



Affiliated with the MTA and NEA

Good morning Chairman Clark, Vice Chairman Alcock, Commissioner Kelley and members of the Board of Higher Education. Welcome to the new members.

My name is Amy Everitt. I am an Associate Professor and Department Chair of the Sports and Movement Science Department at Salem State College.

I am also Vice President of the Massachusetts State College Association, the union representing faculty and librarians at the nine state colleges.

I am here to express the dissatisfaction of the state college faculty and librarians with the status of contract negotiations. Earlier this morning we gave you a letter describing the source of our dissatisfaction.

New Board members may not be aware of the disadvantage that the state colleges face in the academic job market. Every study conducted in the past four years shows that faculty at the state colleges are substantially undercompensated relative to our peers.

The most recent study, adopted by the Board in February of 2008 and a copy of which we provided you earlier today, once again confirms this problem. State College faculty at the rank of full Professor fall 13% short of the average salary of our peers and 21% short at the 75th percentile. Overall, our salaries are 11% less than the average salary of our peers. This pay deficit has resulted in the loss of many highly qualified candidates and the departure of many recent hires who become discouraged by low salaries and the dismal future income prospect as faculty members at the state colleges.

We believe that you – our employer in collective negotiations – share our dissatisfaction with this situation.

On behalf of the MSCA, I am asking that you bargain with the goal of fixing the problem. We cannot just unthinkingly adopt the governor's so-called "parameters." A less than cost-of-living proposal and a six-month salary freeze do not send a positive message.

We may be limited in what we can accomplish this year; we do not make light of the current economic environment. However, we ask that you join with us in coming up with creative approaches in this round of bargaining. This means taking the time to think, discuss and plan – something that we cannot do with the threat of "no retroactivity" hanging over our heads. It is imperative that we carefully develop what we together believe will overcome the inferiority of compensation for state college faculty and librarians.