

Campaign Statement of Kelly Socia

Hello fellow union members,

My name is Kelly Socia, and I am asking for your vote to become the MSP President. I am a tenured full professor in the School of Criminology and Justice Studies in FAHSS, and I currently serve on the MSP executive board as the Social Science Rep, as well as the Grievance Officer. I am also on the Core Bargaining Team (CBT) negotiating our next contract and have served on prior CBTs as well.

I am running for MSP President as part of the [MSP Solidarity Coalition](#), an entire slate of faculty running for different board positions who share the same goals of bringing **solidarity, empowerment, and transparency** to the MSP. For example, if you've noticed that MSP bargaining this cycle has been more transparent, inclusive, and action-oriented than in the past, that has been spearheaded by bargaining team co-chair Adam St. Jean, who is running for Vice President with the MSP Solidarity Coalition. Other MSP Solidarity Coalition candidates have similarly been actively working towards a more transparent and effective union.

I have a long-standing commitment to our union, and began serving in an official board role in 2020 as the Social Science Rep. I ran then after seeing the MSP agree to a disastrous post-COVID19 bargaining agreement that obligated faculty to either teach a free course or be furloughed for a week. In fact, we were the *only* faculty union to agree to furloughs/free courses throughout the *entire* UMass system. In 2023 I became the MSP grievance officer, which has allowed me to become intimately familiar with our 232-page contract. Through this, I've gained substantial experience in helping our faculty to fight administrative overreach and defend the contract, whether through the 'official' grievance/arbitration process or informal negotiations. I have a clear understanding of our contract, including all of its contradictory language, unclear provisions, and weak protections — the result of ~50 years of patchwork edits. For example, when the administration attempted to unilaterally steal RIF funds from faculty to fill a self-inflicted budget gap in 2021, *I* was the one who found the specific contract language on p. 110 that prevented that from happening and protected our members.

In addition to my 'on the ground' experience on the MSP board, my formal union training includes:

- Completing multiple Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) workshops and courses (e.g., grievance training, bargaining);
- Attending multiple MTA/NEA conferences;
- Participating in the MTA's 'Next Generation Leadership' program;
- Completing the [MTA bargaining certificate](#) program;
- Currently pursuing a master's degree in Labor Studies at UMass Amherst.

Given the continued attacks on faculty workloads and autonomy, and the threat to public higher education nationwide, our union needs new leadership and a fresh perspective. Our union continues to suffer from disorganization, limited transparency, and (rightfully) disengaged membership. As President, I vow to solve these issues.

As the next MSP President, I will steer the MSP to have a more active, effective, and collaborative role within the university, work closely with other labor unions at UML and throughout the UMass system, and increase member engagement via increased outreach and transparency.

I would appreciate your vote for President, and I encourage you to also vote for the other MSP Solidarity Coalition candidates. You can see our slate's candidates and statements, and our overall platform at www.MSPSolidarity.org. Please reach out to me with any questions you may have (ksocia@gmail.com).

In solidarity,
Kelly Socia