black Lives Matter* (BLM) follow a long history of earlier organizations with active platforms denouncing and calling for an end to this antipathy and violence. This course surveys the history of this violent mistreatment; explores the general responses to this culture; and examines the emergence and resolutions of pertinent organizations in different eras. Variables including race, class, gender, and regional location will be considered throughout the course.

General Education Capabilities (for Distribution motion): Critical Reading and Analysis and Effective Communication (writing, speaking, and other forms of expressive communication).

6. Moved: That Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies 347, Feminisms, Intersectionality, and Social Justice: Histories, Debates, Futures, be approved as satisfying the U. S. Diversity requirement.

WISER Course Description: Students critically engage a sampling of key works, some classic and some 'hot off the presses' that explore feminist thinking about a variety of topics, as well as the ways that feminist theorists construct and complicate analyses of power, privilege and oppression. The aim is to train students to grapple with a range of concepts and frameworks that inspire and inform feminist research and activism. Throughout the course, we engage the burgeoning critical scholarly discussion of 'intersectionality'—at once a lens, a framework, and a core concept—which has gained increasing prominence in feminist discourse and requires careful consideration. The course is structured around broad themes through which gender is complicated by multiple axes of identity-- race, culture, social class, and sexual orientation.

VOTE on items 1-6: Voice vote

Approved unanimously. MOTIONS CARRY.

From the General Education Committee and Writing Proficiency Subcommittee:

7. Moved: That the Faculty Council accept “Report and Recommendations on Two Pilots,” February 21, 2022, and approve its two recommendations:

A) That all students with retake scores on the Writing Proficiency Examination may resubmit their challenge essay after participating in retake counseling, and further:

A1) That the Associate Director of Writing Proficiency may allow individual students who received “void” scores on the Writing Proficiency Examination to submit their challenge essays after participating in retake counseling;

(A2) That students who resubmit their challenge essays may appeal the resubmission decision to the Associate Director of Writing Proficiency, who will review their revised challenge essay and provide students with commentary to explain the decision; and

(A3) That students who do not succeed in satisfying the Writing Proficiency Requirement with a resubmitted essay will be strongly encouraged to take Critical Reading and Writing 282, Elements of Writing Proficiency.

B) That the Electronic Writing Assessment Portfolio (“EWRAP 2”) be adopted for Critical Reading and Writing 282, Elements of Writing Proficiency.

DISCUSSION:

- Lynell Thomas and Betsy Gomez spoke about the history of the EWRAP and Writing Proficiency and the passing rate that was higher for the EWRAP. They also thanked all involved in this process and

gave clarity on the major change. There was discussion about the differences and processes involved between FC members and the motion Reps. There was discussion of concerns regarding plagiarism and whether or not students could get help with writing essays when submitting.

VOTE: Zoom poll

18 IN FAVOR, 1 OPPOSED, 0 ABSTENTIONS. MOTION CARRIES.

VIII. Motion to Adjourn

Approved unanimously.

Minutes for April 11, 2022

Members present: Joel Fish (CSM); Sommer Forrester (CLA); Priscilla Gazarian (CNHS); Rafael Jean (CLA); Sharon Lamb (CEHD); Lusa Lo (CEHD); Kibibi Mack-Shelton (CLA); Jeffrey Melnick (CLA); Pamela Nadash (MGS); Dimity Peter (CEHD); Neil Reilly (CSM); Heike Schotten (CLA); Eduardo Siqueira (HONORS); Eve Sorum (CLA); Betsy Sweet (CLA); Phil Troped (CNHS); Roberta Wollons (CLA); Kevin Wozniak (CLA);

Members absent: Matthew Bell (CSM); Kui Du (CM); Margaret Hart (CLA); Maria John (CLA); Werner Kunz (CM); Michael Tlusty (SFE); Kiran Verma (CM); Kai Zou (CNHS)

Representatives present: Marlene Kim (Representative to the BoT); Tessa Lyman (USG)

Representatives absent: Michael Mahan (PSU); Chidimma Ozor Commer (GEO); Steve Striffler (CLA); Graduate Student Assembly (TBD); CSU (TBD); DCU (TBD)

- The Chair noted that the Executive Committee would be having a new agenda item at the end of the meeting under “New Business” that would be a discussion for FC members only.

IX. Motion from the Graduate Studies Committee

From: CLA (HIST)

Request for a new course: HIST 684 Topics in Food History

Rationale: Food studies stands at the intersection of History, American Studies, Economics, Science, and Anthropology. As an interdisciplinary subject, it is of great interest to many students who can pursue research from many different perspectives. There are several faculty members in the department with interests in food studies through different geographic lenses; the sample syllabi provided give examples of sample reading lists from three possible vantage points of teaching the course. This course is proposed as an elective.

VOTE: Voice vote

Approved unanimously. MOTION CARRIES.

X. Motion from the Budget and Long-Range Planning Committee

Moved: The Faculty Council approves the Ethical Vendor Policy submitted by the Budget and Long-Range Planning Committee and recommends it for adoption to Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco.

DISCUSSION:

The motion sponsors gave some background on the policy and shared that it had been an effort between faculty and administrators working on this and that it might need to involve UMass' legal team. An FC member wanted to offer a friendly amendment about the last bullet point in the motion. The FC member thought the bullet point might be redundant since all vendors need to abide by US law and cautioned against the use of the term "terrorist" and "terrorism" given the US Government's partisan characterization of people and groups as "terrorist." As well, she raised concerns about faculty who invite guests to speak on the subject of "terrorism" in their courses would be in violation of the university's ethical vendor policy, making this policy an academic freedom issue. There was discussion about the protocol for moving forward with this since the motion was already sent to the Chancellor's Office. The friendly amendment was rejected.

The FC member therefore moved to amend the motion to strike the last bullet point in Section B, point 5.

VOTE: Zoom Poll on the Amendment

13 IN FAVOR, 1 OPPOSED, 4 ABSTENTIONS. MOTION CARRIES.

An FC member asked if this motion included all vendors such as Sodexo and WB Mason. The motion sponsors responded that it included all vendors that do business with the University and that the hope was that the Chancellor would be able to take this to convince the entire UMass system to abide by this policy. There was discussion about suppliers and supply chains. There was further discussion about the policy language and whether or not it was appropriate to make changes to the motion at that point. Another FC member spoke about the motion. While he supported it, he would like to caution all that the work should not stop there and related the larger history of work that had led to the crafting of an Ethical Vendor Policy. The FC will need to continue to press for a more effective policy than the current one since it seemed that the current Chancellor was not supportive of the previous work done on this issue to sever ties with, for example, Salesforce, because of their complicity with ICE and CBP.

Another FC member called the question.

VOTE: Voice vote to call the question

Approved unanimously. Discussion ends; proceed to vote on the (amended) motion.

VOTE: Zoom poll

11 IN FAVOR, 4 OPPOSED, 4 ABSTENTIONS. MOTION CARRIES.

XI. Resolution from the Executive Committee

Resolution:

WHEREAS, elimination of debt in higher education and pathways to education as a public good represents substantial opportunities for the University of Massachusetts Boston to demand support for and reform of higher education, increase economic and public health security, expand prosperity, create jobs, and save our community money;

WHEREAS, cancelling student loan debt and eliminating debt in higher education represents an enormous economic opportunity for UMass Boston to support students, staff, and faculty in moving upward in social mobility, creating and pursuing better jobs, increasing spending in our local community, and providing a deeply needed stimulus during the pandemic;

WHEREAS, Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian and Pacific Islander, and other communities of color; economically disadvantaged residents; older people and young adults experience the impacts of student debt and debt generally most acutely;

WHEREAS, abolishing of student debt also represents a social justice opportunity for UMass Boston to support students, addressing racial and gender wage gaps, and providing better overall health outcomes to students since debt is associated with negative mental and physical health outcomes, like stress, depression, general health, obesity and mortality;

WHEREAS, cancelling student debt is a policy that is strongly supported across all political parties and across the country, but especially here in Boston, and now President Joe Biden and the Democrats committed to some form of student debt cancellation during the 2020 election;

WHEREAS, student debt cancellation is only one step toward relief and a better higher education system, and examples from overseas and locally show the need for elimination of full student loan debt and investment in and pathways toward free higher education and other programs to support higher education as a public good;

NOW THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED by the Faculty Council of the University of Massachusetts that we call for the Federal Government to commit to cancel all student debt.

The Faculty Council further requests that the Federal Government enacts a plan to cancel student debt and begin the transition to education as a public good.

Rationale:

THE PROBLEM

More than 45 million people in the United States hold nearly two trillion dollars of student debt. Student debt exacerbates class, race, and gender inequalities. It reduces students' access to education, and hinders them from taking jobs of their choice in the fields in which they were trained. It burdens our faculty and staff, who also carry student debt into their offices and classrooms. And most importantly, it's unnecessary, as there are clear opportunities now for canceling that debt and reforming higher education finance to prevent students from incurring further debt.

THE MOMENT

In December 2021, Biden extended the federal student debt payment pause until May 1st, the *second* extension since 2020. But, our communities are suffering and need student debt cancellation now, more than ever. Now is the time to turn the payment pause into permanent cancellation. The idea of student debt cancellation has never been so popular, or possible [Over two thirds of Americans support some kind of student debt cancellation](#). Substantial numbers of elected officials and grassroots organizations are ready to mobilize.

THE DEMAND

We are therefore calling for full student loan debt cancellation and a pathway to tuition free college.

DISCUSSION:

The Chair of the Executive Committee noted that this resolution came from the Debt Collective. It calls on the US President to cancel student debt. An FC member noted their support for this but explained that it may be more powerful to get the Chancellor to have the Board of Trustees support it.

VOTE: Zoom poll

18 IN FAVOR, 1 OPPOSED, 0 ABSTENTIONS. RESOLUTION CARRIES.

XII. New Business: Update from FC elections committee

- The Elections Committee of the FC gave an update on the email list they now have to reach all faculty members. There was some discussion about moving forward with individual ballots as the next step. The FC Chair thanked those in IT who assisted with this to grant access to the email list.

XIII. New Business: FC members-only discussion

The FC Chair respectfully asked all non-FC members to leave the Zoom room so as to facilitate discussion amongst FC of a Council-related matter.

1) As you may have heard, Gov Baker signed the supplemental budget – which include our contract and our raises.... This means the funds should be transferred to the university shortly, after which....raises will be processed.

2) As the Chancellor mentioned, the FSU got a grant to test our HVAC system and air quality – just in Wheatley. We had two very experienced experts come to campus on 2 days in November and they tested about 35 spaces in Wheatley, including classrooms, offices, and even bathrooms – the university Admin and facilities helped make this happen.

The report came back and has been circulated -- and the testing determined that about 60% of the spaces that were tested had inadequate air supply –with the problems being worse on 1st and second floors of Wheatley. Many of the classrooms also had too high of CO2 levels, which indicates poor air quality. I don't think these results are surprising to anyone who has an office in Wheatley or has taught there.

3 things:

First, problems should be addressed in those spaces that were tested and we know have insufficient ventilation; some of the solutions may be long term, but short term fixes are available. As the Chancellor mentioned, facilities is now purchasing 15 HEPA Portable Air Purifiers – largely for classrooms in Wheatley. So this is a step in the right direction. And some things have been done to improve air on the lower levels of Wheatley since November...

Second, and really more importantly, there needs to be a more systematic testing of air ventilation and air quality throughout the campus, starting in the older buildings -- Wheatley, Healey, and McCormick. The union test in Wheatly suggests that there are most likely problems elsewhere. At the start of Covid the university did things like upgrade air filters to MERV 13 and made sure air was really blowing from the sources – but we don't really have a great sense of how that translated into particular spaces around campus – and plenty of anecdotal evidence, in addition to this study, to suggest that air ventilation and quality is really uneven across campus...and just inadequate in some places. – as Dr Jha pointed out in his talk and the Chancellor pointed out....ventilation is key for

Covid....but is just important in general for having a safe and productive workplace.

Third, in addition to fixing the stuff we can fix now and relatively cheaply....with portable air filters and by doing systematic testing so we can address problem areas.... the study suggests we need major upgrades on this campus. Again, not surprising....but having this data should add some urgency to our efforts. The University is applying for a \$15 million grant from the state for serious HVAC upgrades to Wheatley; We Will have new air handlers in Healey within a year....which will give them more capacity/efficiency. And there is discussion of Broader Capital Plan to rebuild chunks of Wheatley, esp on first two floors. All this needs to be fast-tracked....and we are glad the union report has gotten some attention.

One final thing in terms of what Kibibi raised – the problem she raises is bigger than one department in part because having a strong Africana Studies is so central to our mission of becoming a leading anti-racist university....so the continual failure....to make hires and retain faculty in that dept is something we all need to be watching... If there is any way to rescue these hires for this year we have to consider it – because this has gone on all too and the explanations for failure in this area just aren't satisfying...

GEO Report

We last met on Thursday, 3/24/22 for bargaining. Needless to say, we did not arrive at a resolution despite caucusing. One beautiful thing I can report is that we had graduate student employees present in solidarity.

What I want to use my time today to underscore is that management has refused to bargain over summer employment. As such, our members are currently attempting to get summer jobs/employment lined up. If you were unaware, all GEO contracts expire in May. So for any summer work, our folks need to sign new contracts, get their I-9 employment paperwork resubmitted, etc. This is an admin nightmare. And is again, inconsistent with UMB's aspirations to be anti-racist and health promoting.

I'll share something I wrote last week: On Sunday, March 27, 2022, [Yuh-jung Youn](#) presented the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor since she won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress last year for "Minari" (side note: wouldn't be nice if the Academy abandoned the gender binary, I digress). This year's nominees were [Ciaran Hinds](#), "Belfast" [Troy Kotsur](#), "CODA" [Jesse Plemons](#), "The Power of the Dog" [J. K. Simmons](#), "Being the Ricardos" [Kodi Smit-McPhee](#), "The Power of the Dog"

To be fair, I was reluctantly watching the Oscars with my husband because he is into the show, and I'm grateful I didn't miss this presentation. Yuh-jung began by sharing that last year she was upset that her Korean name was mispronounced (I can certainly relate as can all of us with names that are beautiful and connected to our cultures of the Global Majority - aka not Karen, Emily, Katie, Valerie, Brad, Chad, Thad, or Tad). She then went on to say that maybe she shouldn't have been so upset because this year she had a challenging time pronouncing some of the nominees' names. She shared in a humorous, thoughtful, and incredibly humble way. I thought, that was beautiful.

And it only continued to get better and more beautiful. Even rewatching it for this piece I'm sharing with you all, I wept *again*. When she announced the winner of the Oscar, she signed it using American Sign Language (ASL) so that Troy Kotsur knew that he had won *at the same time* everyone else - who hears and is likely not deaf or hard of hearing/hearing impaired - knew he had won. Upon starting to make his acceptance speech she grabbed his Oscar so that he could use both hands to sign as an interpreter interpreted for him off camera.

Why is this important? It was a small, yet large, demonstration of inclusion. It didn't take a lot out of her to sign his name. It allowed him to be part of one of the largest moments of his life and not sit on the sidelines for it.

How can you all continue to come alongside us? Ensure your students know we exist. Is GEO on your syllabi as a resource for your students who are graduate student employees?

Our next bargaining session will be this Thursday on Thursday, 4/7/22 at 11am.

Faculty Council Meeting
Report by Professional Staff Union Representative
Michael M. Mahan
April 4, 2022

- Air Quality in Wheatley
- Salary Scales
- Meditated Discussions/Campus Conversations

Air Quality in Wheatley

As a result of a recent indoor air quality assessment of selected classrooms and other spaces in Wheatley Hall, funded by a small grant the Faculty Staff Union (FSU) obtained from the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA), there is now the recognition of the need for short and long-term interventions to address air circulation and filtration in that building. The assessment did not include other buildings on campus, such as McCormack Hall or the Healey Library.

Salary Scales

There has been considerable progress toward increasing the salary scales for all professional staff, which have not been updated since 2007. The university administration and PSU leadership have been working on this issue over the past two years and have nearly reached an agreement.

Mediated Discussions/Campus Conversations

We applaud the agreement to hold mediated discussions between the Faculty Council and administration in light of the recent damaging communications. In our contract negotiations, the PSU sought mandatory training for all UMass Boston employees on the issues of racism and implicit bias. We believe recent events underscore just how important it will be to have our whole community engage in meaningful education and dialogue around these issues so that we can, together, develop a healthy, respectful, and productive way of addressing concerns that arise from differences in our perspectives and experiences on campus.