

September 28, 2004

The Honorable
Mitt Romney, Governor
The State House, Room 360
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Massachusetts State College Faculty Salary Study

Dear Governor Romney:

We are pleased to provide you with a copy of a recent study of the salaries of the Massachusetts State College faculty that the Chairpersons of the Boards of Trustees and the Presidents of the State Colleges commissioned in consultation with the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. As you will see from the report, faculty at our State Colleges are not currently compensated at a nationally competitive level, and the results of lower than average salaries are beginning to dramatically impact our ability to attract and retain high quality faculty on our campuses. The tens of thousands of Massachusetts residents who attend our colleges as students deserve and properly demand the highest quality higher education, but we must be mindful of the obvious truth that the erosion of our competitive faculty salary position will eventually cause an erosion of educational quality on our campuses. We must act to prevent such a result.

The study compared State College faculty salaries against those from public, Masters I institutions with unionized faculty in the leading industrial states. The study utilizes data collected by the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA) – an organization that serves more than 6,500 human resources administrators at nearly 1,600 colleges and universities in the United States. The study found that across all ranks, faculty at our State Colleges receive 10% less than the average salary of their peers, with full professors earning 14% less. Moreover, the shortcomings were starkest in those fields that are critical to the future growth of the Massachusetts economy. Salaries for full professors in business administration and management were 25% less; 18% less in biology; 15% less in computer and information sciences; and 12% less in mathematics and statistics.

To compensate for the high cost of living in Massachusetts, the study also compared State College faculty against faculty in their peer group with earnings at the 75th percentile. Based on this comparison, State College faculty at all ranks were underpaid by 18%, with full professors the worst off, earning only 78 cents on the dollar compared to their peers. Analysis of faculty salary at the 75th percentile is consistent with a Board of Higher Education/Community College faculty salary study completed in 1999 and now implemented at the 15 Community Colleges in Massachusetts. Utilization of the 75th percentile of faculty salary of industrialized states also appropriately captures the high cost of living in Massachusetts as compared to other industrialized states. Indeed, according to two MassINC studies: “The State of the American Dream in Massachusetts” and “Homeownership in Massachusetts: A New Assessment”, Massachusetts ranked 26th in home affordability in 1980, but by 2000, Massachusetts was the third least affordable state in the nation. By the year 2000, Massachusetts housing prices were 60% above the U.S. average, and from 2000 to 2003, Massachusetts was among the national leaders in housing inflation, witnessing an additional 40% growth in housing prices (Source: Warren Group Publications).

To return to a level of competitiveness with regard to faculty salaries at the State Colleges, we must be realistic in accounting for the high cost of living in Massachusetts. In recruiting faculty for the State Colleges, we conduct national searches to identify and recruit the highest quality faculty available in the nation. When considering hiring offers, however, candidates are increasingly choosing to locate in states with lower costs of living even if salary levels are comparable. In considering employment offers, our preferred candidates often turn to leading web-based cost of living calculators to compare costs. For example, according to one such web tool, an employee in Dallas, Texas earning our average State College full professor's salary of \$68,000 would have to earn 43.46% more (\$97,552) in Boston just to maintain the same standard of living (Source: Bankrate.com). Most of the cost differential is attributable to high housing costs in our state.

As we survey our campuses with regard to recent faculty hiring patterns, we have found that campuses have reported as high as a 1/3rd refusal rate of otherwise successful faculty candidates to relocate to Massachusetts due to low salary / high cost of living factors. Additionally, we are losing existing faculty to lower cost of living states at an accelerating rate. Many of the faculty who are leaving Massachusetts tend to be younger, recently hired professors, who are quite frankly, having a difficult time making ends meet in Massachusetts.

With higher educational standards, enhanced accountability, and the growing economic importance of public higher education, campuses must be in a competitive position to recruit and retain the highest quality State College faculty possible for our 45,000 students. A greater proportion of jobs in Massachusetts are found in professional and technical occupations than in the rest of the country. The Division of Employment and Training, in its employment projections for the State through 2010, has determined that 321,500 job openings will require a bachelor's degree or higher, as compared to 68,720 jobs that will require an associate's degree – almost a 5 to 1 ratio. The more than 200,000 State College alumni who live and work in Massachusetts are filling critical positions that are vital to our State's economic future.

The Massachusetts State Colleges are the most affordable and accessible regional gateway for our citizens to pursue four year degree and professional development opportunities in Massachusetts. Our faculty are the indispensable molders of the thousands of minds that will help shape the future of the Massachusetts economy. We hope that you will agree that in investing in our faculty, in our State Colleges, and in public higher education more generally, we are investing in our own future as a State. As the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative noted in its *2003 Index of the Massachusetts Innovation Economy*: "A strong public sector higher education system is needed to complement private higher education. Low and declining support per capita threatens the Massachusetts Innovation Economy and its well educated workforce."

Despite the critical economic function our faculty perform in Massachusetts, our colleagues in the classroom often do not believe that the State they serve values the contribution that they make every day. The attached salary study lends credence to this belief by underscoring the less than competitive compensation that we provide to our faculty. We hope that we can meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss the study and possible solutions to the disparities identified in the report. Thank you in advance for your consideration of the study.

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With warmest regards,

President Dana Mohler-Faria
Bridgewater State College
Chairperson, Council of State College Presidents

Commodore Richard Gurnon
Acting President, Massachusetts Maritime Academy

President Robert Antonucci
Fitchburg State College

President Nancy Harrington
Salem State College

President Helen Heineman
Framingham State College

President Vicky Carwein
Westfield State College

President Katherine Sloan
Massachusetts College of Art

President Janelle Ashley
Worcester State College

President Mary Grant
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

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With warmest regards,

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