

University Status Option Offers More Questions Than Answers

Patricia V. Markunas, MSCA president &
Brett M. Rhyne, Perspective editor

The management of several state colleges is aggressively pursuing university status. Besides the right to call a state college a “state university,” what does this mean? Bridgewater State College and Salem State College have produced white papers making a case for becoming state universities. These can be accessed through the MSCA Web site at www.mscaunion.org. Neither answers questions of vital importance to the professional lives of state college faculty and librarians.

One member of Bridgewater State College’s University Task Force was Frederick W. Clark Jr., who was appointed chairman of the Board of Higher Education in August. Clark authored the financial section of Bridgewater’s white paper, which was made public in May 2007. While the BHE has not yet

taken an official position on university status, Clark was guardedly supportive of the idea in the MSCA’s interview with him last month. “On a personal level,” he said, “I think it’s absolutely the right strategy for the state colleges to explore.”

The legislature’s Joint Committee on Higher Education is currently considering House Bill 1185, the so-called “University Status Bill.” The MSCA Board of Directors has insisted on, and been assured that, language mandating a continuation of the current system of union representation will be included in the legislation. As of this writing, however, the bill is still in committee and no amendments have been made to it. The MSCA has also made it clear

continued on page three

