

ONE YEAR AT A TIME

Day Unit Members Ratify One-Year Deal

MSCA day unit members overwhelmingly ratified a one-year contract to run through June 30, 2008, in balloting held Sept. 26 and 27 at all nine campuses.

The deal was approved by 97 percent of the 722 members casting valid ballots, out of approximately 2300 eligible voters. The tally:

Yes: 700 No: 20 Blank: 2

Election officials challenged the validity of 11 other ballots.

Among the provisions of the new deal is a 3.5 percent across-the-board pay increase. This is the same percentage increase received by MTA affiliates representing faculty and staff in the UMass system, who were negotiating with the UMass Board of Trustees concurrently with MSCA. This round marked the first time MSCA and UMass affiliates were in direct communication during negotiations.

Another major element of the agreement was a \$350,000 longevity adjustment pool, implemented to begin addressing salary compression (when longer-standing workers make less in relation to their

newer colleagues of the same rank). Members will get one “share,” worth between \$110 and \$120, added to their base salary, for each decade of full-time state college service; so members with less than 10 years of service will get one share, less than 20 years will get two shares, and so on; 40 or more years of service will garner members the maximum five shares. The union proposed adding the shares to base salaries before the 3.5 percent raise, but management wouldn’t agree to this proposal.

According to several members of the negotiating team, funding for all new increases came from the state; none of the money was contributed by any of the nine college administrations.

Apparently, the Council of Presidents was concerned about the Patrick administration cutting funding to the campuses, similar to what the Romney administration did in 2005. Romney’s cutback forced the colleges to enact significant spending cuts. Rather than risk a similar belt-tightening, the colleges chose not to contribute additional moneys to the collective bargaining agreement extension.

— *Brett M. Rhyne*