



April 3, 2024

Chris Gabrieli
Chair, Massachusetts Board of Higher Education
One Ashburton Place, Room 1401
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Chair Gabrieli,

As union leaders representing thousands of staff and faculty members working at the Commonwealth's community colleges, state universities and UMass campuses, we want to share alarming data concerning wages paid to those of us who are committed to public higher education in Massachusetts.

A salary study conducted by ASA Research on behalf of the Massachusetts Teachers Association shows that the wages of faculty and staff, when adjusted for cost of living, are substantially below those of colleagues working at public colleges and universities in nearby states, as well as at those located in states similar to Massachusetts. Wages for faculty and staff at Massachusetts public colleges and universities are also far lower than those paid to faculty and staff working at comparable private colleges and universities in the state.

In some cases, the gaps exceed \$30,000 annually.

The study was careful to measure wages in the context of the high cost of living in Massachusetts. When our public colleges and universities try to recruit job candidates, many inevitably withdraw realizing that the pay would make it nearly impossible to make ends meet here. When the cost of living is considered, our salaries are the lowest, or next to lowest, among comparison states at every level of public higher education. This wage gap undermines our efforts to diversify faculty and retain highly qualified staff and faculty.

The study examined 2021-22 data. When inflation is factored into our pay, we see real wages dropped from 10% to 12% for our members when compared to the salaries they earned in 2016-17. As wages fall below what is needed to meet this state's high cost of living – a real dilemma many of us in public higher education are facing – it not only harms those of us working in public higher education, but also the institutions themselves, as it becomes increasingly difficult to fill vacancies and attract the best-qualified job applicants. Consequently, student supports and academic programs are put at risk.

We urge you to carefully examine this data and to note that even wage increases have not been keeping pace with the cost of living, causing Massachusetts to trail peers in competitiveness.

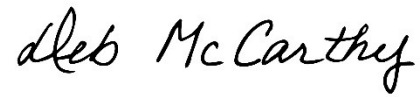
Please join us in advocating for investments in public higher education that will close these wage gaps and ensure that our colleges and universities are able to have the faculty and staff necessary

to meet the needs of all students, especially as Massachusetts makes progress on increasing access to public higher education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Max Page". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Max Page
President of the MTA

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deb McCarthy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a distinct loop for the 'd'.

Deb McCarthy
Vice President of the MTA