

MCCC NEWS



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from left to right: Phyllis Barrett; Phil Mahler, MCCC President; Susan Dole; Estela Carrion and Jim Bradley

Delegate Assembly

The annual MCCC Delegate Assembly was convened at the Ramada Inn, Auburn, on Saturday April 29, 2000. 119 members were in attendance establishing a quorum.

Susan Dole addressed the assembly as President, for what she noted was the last time. Noting the turmoil in the MCCC, she commented, "Democracy is messy, but important." She recounted the accomplishments of her presidency—the establishing of a central office, and progress towards fiscal health and responsibility.

Treasurer Estela Carrion presented the FY2001 budget. Animated discussion ensued in which a motion passed to reinstate two reassigned times per year for MCCC/MTA Board members. A motion to delete funding for (July 2001) NEA Representative Assembly delegates was passed. The main motion to accept the 2001 budget then passed. A final motion, that the FY2001 budget contain no dues increases, passed.

After the lunch break outgoing President Susan Dole was presented with roses, gifts, and accolades for her service to the MCCC. Jim Bradley, stepping down from the Board of Directors after years of service, was lauded and thanked. Central

Office secretary, Alicia Ameur was presented with flowers for Secretaries' Day. (see picture, page one)

Abe Sherf brought members of the Negotiating Team to the fore, and thanked MTA legal for their work in the negotiations. He briefly updated the meeting on the accomplishments and struggles of the Day Team to date. Motions to demand individual unit members be provided precise data involved in determining their classification adjustments before ratification was made, heated discussion ensued, and the motion failed.

DCE Team Chair Marcia Blanchette distributed a written report.

The DCE Team, the Nomination Committee, and the Strategic Action Committee were thanked for their work on negotiations, the election, and the campaign to finance Classification respectively.

The Laws and Standing Rules Committee suggested two amendments to the MCCC bylaws. These were presented by committee chair Carolyn Tetrault. The first, related to the constitution of the Dce Grievance Committee, passed. The second, a motion to delete language preventing directors from campuses already represented by elected officers, from serving on the MCCCC Executive Committee, failed. ■

Contract Ratified

A three year agreement between the Massachusetts Community College Council and the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education was ratified Wednesday, May 31, 2000 by a vote of approximately seventy five percent of the 2000 person faculty and professional staff organization. The membership supported the new contract by a 2:1 ratio, 1033 to 515. Turnout was high despite the ratification date falling just after the close of the Spring, 2000 semester. Absentee ballots represented nearly 15% of votes cast on some campuses.

The new contract represents the most radical rewrite of the organization's contract since the first in the early seventies. The workload article underwent the most dramatic reconfiguration with the commonwealth's community college faculty now committed to teaching 15 credit hours per semester, up from a long established 12 credit rule of thumb.

The carrot apparently convincing the membership to support the contract was an agreement by the relevant state leaders to support funding an adjustment in members' salaries in the magnitude of 50 million dollars. Acting Chancellor of Higher Education Judith Gill, Chair of the BHE Stephen Tocco, Personnel Administrator James J. Hartnett of Administration and Finance, and Governor Argeo Paul Cellucci have publicly supported the agreement and the funding necessary for its actualization. Speaker of the House Thomas Finneran and Senate President Thomas Birmingham were apprised of the funding amounts and prior to ratification, had indicated that if faculty agreed to the "significantly increased productivity," referring to the workload article, that they were supportive of the salary increases.

Individual bargaining unit members' pay adjustments will be based on a classification study performed by D.M.Griffiths and funded by MCCC unit members. The membership agreed, in their last, 1995-98, contract to set aside 3 1/2% of their across-the-board raises to pay for an equity study to ameliorate severe inequities in the salaries of the Massachusetts Community College faculty and professional staff. In the study, salaries of faculty and professional staff were compared with their peers in ten other states. Chancellor Stanley Koplik, before his untimely death, had committed to adjust salaries to the 75th percentile of the comparison group, contingent on accession to the fifteen-credit faculty course load model. His successor, Judith Gill, and the BHE were committed to his vision in negotiations. Research by both teams found the fifteen-credit teaching load to be standard across the country.

Massachusetts' Community College faculty have been among the lowest paid among their peers in the industrial states. Many faculty in their fifties, with 25 years experience, were below forty thousand dollars per annum. Salaries had been stagnating for decades. Faculty and professional staff are generally earning less than K-12 teachers in the communities in which the colleges are located.

Vociferous argument against the fifteen-credit model was heard from a significant portion of the membership. Concerns for maintaining the quality of education for which our community college system is renowned as faculty spread themselves more thinly were perhaps the most frequently voiced. Also expressed was worry about the perceived de-professionalization of faculty as they withdraw from committee work, research, advising, community service and professional development activities in order to meet the higher teaching load.

The BHE also demanded post tenure review language and merit pay, both of which were problematic for the team and the membership. Our negotiators, recalling experimentation in an earlier contract with merit pay, were skeptical. After considerable wrangling, "just cause" language was retained in the post tenure review article. Only time will tell how these changes affect unit members in practice.

With the expected political approvals, movement through the house and senate and the Governor's signature, professional staff will see their classification-recommended salaries effective July 1, 1999, and a 2% pay increase and 3% on base merit increase effective January 1, 2000. Faculty will see the same increases in January, and their classification-recommended salaries effective July 1, 2000.

The contract is slated to be executed Wednesday, June 14. ■

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**The MCCC wishes
its members a safe
and
enjoyable Summer!**