

CT news

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



Clerical-Technical Union
of Michigan State University



Martin Luther King Jr. Celebrations

CTU participated in several MLK celebrations despite the inclement weather conditions! On January 16, the MSU Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Unity Dinner took place with several CTU members volunteering. Along with a wonderful buffet dinner, the program featured the announcement of this year's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Endowed Scholarship recipients, Keynote Speaker Sharon Chia Claros, DEIB Practitioner/Scholar, Graduate and Undergraduate speakers, musical performances, as well as remarks from MSU President Dr. Kevin M. Guskiewicz and MSU Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer Dr. Jabbar Bennett.



On January 20, due to the freezing temperature the MLK Commemorative March was moved indoors at the IM East for everyone's safety. The symbolic March proceeded around the perimeter of the gym for all participants followed by the official program.



Members of CTU also attended the 40th Annual MLK Day of Celebration Luncheon at the Lansing Center in downtown Lansing. The program featured the middle and high school essay contest winners along with music provided by the incredibly talented Detroit Youth Choir. The highlight of the event was the Fireside Address featuring Dr. Bernard Lafayette, Jr., the Civil Rights Movement activist, minister, educator, lecturer, and authority on the strategy of Nonviolent Social Change. He was the leader of the Nashville Movement Lunch Counter Sit-Ins, and the Freedom Rides of 1961.



In this newsletter
you can expect:

CT Classifieds
Page 2

Winter Membership
Meeting Highlights
Page 3

Federal Policies
Update
Page 4

President's
Message
Page 5

Final Look Back
50 Years!
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 garcia@msu.edu

Janet Hershberger jroe@msu.edu

Andrea Parker parker97@msu.edu

Stephen Stofflet sstofflet@gmail.com

Jan Wallace wallac12@msu.edu

CTU Staff

Communications:

Theresa Stevens

stevens9499@outlook.com

Contract Administrators:

Sean Temple sean@ctumsu.org

Mike Wiessman 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. [Samantha Vanderveen]

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

Char-Broil 2-burner Grill

Used for 1.5 years. It works great, we're just moving and don't want to deal with it. It's on wheels and has flip-up side panels. I will include the propane tank and all-weather cover (\$75+ value). Total: \$180, will deliver locally for \$20. Call or text 218-821-2217 or email sam.nesheim@gmail.com

Yard Machines 20" Push Lawn Mower

Lightly used, well-maintained and will include the gas can and engine oil. Total \$130, will deliver locally for \$20. Call or text 218-821-2217 or email sam.nesheim@gmail.com"

Bunn Coffee Pot Still Available

CTU has a Bunn Coffee Pot available to a good home. If you are interested, please send an email to ctu@ctumsu.org.



Membership Meetings

Meeting
Notice

Membership meetings are for making decisions about the Union, asking questions, and receiving updates about union activities.

The membership meeting dates for 2025 have been tentatively set by the Executive Board.

Pre-registration is required. Look for an email with the link. Members are welcome and encouraged to attend!



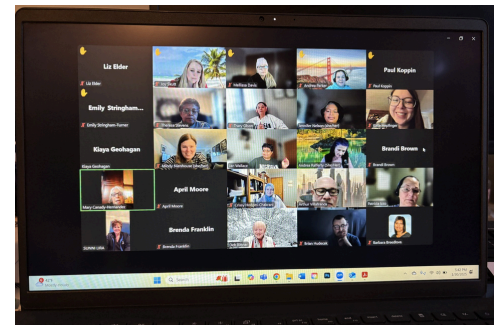
Winter Membership Meeting Highlights

The Winter Membership Meeting was held on Thursday, January 30, 2025, via Zoom. There was a quorum so official union business could be conducted. The meeting quorum is 50 members.

Meeting highlights:

- Minutes from October 23, 2024 were presented and approved with corrections.
- Tracy Rich, Treasurer, presented the financial report and an overview of finances. The annual audit will begin next week with results expected for the April membership meeting. The budget will be finalized soon now that December figures have been received and will be discussed in depth at the April meeting.
- Board recommendations were presented for membership approval of donation requests. The following were approved after discussions:
 - 15th Cesar Chavez & Delores Huerta Celebration - \$1,000
 - Greater Lansing Food Bank - \$1,000
 - Haven House Pancake Palooza - \$1,000
 - MSU Juneteenth Celebration - \$1,000
 - MSU Student Food Bank - \$1,000 *Board recommended \$500, membership agreed to increase
 - Tri-County Office on Aging - \$1,500 *Board recommended \$1,000, membership asked to increase the donation to the Meals on Wheels program.
- Membership was informed that health care bargaining has begun and the team was named. Process and the goals of the negotiations were explained and feedback and/or questions were encouraged. [Janet Hershberger]
- New Member Orientations are scheduled as follows:
 - 2/20 - Dinner at Brody Square, 5:30pm
 - 3/6 - Dinner at Brody Square, 5:30pm
 - 4/8 - Dinner at Brody Square, 5:30pm

Pre-registration required with tiffany@ctumsu.org



Congratulations to door prize attendee winners!

Emily Stringham-Turner - \$100 Quorum
Thomas Cook - \$50
Wendy Poulin - Winter Prize
Karen Spitz - CTU Swag
Jay Feight - CTU Swag
Mary Canady-Hernandez - CTU Swag



Sunday, April 27
6th Annual
Izzo Run/Walk/Roll

If anyone is interested in participating in the Izzo Legacy event, CTU will reimburse you for your registration fee but you need to RSVP a spot by notifying CTU. Sign up by emailing deb@ctumsu.org. Remember to wear your CTU shirt!

Federal Policies Update

On January 27th, the Trump Administration issued a memorandum directing all federal agencies to temporarily pause the obligation or disbursement of federal financial assistance, effective Jan. 28, 2025, stating that the suspension was intended to allow a political review to assess whether federal financial assistance aligns with its priorities. Minutes before the memorandum was to take effect, U.S. District Judge Loren L. AliKhan temporarily blocked the order to maintain the status quo while further litigation could play out which was then followed by the Trump Administration rescinding its call for a pause on payments for federal grants and other programs. It stated that only the freeze had been rescinded — not its effort to review federal spending. Had this freeze on program funding taken place, critical services like cancer research, housing and food assistance, Head Start and preschool programs, domestic violence shelters, and so much more could have caused real harm and put lives at risk. There is still some question as to whether the rescinding of the freeze is temporary or permanent, and many states, schools and organizations that rely on the trillions of dollars of critical program funding from Washington worry that it can be taken away at any moment.

The freeze would have also affected many programs and grants that universities receive including MSU. President Kevin Guskiewicz issued a letter stating “such a freeze would significantly disrupt our research and innovation work. Governmental agency funding is a major component of the nation’s medical, energy and other vital research”. For university updates on federal polices and executive orders visit <https://tinyurl.com/MSUUpdates>.

CTU is not clear on how the “pause” will affect our members work. We do not know the effect of stopping any federal grants or any National Institute of Health (NIH) grants will do. We do know that CTU is monitoring this and will make sure that all contractual rights are upheld. Please contact CTU if you receive any notices regarding your work involving this issue.

WE NEED YOU!!!

The Clerical-Technical Union (CTU) is currently seeking dedicated CTs to volunteer as Union Representatives (UR) in their districts. As a Union Representative, you will play a crucial role in advocating for your colleagues and ensuring their voices are heard. This is a unique opportunity to contribute to our workplace community and help make a positive impact. Maybe you think that you don’t have the experience in the labor movement and that’s understandable. CTU will train you to be effective leaders. You are never alone in your role as a UR.

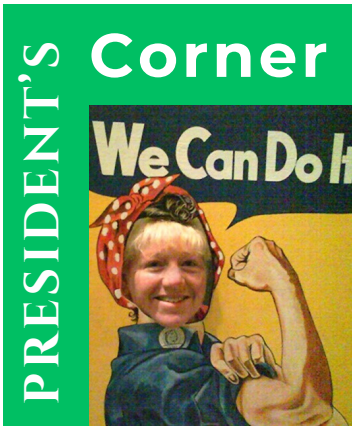
I first became a UR because I saw in the newsletter that there was a need in my district, and it was the best move I ever made. I did not know much about being a leader in our union, but I was willing to step up and fill the need for CTU. Even though I am the Vice President now and don’t have the responsibilities of a UR, I am still learning all the time and I’m a better advocate for the CTs in my department and building. I have learned so much about our union and how to make sure the terms of our contract are being followed at the university.

CTU is a strong union with a strong contract, and we need people to step up and possibly out of their comfort zone to fill these open positions. If you’re interested in volunteering or would like more information about the responsibilities, please reach out to me. Your participation and support will be greatly appreciated! I promise, you won’t be sorry to join us!

In solidarity,

Andrea Rafferty, Vice President and Union Rep Liaison





A message from President Deb Bittner

Happy 2025!

I know it is February and it is still early in 2025! I think the winter dreariness makes it seem far later in the year as we feel pretty sluggish and bogged down by having to “layer up” every day. But in the academic world, we are almost halfway through the semester, as crazy as that sounds. Things here at CTU seem to be as busy as ever. The glow of our 50th year has worn off and we are now busy making plans for the next steps.

One of the big ticket items for this year is bargaining health care. Together with six other unions, we are working to secure another Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the University. This MOU is the governing document that defines our health care arrangement and provides for our annual general raises. It also gives us the ability to partner with MSU through a joint health care committee (JHCC) to actively work on reducing health care costs all year round. We meet twice a month and discuss all aspects of our plan.

This innovative and creative process was first discussed in the years of 1994-1996 when the unions and the University agreed to work together to tackle health care insurance and the increasing costs. The goal was to reduce long-term increases in health care costs rather than simply shifting the costs to employees. But in order to do this, the unions had to agree to bargain together. Each union involved took this unique arrangement to their respective members and all had the concept ratified by their memberships.

Ultimately, this model of health care bargaining began to take shape in 1998. We were the first of its kind in Michigan, and maybe even the country. The model ensures that a dedicated team monitors costs and administrative processes by keeping more eyes on our insurance vendors and trends. And it has maintained raises for union employees almost every year. I think there has only been one year since 1998 when we didn't get a raise!

Over time both sides wanted to formalize this model. A declaration was discussed and finalized in 2005 that states:

“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.”

We also created health plan goals that:

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.

These declarations are included on each meeting's agenda and provide guidance. Every change that we make to reduce costs and maximize our raises is measured against these principles. We also consider potential disruption to the lives of MSU employees and gauge the “returns” by evaluating the overall change through the lens of quality, costs, and impact. If a potential change doesn't pass these tests, it won't be implemented. We are constantly looking for ways to keep costs down while making sure our health care is still a quality product. [Theresa Cyr]

But like anything, over time there was more at stake. The employees needed to add “skin to the game” (our share of the risk). So an idea was born to create a formula that ties our wages to health care cost increases. The bargaining team for the 2002-2006 MOU developed a “matrix” that is the face of a complicated process that determines the health care cost experience. Simply put, the better we did at keeping costs down, the bigger our general raise would be. This was a way to ensure a fully-funded plan option, meaning no premium sharing, in our choices for health care. We knew this would be a delicate balancing act for we are, after all, public employees who take our role with the public

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE cont

seriously. As we evolved and became entrenched in our “health care way,” the employees have become “smart health care consumers” who do their part to keep costs down. It isn’t fun and is very challenging and time-consuming but we have all worked to do this for the good of all.

Over the years, this process of bargaining jointly with other unions and the University has provided stability in benefits and consistency, especially when employees move from one bargaining unit to another. It also provides stability and consistency for MSU in budget planning, and gives the University a partner that works hard to keep costs down. Most of all, it provides peace of mind to the employees who do not have to worry about medical insurance coverage.

This partnership is indeed unique to MSU. We have introduced innovations and “forward” planning by an active committee which works hard to maintain this benefit. This partnership also spills over into other aspects of the University, for example when members of labor participate in other committees like search committees, the Police Oversight Committee, and the President’s Advisory Committee on Disability Issues. Labor has even helped lobby our state legislators to get more state appropriations for the University.

We are now working on our eighth MOU. While every bargain is unique, this particular year is especially delicate. We have so many new people in MSU’s administration and on their team, that it feels like we are almost beginning from scratch. We have been required to have many discussions including education and history lessons to keep reminding all that this process works. It works for the benefit of both sides and it needs to be preserved. [Mary Fukagawa]

Maybe many of you reading this are new to the process as well. If so, I hope this has helped you to understand why we bargain health care this way and why we should be proud of our work together. If you are a “seasoned” employee, then your task is to talk about this process to anyone who will listen. It has been a successful process that needs to be respected and continued. If you have any questions or this is still confusing, please feel free to contact me. The more who understand, the better we all will be.

Another item I want to mention is that CTU has set up New Member Orientations for those who want to know more about CTU and why paying dues is a good thing. These are for those CTs who already do pay their fair share and those who don’t -- yet. Take some time to join some of the CTU Leadership, including me, in a meal and conversation. I think you will find it a good use of your time. The list of upcoming orientations are on page 3.

As always, thank you for all you do to assist in the mission of MSU. You are the energy to keep it going!

Deb



Think Spring!

Mark your calendars!
The next membership meeting is:

2025
Tuesday
April 29



Congratulations!

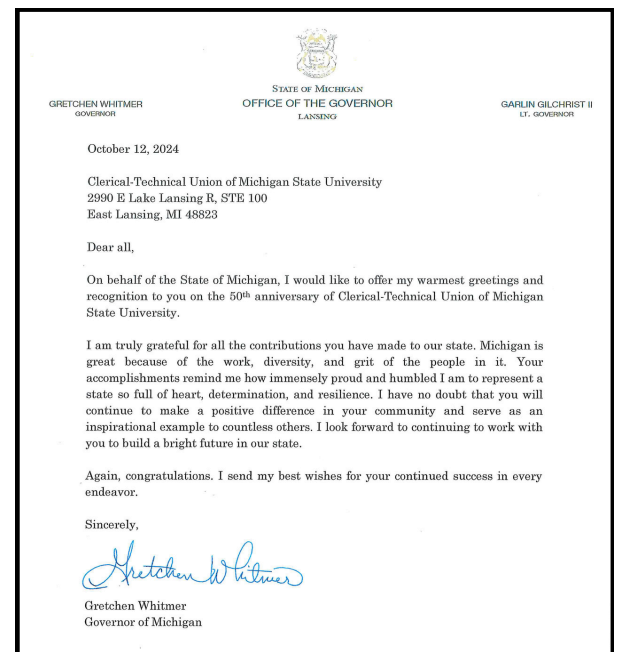
Captain Florene McGlothian-Taylor has announced her retirement from the Department of Police and Public Safety after 48+ years of service at MSU.

We wish her all the best in the next chapter, with much happiness and health.



A FINAL LOOK BACK...50 YEARS!

- 1969** Michigan State University Employees Association (MSUEA) is born.
- 1974** **MSUEA is certified by MERC as official bargaining representative for CTs at MSU.**
The first contract is negotiated and ratified by the Membership.
- 1975** MSUEA elects first officers, hires staff, and rents its first office (Trowbridge Rd, East Lansing).
- 1976** MSUEA office moves to Frandor. CT classifications are established through collective bargaining.
- 1979** MSUEA recognized as largest clerical-technical bargaining unit at a public university in the U.S.
- 1981** MSU unilaterally closes for 2.5 days between Christmas and New Year's making everyone use their own time to get paid. MSUEA protests and wins backpay through the courts, the only union to do so. (In 2022, campus unions secure this as paid time, now known as "Winter Break.")
- 1982** The Membership votes to change name to Clerical-Technical Union of MSU (CTU of MSU).
- 1988** CTU goes on a two-week strike involving 2000 CTs resulting from MSU's refusal to implement the classification study. It was the first, and only, successful strike at MSU!
- 1995** CTU office moves to Brookfield Plaza, East Lansing. The new (current) logo gets adopted showcasing the inverted business pyramid with the workers on top!
- 1996** Coalition of Labor Organizations (CLO) and MSU agree to ground-breaking joint bargaining on health care which keeps a premium-free health care option available.
- 1999** CTU celebrates its 25th anniversary.
- 2000** CTU office moves to Lake Lansing/Abbott Roads, East Lansing. Major changes to the CTU constitution are approved. [Jordan Hiebert]
- 2002** New CLO-MSU health care agreement becomes first in nation to link wage increases to savings in health care costs ensuring MSU public employees keep getting raises and a premium-free health care option.
- 2005 & 2006** The Membership approves buying a building and CTU moves into a permanent home at 2990 E. Lake Lansing Road, East Lansing.
- 2007** Long-time legal counsel, Brad Raymond, leaves to become General Counsel for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters in Washington D.C. Attorneys Nancy Harris Pearce and Mike Weissman take over as CTU's general counsel.
- 2010** CTU welcomes new members in the Detroit Medical Center, Grand Rapids and Macomb Community College. Flint members join us a few years later.
- 2012** Michigan enacts Right to Work laws. (It was repealed in 2023 but not for public employees.)
- 2014** CTU is a partner in the University's celebration of the Civil Rights Act, Project 60/50.
- 2015** CTU provides many volunteers for the University's employee recognition celebration, The Big Event.
- 2017** Long-time MSU Director of Employee Relations Jim Nash retires, allowing him to work for CTU a few years later!
- 2020 & 2021** CTU survives the pandemic, furloughs, and mask mandates while mastering zoom meetings and outdoor Membership meetings in our parking lot.
- 2022** Another health care Memorandum of Understanding is ratified under the turmoil of the pandemic, a tough bargaining climate and restless unions. A fully-funded health care option is maintained.
- 2023** CTU secures paid parental leave for bargaining unit members in another successful bargain for a new (current) contract.
- 2024** **CTU Celebrates Being 50.**





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

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



Important Dates



New Member Orientation	Thursday, February 20, 5:30pm, Brody Square (Pre-registration required)
Spring Break	Sunday, March 2 - Sunday, March 9
New Member Orientation	Thursday, March 6, 5:30pm, Brody Square (Pre-registration required)
Classes End	Sunday, April 27
Membership Meeting	Tuesday, April 29 5:30pm Via Zoom