

President's Message

State of the Union



Rick Doud,
MCCC President

[The following were MCCC President Rick Doud's report to the Delegate Assembly on May 7.]

Central Office

The MCCC Central Office continues to be a great investment for the MCCC. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of Treasurer Phil Mahler and our three office employees we continue to provide outstanding service to our members. Membership lists and dues collections are vastly improved. Most MCCC committees (BOD, Executive, SAC, Day and DCE Grievance) hold all their meetings at the central office. Also, special thanks to Treasurer Mahler for his outstanding work on the MCCC website. If you have not already done so, please check out the MCCC website: www.mccc-union.org.

Day Contract Extension

I am sure you know that the legislature, after having passed a supplemental budget that included payment of our April 1, 2003 points, refused to override the governor's veto. Just to remind you, our one-year extension was signed in August of 2002. This extension was an agreement negotiated between the MCCC and the BHE. It was within the parameters set by Governor Swift at that time, but after giving the BHE the authority to sign the contract, the governor reneged on the offer and refused to file legislation that would have funded our extension. The MCCC and the college presidents have formed a joint crisis committee to develop strategies to get our points funded. Both the college presidents and the MCCC leadership met with Chancellor Gill

to discuss the points issue. It was decided that the MCCC and the BHE would resubmit the one-year extension to the Governor one last time. The extension was signed on April 13, and hand delivered to the governor's office on April 26. The governor has 45 days to act on the funding request. Thanks to the MTA and all our members who participated in the postcard campaign. The MTA also provided letters that have been sent to the governor by college trustees and concerned members of the business community in an attempt to educate the governor about the classification system, including its history and the importance of points in such a classification system. If that fails, we plan to work together again with the legislature to find a way to fund our points in the FY06 budget. A more long run strategy will be to try to amend chapter 150e. At the March BOD meeting, the directors passed a motion in support of legislation that would amend chapter 150e to allow the employer (the BHE) to submit legislation to fund future contracts directly to the legislature, rather than having the governor submit such legislation.

Successor

The Day Bargaining Team, chaired by Joe LeBlanc, was formed in the fall of 2001. Official negotiations with the BHE have been taking place regularly since last fall. Until very recently the Romney administration had insisted that any new contracts that include salary increases would not be approved. In the last couple of weeks the administration has authorized offers of 2% per year salary increases to be made, with a 3% offer in the first year in lieu of any retroactive pay increases owed to unions. NAGE recently accepted such an offer reluctantly. The MSCA has ratified a three-year contract with 3% per year plus an additional 1% from the college presidents, but this offer has not been approved by the Romney administration. Once the MSCA contract offer is resolved, it will become clearer as to what the real financial offer will be from the BHE to the MCCC.

Appeals

Thanks to the work of the joint labor/management appeals committee we have agreed to a new protocol for all future faculty and professional staff appeals. All new hires will now be notified of how their initial salaries were calculated and be given an immediate chance to appeal their initial salary placement. In addition new forms have been adopted that allow professional staff members to request an audit of their position from their campus HR director if substantial changes have occurred in their job. The college has 90 days to conduct the job audit and render a decision. The decision of the HR office could then be appealed to the appeals committee.

DCE Contract

A new DCE three-year contract was ratified by a vote of 912 yes 85 no. The Agreement calls for 3% salary increases for three years, with an MOA for another 3% in the outside year. In addition a moratorium on changing the minimum number of students for under-enrolled courses was agreed to for one year while a study committee examines the issue. John Palmer (QU) with Jane Arnold (MX) serving as recording secretary chaired the DCE Team. Other members of the team were: Patrick Seyon (RX), Divya Taylor (NE), Michael Dubson (MX), Don Williams, (NS), Joe Rizzo consultant to the Team, and Michelle Gallagher as team spokesperson.

Part-Time/DCE Issues

The MCCC and the MTA both continue to work on getting legislation passed to provide health insurance and pension benefits to part-time employees. Obviously getting such legislation funded will be extremely difficult. On May 12, the MCCC is sponsoring a rally at the state house to support legislation that has been filed to provide pension benefits (SB1535) and health benefits (HB 189) for part-time members. The over reliance on both part-time professional staff and part-time faculty continues to be a concern for all of our higher education unions.

Senate Task Force Report

In late March, the Senate Task Force on Public Higher Education released a very promising report. The Task Force report titled "Investing in Our Future" would significantly increase state spending on public higher education over the next five to seven years. The Task Force, co-chaired by Senators Panagiotakos and Rosenberg, has laid out a plan that calls for:

1. Full "formula" funding, which will require an increase of \$400 million dollar in state spending on public higher education.
2. The use of general obligation bonds in order to increase capital spending at the state and community colleges by 1.2 billion dollars.
3. An immediate increase in needs-based financial aid of 7 million dollars for students attending public higher education institutions in the state.
4. An increase in funding directly related to hiring new faculty and professional staff.
5. The establishment of a general policy of retained tuition, and within one year establishment of a plan for community colleges to phase out the difference between Day and DCE unit work.

The Months Ahead

We must continue to use political action and campus activism to:

- Fund the April 1, 2003 points payments
- Complete negotiations for a new Day Agreement
- Amend Chapter 150e to allow contracts to go directly to the legislature
- Restore college budgets to offset the massive cuts suffered over the last few years
- Support the Higher Ed Task Force report "Investing in our future"
- Restore state tax revenues and fight Romney's plan to reduce income tax rates
- Fight for health care and retirement benefits for part-timers ■



MCCC President Rick Doud explains the salary aspects of the tentative Day agreement to the Board of Directors.

Day Contract...

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Points that accrue for the academic year 2005-2006 will be paid out as of October 1, 2005, six months earlier than the April 1, 2006 due date. This puts most of the payout of the 3-year contract in a narrow time-frame.

The benefits of this agreement's pay structure favor newer employees. They will generally receive larger percentage increases. And because of their newer employment status, they are more likely to be receiving changes in rank.

Professional staff members will see some improvements in the values of their points, and the professional staff will receive the same amount for points as faculty for the 2005 and 2006 points, which will work towards reducing some of the inequities in the classification structure. The Union succeeded in getting the employer to address other inequities in the system by getting professional staff credit for prior part-time employment.

Part-time day unit members will receive a 5% salary increase. These part-time hourly employees will also have a new

benefit of a limited amount of paid leave. This is on a one-year trial basis, but opens the door for further improvements in their working conditions.

There were several language changes in the Agreement. Improvements were made in family leave provisions, mileage and meals reimbursement rates.

University of Washington student evaluation forms will continue to be used, but the signature requirement will be dropped-however, median scores are used for each class evaluated instead of averages, which should make the score received more accurately reflect the assessment of the students. This change is mainly because of the dismal participation rates that students have exhibited, due to the awkward signature mechanism necessitated by the U-Washington form. And the language that specifies the length of winter semester break has been changed to allow more local flexibility.

The Union has been told that the package has been pre-approved by the Romney administration. After the experience of the past 3 years, Union leaders are not going to take that as a guarantee, and they are gearing up for a strong lobbying effort to ensure that the governor does submit the Agreement to the legislature if the membership does ratify.

More detailed information about the agreement is available on the MCCC website. You can view it at www.mccc-union.org.

If you are a Day Unit member and you have not received the contract ratification mailing, contact the MCCC Office toll free at 1-877-442 MCCC or email to office@mccc-union.org. ■

State Ethics Commission

In the Nov. 2004 issue of the MCCC News we reported on a State Ethics Commission Ruling regarding faculty members assigning self-authored textbooks. Recently members have reported being called by commission representatives.

As detailed last November, the original ruling said that there is a potential conflict of interest and violation of state ethics law when, in the course of their regular duties as state employees, faculty members stand to make a financial gain from their decisions.

Recognizing that faculty members are considered "special state employee[s]" who are allowed to engage in other employment during regular working hours, and recognizing contractual rights to choose their own course materials, the commission has not banned faculty from assigning their own books.

But, faculty should have approval from the college before assigning texts they have written to their classes. It might be expected that the colleges would approach faculty about this situation, but the direct contact of faculty members by the commission suggests that individuals should be pro-active.

If you are contacted by the State Ethics Commission, contact MTA for legal advice prior to making any statements. Members should contact their respective MTA Consultant at 800-392-6175 for a referral to MTA Legal: Full-time Day members call Katie D'Urso, DCE members contact Michelle Gallagher. ■