

CT news

The Voice of the Clerical-Technical Union of Michigan State University



Clerical-Technical Union
of Michigan State University



Update on Federal Funding/University Budget Deficit

Michigan State University continues to see cuts in funding it receives from the federal government. Since March of this year, MSU has lost nearly \$6.5 million in previously guaranteed federal funding for 18 research projects. The research projects seem to be those deemed by President Donald Trump's administration as promoting DEI: with components of them focusing on race, gender or equity. The first terminations for grants started on March 20, and the most recent round of cuts happened on May 2. These cuts are unfortunately leading to the possibility of layoffs across the University, and some have happened already.

Additionally, as you know, President Guskiewicz has directed all units to reduce costs by 9% over the next two years because of the University's stated budget deficit. Although the narrative created by the University suggests that the primary reason for its structural budget deficit is "double-digit" increases in employee health care costs, we want to make sure you are aware that any double-digit increases are not the result of CLO-represented employees subject to the Memorandum of Understanding on Health Care. In fact, because of the efforts of employees and the Joint Health Care Committee to keep costs down, the increases in the health care experience for CLO-represented employees have been less than "double digit" and actually averaged only 3.4% per member per year in each of the past seven years. [Tammy Peterson]

We are not happy about the way the budget deficit is being portrayed by the University. Nevertheless, and regardless of the underlying reasons for the deficit, this could also result in layoffs across the University. CTU wants to remind everyone that you have protections that are set forth in our collective bargaining agreement. If you receive notification of a layoff, please reach out to your UR or the CTU office to assist you. It is the University's policy to provide 60 calendar days' notice and notice is 15 working days prior to the effective date of a layoff so time is of the essence. Reach out immediately if you have any questions or concerns.

We are here to help you!



In this newsletter
you can expect:

CT Classifieds
Page 2

President's
Message
Page 3

The CLO and MSU
Joint Health Care
Page 4

Spring Membership
Meeting Highlights
Page 6

MSU Nonprofit
Leadership
Courses
Page 7

Remember to search for your [Name] bracketed within the CTU newsletter. If you find your name in the CT News, you have won a union solidarity prize. To claim your prize, call the CTU office at 517-355-1903 or tiffany@ctumsu.org.

CT NEWS

The voice of the Clerical-Technical
Union of Michigan State University

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

2990 E. Lake Lansing Road
East Lansing MI 48823-2281
517-355-1903
www.ctumsu.org
ctu@ctumsu.org



Organized and
independent
since 1974

CTU Executive Board

President:

Deb Bittner deb@ctumsu.org

Vice President:

Andrea Rafferty raffer24@msu.edu

Treasurer:

Tracy Rich tracy@ctumsu.org

Secretary:

Michelle Jenkins jenki285@msu.edu

Directors:

Barbara Breedlove breedlov@msu.edu

Leslie Fernandez-Lopez

ferna232@msu.edu

Rosario Garcia garciar@msu.edu

Janet Hershberger jroe@msu.edu

Andrea Parker parker97@msu.edu

Stephen Stofflet ssstofflet@gmail.com

Jan Wallace wallac12@msu.edu

CTU Staff

Communications:

Theresa Stevens

stevens9499@outlook.com

Contract Administrators:

Sean Temple sean@ctumsu.org

Mike Weissman mike@ctumsu.org

Financial Coordinator:

Angelica Garcia angelica@ctumsu.org

Organizational Coordinator:

Tiffany Westendorf tiffany@ctumsu.org

Editorial Policy

The CTU News is the voice of our union. It is our vehicle for communication, on a regular basis, the issues that confront us as workers. Through this newsletter we explain union policies show how dues are spent, and explain the view and action of the elected leadership for evaluation by the members.

The CTU News is the voice of the membership. We welcome articles from members and stories about members.

While contributions are welcome, they should be constructive and contribute positively to the welfare of our union. We will accept no attacks do any union leader or member.

We will accept thoughtful discussion of all related issues in the letters section, and reserve the right to reply to those that seem to reflect a misunderstanding of the union and its policies. Direct ideas, letters, questions and comments can be sent to Theresa Stevens.

CT Classifieds



If you would like to advertise to your colleagues in CT News, whether it's an item you would like to donate or have services you would like to share, send your ad copy to ctu@ctumsu.org. **Items will remain listed until we are notified to remove them.**

Please visit www.ctumsu.org/news/ct-classifieds to review the guidelines for submitting an ad.

Telephone Stand/Chair - Antique

It is over 50 years old with a little ding in the seat. Asking \$40 or BO. Call or text 517-303-9716 or email thomase@msu.edu.



Side Table - Antique (possibly 70 yo?)

Has shelves and doors on either side - brown wood. Asking \$40 or BO. Call or text 517-303-9716 or email thomase@msu.edu



2015 Shadow Cruiser 282 BHS Travel Trailer

Well-maintained RV offers a spacious layout with numerous features designed for comfort and convenience. Features living/dining area, kitchen, master bedroom, double bunk bed and convertible beds and full bath. \$15,500 OBO, located in Holt, MI.

For more details or to schedule viewing contact Rosario Garcia at 517-944-5437 or email garciar@msu.edu.

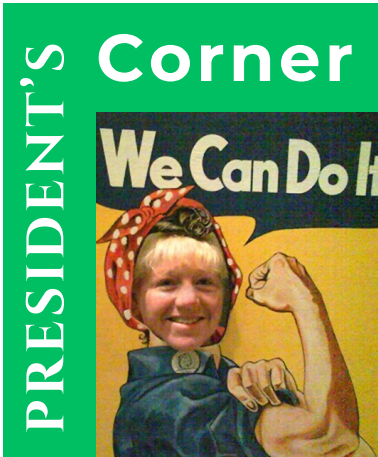


2007 Honda Shadow Motorcycle

Manual transmission, blue with multiple extra features. In good condition, very low mileage, new battery. \$5,000 OBO. Serious buyers please. Contact Rosario Garcia at 517-944-5437 or email garciar@msu.edu.



A message from President Deb Bittner



Happy Summer!

Even though summer doesn't officially start until June 20, it feels like we are already in the throes. Please take time this summer to use your hard-fought and hard-earned vacation accruals. You deserve it!

Now on a more serious note, as you know, the Coalition of Labor Organizations at MSU (CLO) reached an agreement with the University on February 27, 2025, for another Memorandum of Understanding regarding health care and wages for employees represented by the CLO MOU. This agreement not only provides health care coverage for employees and the mechanism for wage increases, it also provides stability and consistency for MSU in budget planning. CTs ratified this agreement on March 28, 2025. The new MOU begins on January 1, 2026.

Since then, we have seen increasing finger-pointing around health care costs. Of course, we have been reading all of the updates from the University regarding its stated budget deficits. We recognize that there are concerns in connection with federal funding and the loss of research dollars. We appreciate the University's ongoing efforts to minimize those losses. But we have been extremely disappointed, and in my language, a bit of a "hot ticket," to learn of the narrative created by the University – which is now being repeated by the media – that the University's structural budget deficits are "primarily" the result of "double-digit" increases in employee health care costs. [Amber Britten]

This narrative has fueled damaging perceptions that support staff is to blame. This was blatantly evidenced by the insulting suggestion of an attendee during a recent "Conversation with Vennie" town hall that the University should consider reducing the wages and retirement contributions of "union employees."

Let's set the record straight.

I strongly refute this and remind all readers of the benefits and significant cost savings that the University has enjoyed as a result of the joint health care bargaining process. For more than 25 years, the unions and the University have worked together to tackle health care insurance, address increasing costs and keep employees with quality health care options. This model ensures that a dedicated team monitors costs and administrative processes by keeping many eyes on our insurance vendors and analyzing trends.

Many years ago, to continue keeping employees and the University engaged, the health care negotiations linked increases in the cost of health care with wages so that employees added even more "skin to the game" and we became "smart health care consumers." Union members have done their part to keep costs down and continue to do so. We know the value of health care not only in the total compensation of our benefits package but also to our families' peace of mind. We have sacrificed high wage increases to continue quality health care for all of us.

Ultimately, far from "double digit" increases in health care costs, the health care cost experience for CLO-represented employees on a per employee per year basis has only increased an average of 3.4% in each of the past seven years. And because wages are directly linked to increases in health care costs, wage increases over the time period have been small. Additionally, since the joint health care bargaining process has been in place, the Unions have worked to ease the University's health care liabilities by agreeing to make changes in coverage over the years like eliminating a retiree's spouse from employer-paid health care coverage (for employees hired on or after July 1, 2002) and eliminating paid health care coverage for all retirees hired after July 1, 2010. As a result, the University's commitment to retiree health care coverage is decreasing every year, and eventually will be eliminated entirely. The Unions have more than done their part in keeping University costs down.

President's Message (cont.)

So it is very concerning when we hear that administrative units are now being influenced by a false perception that union employees are to blame for the University's budget deficits when planning their reductions. I sincerely hope that the University will keep the above in mind when issuing future updates and in creating additional talking points.

To help facilitate this change in the financial narrative, your help is needed to spread our health care message. I am asking you to know these facts, to gently let your colleagues know this and to make sure the right commentary is being repeated around you. [Karen Deweerd]

We have a lot to be proud of with these accomplishments and our leadership with MSU to be true financial partners. It is a legacy we need to keep fighting for.

In solidarity,

Deb

The CLO and MSU Joint Health Care Committee's Mission Statement

We commit to work together to support and promote the health and well-being of Michigan State University, its employees, and their families through cost effective, accessible, quality driven health care in an effort to ensure a productive workforce. Adopted 2005

Health Plan Goals:

- 1) Encourage appropriate health promotion and disease prevention initiatives.
- 2) Identify and implement health care cost control strategies (for both MSU and employees) to achieve predictability.
- 3) Promote payer, insurer, consumer and provider partnership, responsibility, and accountability.
- 4) Provide opportunities for employee choice.
- 5) Ensure access to health care at appropriate sites.
- 6) Ensure quality health care.
- 7) Maximize internal and external administrative and program efficiencies.
- 8) Influence health care delivery system efficiency and effectiveness.
- 9) Promote appropriate health care consumerism.

Highlights from the JHCC collaboration

- 1992** - One campus bargaining unit accepts tentative agreement of \$600 cap on health care premiums; the TA is not implemented when other unions will not follow suit.
- 1992** - BC/BS contacts AFSCME Local 1585 to ask their help to get back on campus; 1585 brings issue to Coalition which backs the plan; the switch from AETNA to the Blues saves MSU \$21 million, the beginning of the partnership.
- 1994** - Each union involved in the proposed health care negotiation process takes the issue to their membership for vote to allow health care to be bargained jointly. After positive votes, MSU recognizes the unique new method of joint bargaining process for health care with the Coalition. This new process provides stability and consistency for union groups, esp when moving from one bargaining unit to another, and for the University's budget planning.

Highlights from the JHCC collaboration (cont.)

- 1994** - BC/BS change from fully-insured ("indemnity") plan to Administrative Services Contract (ASC, self-insurance) after discussions involving both MSU and Labor through the joint process. This saves MSU an additional \$17 million.
- 2000** - Coalition begins education process for successor contract bargaining to be concluded by 12/31/01 for implementation 7/1/02. The \$50 million "savings" reflects what MSU would have spent if the Coalition had not been formed and had not helped it redesign plans and identify better approaches to health care.
- 1997-2001** - First Coalition agreement in effect for health plans. The agreement introduces several innovations that improve plan benefits. It introduces innovations and competition among insurance providers. Labor and MSU advance information to employees through educational talks to move to a "smart health care consumer" model to reduce costs.
- 2001** - Unions join the "Close the Gap" campaign in partnership with the University to place pressure on the legislature to provide per-student funding to MSU equal to funding provided to UM and Wayne State.
- 2002-2006** - The Coalition and MSU agree to a 4-year successor contract that takes effect July 2002. The new contract ties increases in the cost of health care to salaries/wages. This innovative agreement gives the university predictability in budgeting; guarantees an employer fully-funded health care insurance option; and allows employees to recoup some health care savings in the form of increased wages. It also requires employees to shoulder some of the risk because wages will be low if health care savings soar.
- 2003** - After MSU is targeted for an \$84 million cut due to the State budget crisis, the CLO champions the University's importance to the citizens of Michigan and political leaders. CLO continues partnership with MSU by helping to organize lobbying efforts, letter-writing campaigns, a forum, and a demonstration. The result was that cuts were significantly less than proposed. CLO helps form the political action committee, the Green and White PAC.
- 2010-2013** - A new four-year Coalition Health Care Agreement alters the traditional formula, a matrix, balancing the increases in health care costs with raises. Instead, the overall health care spend is decreased by 10% off the top. The employer is responsible for paying the premiums at the reduced level and up to 5% of any annual increase in health care costs. Employees pay the difference between the actual cost of health care and the employer's share. In addition, wage increases are set for the duration of the contract at 0% in the first year, 1% lump sum and 1% base wage increase in the second year, and 2% in the third and fourth years. The employer agrees to set aside the difference between what they actually pay in health care costs and what they agree to pay (the reduced rate plus up to 5% a year) in order to offset any large future increase in costs. The employer agrees that the money set aside will be used by the Coalition. [Richard Thomas II]
- 2014-2017** - A new four-year Coalition Health Care Agreement returns to the traditional method of tying increases in the cost of health care to wages. The savings realized under the previous contract are distributed to the members represented by the support staff unions that are party to the MOU.
- 2018-2021** - MOU was signed that featured a change in how Health Care Cost Experiences are calculated specifically by eligible CLO member instead of by total cost. Matrix was reconfigured to include a 2.75% max and lump sum payout if cost increases over 11% for the year.

Summary:

We have worked together to negotiate agreements in 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, 2018, 2022 and 2025. We have kept health care costs stable and easy to budget.

We have enhanced health care options and programs for our members.

We have received raises each year.

The partnership has been beneficial for both the University and its employees.

Spring Membership Meeting Highlights

The Spring Membership Meeting was held on Tuesday, April 29, 2025, via Zoom. There was a quorum so official union business could be conducted. The meeting quorum is 50 members.

Meeting highlights:

- Steve Osborn, Manager and Field Auditor with Maner Costerisan, presented the results of the 2024 annual audit. CTU received the highest rating in the audit world – a “clean audit” again this year. And again this year, CTU was at a rate of 96.63% of chargeable vs. non-chargeable expenses that are considered to be defending and strengthening the contract. Special thanks to the Audit Committee for their oversight responsibilities to make sure the audit occurs: Kate Fandrick, Wendy Poulin, Angel Toth. The audit was accepted by membership as presented. To request a copy of the audit, please email angelica@ctumsu.org.
- The projected 2025 budgets were presented by Treasurer Tracy Rich, highlighting the operating and building budgets. Thanks to the Finance Committee: Tracy Rich (chair), Barbara Breedlove, Leslie Fernandez-Lopez, Rosie Garcia and Stephen Stofflet. The budgets were accepted by membership as presented.
- Rich also presented the financial update and overview of finances for the organization, noting that even with market volatility the Contingency Fund remains strong. There was a recommendation by the Executive Board to transfer funds from the Contingency Fund to the operating savings to reimburse the account for the 50th Anniversary celebrations, reimburse health care bargaining that began in October 2024, and to cover the cost of insurance-mandated sidewalk repairs and other building and parking lot upgrades. The transfer was approved by the membership.
- Minutes from the January 30, 2025 membership meeting were presented and approved.
- Contract administrators Sean Temple and Mike Weissman answered questions regarding uncertainties on the federal level and how it affects layoffs, making reference to the in-depth overview in the March/April edition of the CT Newsletter.
- Thanks to 15 individuals who participated as part of Team CTU in the Izzo Legacy Run/Walk/Roll event on April 27.
- President Bittner shared an email from CTU's investment manager who expressed reassurances of the portfolio to try to ride out the storm, and not panic along with everyone else. While the current market is unlike any other time, he is projecting the waters will calm down.
- The signed Memorandum Of Understanding on Health Care was received earlier today. Thank you to everyone who participated in the Town Halls and by voting to ratify the MOU.
- Discussion was had on whether to hold another member event at Potter Park Zoo on Sunday, September 28th. Based on the results of the membership poll, it was decided to proceed with the Potter Park event. Other member activities suggested were a Lugnuts or Tigers game; local events and game nights. Staff will look further into those suggestions. [Sarah Kosloski]
- NOTE: the Summer Membership meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 22 outside at the CTU office. Remember to bring a chair! There will be food and prizes too.

Congratulations to attendee participation winners!

Barbara Breedlove - \$100 Quorum
Angela Zamora - \$50
Leslie Fernandez-Lopez - Spring Prize
Eric Tervol - CTU Swag
Edie Sekmistrz - CTU Swag
Sally Becker - CTU Swag
Lisa Spees – CTU Swag

Meeting Notice

Don't miss the next meeting! A new group photo will be taken for our website banner and newsletter heading.



Don't forget to bring a chair!

MSU Nonprofit Leadership Courses

For MSU employees considering professional development opportunities in the upcoming academic year, the Nonprofit Leadership Online Graduate Programs may be of interest. Employees can enroll in individual courses and apply to pursue a graduate certificate or a master's degree. All courses are 5 weeks and completely online and asynchronous. A full list of Nonprofit Leadership courses and the schedule for Fall and Spring can be found at <https://religiousstudies.msu.edu/global-nonprofit-leadership/courses/>. All courses qualify for MSU tuition assistance.

Courses include developing and expanding knowledge in:

- Grant writing
- Project management
- Nonprofit marketing and fundraising
- Nonprofit financial management
- Philanthropy and nonprofits
- Ethics in applied leadership
- Volunteer management
- Cultural and religious knowledge

The programs offer:

- Fully online, asynchronous study
- 5 week, 2 credit courses
- Interactive weekly lessons
- Experienced, highly engaged faculty members
- No GRE required to apply
- Programs qualify for MSU tuition assistance

Additionally, the Department of Religious Studies is now offering an undergraduate degree in Nonprofit Leadership, Religion, and Social Change. Please contact Jennifer Marcy (marcyjen@msu.edu) with any questions.





CTU OF MSU
2990 E. LAKE LANSING ROAD
EAST LANSING MI 48823-6219

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



Important Dates



Juneteenth	Thursday, June 19 University Open, Classes not held
4th of July Holiday	Friday, July 4 CTU Office and University Closed
Membership Meeting	Tuesday, July 22 5:30pm IN-PERSON CTU Office Parking Lot
Summer Classes End	Friday, August 15
Fall Classes Begin	Monday, August 25