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MCCC News

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MCCC Delegate Assembly Holds Dues

Elected delegate names were a little slow coming in, but in the end over 100 members signed up to serve as delegates at this important governance meeting. President Claudine Barnes called the meeting to order at 9:30 over Zoom. She thanked the delegates for attending and then went into her annual report which is presented in full on page 2 of this newsletter issue.

In his Vice Presidential report Joe Nardoni addressed the problem of declining union membership. He noted that in 2007 there was a total of 4877 members (2287 Day and 2590 DCE) and by 2024 it had declined to 3484 (1905 Day and 1579 DCE). DCE membership has suffered the most after the Janus decision, and with enrollment down there has been some reduction in overall employment. But the percentage of employees belonging to the Union has declined.

To address the membership issue the Strategic Action Committee (SAC), which Nardoni chairs, is proposing a coordinated membership drive that would begin organizing and training during the Summer, but would began reaching out to non-members in the Fall. The intent is to pay stipends to the participants, and with the proposed MTA dues increase for organizing, it is hoped that they will provide funds to support the stipends.

As with MTA, the vice president oversees the budget process. Nardoni next led the assembly through the budget that resulted in no dues increase for the MCCC portion of dues. The budget expenses will be greater than income, but the Union will rely on reserves to bring it into balance. MTA dues were projected to go up by $33 per year, and the NEA is proposing a $5 increase at its July Representative Assembly. The MTA portion of dues is about 50 percent, NEA dues portion is 20 percent, and MCCC retains 30 percent of the dues collected from MCCC members.

The budget was the principal purpose of the Delegate Assembly and it passed overwhelmingly with the MCCC dues unchanged at $372 for full-time and $112 for part-time.

Bylaw changes are another responsibility of the Assembly. In previous years there have been several proposals, but this year there was just one. Two members of the Adjunct Committee proposed a change that would allow the Committee to elect its own chairperson rather than appointed by the Board of Directors.

The Bylaw Committee made no recommendation on the proposal and the Board of Directors unanimously recommended that it not pass. Major problems cited were the fact that the committee at best meets once a month so that getting together to elect a chair who would call meetings would be delayed, and given the contingent nature of adjunct work a chair elected in the Fall may not be teaching in the Spring. The change did not pass.

A new business item was brought by Cathy Boudreau and Paul Weeden from Massasoit that would seek to allow the MCCC to charge non-members for services provided by the Union. Currently MTA policy is to provide services (like grievance assistance) to non-members which legally did have to be done pre-Janus for agency fee payers who did not join the union.



President Claudine Barnes called the MCCC Delegate Assembly on April 20.

Boudreau pointed out that in 2019 the legislature did pass a law to allow this under Chapter 150E–Part B. And MTA legal director Amy Yee prepared an analysis on this for the MTA Board, but it would require a policy change at MTA to allow the MCCC to charge such fees. ■

MTA Annual Meeting Raises Dues



UAW President Shawn Fein spoke over Zoom in accepting the Friend of Labor Award at the MTA Annual Meeting on April 27.

MTA's 179th Annual Meeting of Delegates was convened on April 26 and 27 at the MassMutual Center in Springfield. Over 974 Delegates participated both in person and remotely to present awards, pass the next year's budget, elect officers, and take up member generated new business.

After the call to order and announcements, President Max Page began the meeting by presenting awards. The fist was foe Massachusetts Teacher of the Year De'Shawn C. Washington of the Lexington Education Association, followed by the Educational Support Specialist (ESP) Karen Torres of the Andover Education Association. The Presidents' Award was presented to labor organizer Jane McAlevey who is a senior fellow at the University of California, Berkeley and the strike correspondent at *The Nation*.

The Friend of Labor Award was presented to United Auto Workers President Shawn Fein. After a year of extraordinary success, he had planned to attend in person, but he was needed for a threatened April 27 strike at Daimler Truck plants. At literally the eleventh hour the contract was agreed upon and the strike covering the facilities in North Carolina and other southern states.

Appearing over Zoom, Fein talked about the rising labor movement and some of the creative approaches the UAW has used like the targeted job actions used with the big three auto manufacturers "keeping management on edge not knowing where the union would strike next."

Building on the fact that 150,000 workers went on strike in 2023, the flexing of union muscle is fueling the

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President's Report to the Delegate Assembly 2024



MCCC President Claudine Barnes

Welcome Remarks

Free Community College Advisory Task Force

- Final report is due to the Legislature very soon. The report has recommendations about the expansion of free community college through a middle dollar funding structure, and it includes a recognition that faculty and professional staff salaries are too low, that new positions will need to be created, and that an equity study funded by the state be done.
- Report leans toward AS and certificate programs – those that get students more quickly into workforce. No surprise given the composition of the task force.
- The report does not address our concerns as strongly as I would have liked but it is a solid set of recommendations.

Negotiations Updates

- Day – waiting for funding for 2023-2025 agreement, continuing to work on the distribution of the $500 FTE, and survey for next round of negotiations is going out soon.
- DCE – ballots due for ratification of 8% 1-year deal next Wednesday, April 24. We anticipate a short turnaround for funding. Survey for the next contract (begins 9-1-24) is ready to be sent out.
- Distance Education – not going great – has thought we had consensus from management on most of our proposals but learned that was not the case last Tuesday. Team is meeting next week to determine next steps.

Membership

- Accomplished a great deal for members in recent years, far more than in my entire tenure in CCs. But it's not enough. We know that. But nonetheless the benefits should be persuasive with potential new members, but it is not working.
- Need better ways to stop the reliance of non-members on dues paying members to pay the bills and do the work from which they benefit. Not fair.
- Strength in our collective power.
- New Membership Committee established. Call for members will go out in May.

Work with Public Sector Unions

- Primary topic of this work: increased contract parameters.
- Bringing motion to MTA Annual Meeting to get the coalition to work on amending Chapter 150E to improve the contract funding process and limit the governor's ability to stop funding.

Relationship with MTA

- Generally improved relationships but still do not always see eye to eye.

Other challenges: early college, arbitration results

- Early college- information request – concerns about moving work out of the unit, academic integrity, violations of seniority lists, colleges not following the process, etc.
- Contradictory arbitration decisions – sometimes by the same arbitrator, sometimes on the same campus between the two units.

General Activities:

Board of Directors' Meetings

Executive Committee Meetings

Higher Education Leadership Committee (HELC), President of HELC

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MTA President Max-Page chaired the MTA Annual Meeting and was reelected with no challengers to a second 2-year term on April 27.

MTA Annual Meeting...

Continued from front page

UAW's new "southern strategy." With the success of an overwhelming 3 to 1 vote to unionize at a Volkswagen factory in Tennessee, the UAW is targeting other foreign manufacturers who have located U.S. plants in the traditionally union-hostile southern states.

Fein noted that his sister was a teachers' union leader and he was inspired by what former MTA President Barbara Madeloni and fellow award recipient Jane McAlevey have said and done. He said "the right to strike is a vital tool," and he was inspired by the recent Newton and Andover teacher strikes. "Teachers should not be treated as second class citizens without the right to strike."

He finished by saying," You're in it to win a better life for the working class and the UAW will be with you evert step of the way."

Passing next year's budget was the main event of the Assembly. MTA Vice President Deb McCarthy, who chairs the Advisory Budget Committee (ABC), led the budget discussion. She summarized some of the significant changes that resulted in a budget that recommended a $33 annual increase to a total for the MTA dues portion of $537.

What caused the dues increase was the intent to hire more staff to support local associations and for organizing. The plan is to hire three organizers and six field representatives/organizers (such as the three that serve the MCCC).

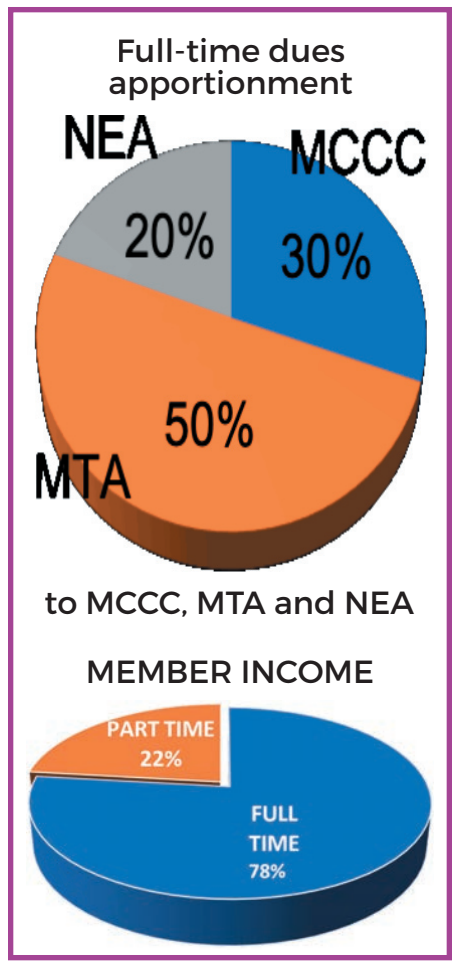
Another aspect of the MTA budget is the special assessment for Public Relations and Organizing (PR&O). This remained at the same $20 level as last year and is additional to the dues.

In the debate over the budget, MCCC member Ellen Madigan Pratt from Mt Wachusett made the point that the MCCC is concerned about how expensive dues have become and the fear that it is an important reason why people don't join the union. In the end the budget passed as proposed.

This was an election year for MTA officers that are only elected by the delegates. There was no challenger for president, so Max Page was declared elected for a second two-year term. Deb McCarthy was reelected as vice president with a vote of 598 to 276 for challenger Yahaira Rodriguez.

Probably the most contentious issue came at the end during the New Business Items without budgetary impact. It was over the statement issues by the MTA Board of Directors in December over the situation in Gaza. While following the actions of many other labor unions in urging a cease fire, the Board added a comment calling Israel's action "genocidal." This caused a lot of controversy in the public sphere as well as with many rank and file members.

Before the meeting ended, Members urged that facing such controversial issues the Board consult with the broader membership before issuing statements on divisive issues. ■



Vice President Nardoni's Testimony to Joint Ways and Means Committee



MCCC VP Joe Nardoni testified at a joint Ways and Means Committee hearing at the end of March. (photo by Don Williams)

Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means
3-27-2024

My name is Professor Joseph Nardoni. This is my 29th year teaching English and Creative Writing at Middlesex Community College in Lowell and Bedford. I am also the Vice President of the Massachusetts Community College Council, the union that represents the hardest-working faculty and professional staff in public higher education.

I am writing today to let you know that the MCCC is very much interested in the work of the Advisory Committee on Free Community College and that we thank you for the foresight in setting that Committee to work. We would also like to thank you for your past support for funding our contracts and in getting the Fair Share Amendment onto the ballot. We also thank you in advance for any support you can give to the current budget priorities of the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges.

The MCCC has reviewed the report of the Committee and we support the middle-dollar approach to funding Free Community College, because it provides for both free community college and some living expenses for our neediest students. ***Providing some funding for living expenses is critical to community college students, as multiple studies show that the biggest obstacle to student retention and perseverance at the community colleges is how many hours per week a student works.*** In addition, this initiative will return the community colleges to our founding principle, to serve as an inexpensive alternative to the first two years of college, as well our more-recent focus on providing returning students opportunities to acquire the skills they need to facilitate career changes and advancement. As we move towards debt-free public higher education, implementing Free Community College now will also provide immediate help to students who plan to transfer to the four-year public universities, as it will automatically cut their total cost of attendance for a four-year degree by 50%, thus benefitting every student in the Commonwealth who makes this choice, regardless of any other factor, and would go a long way towards providing access to a four-year education for our most vulnerable students.

However, while the report acknowledges that our faculty and staff are woefully underpaid, ***the report's approach to increasing funding for FT faculty and staff is out of touch with the reality of our situation.*** In order to hire the highly qualified, diverse full-time faculty and staff we will need to effectively educate and support the students who will make up the expected 16% in increased enrollments once the final report is adopted by the Legislature, an immediate salary adjustment is required. As one of the few remaining faculty and professional staff members who were working when a Classification Study was funded nearly 25 years ago, I am fortunate in that I have had a long career doing meaningful work that will provide me with a livable retirement. That Classification Study provided me with a 39.7% increase in pay in one year and this made it possible for me to advance my earning power through subsequent contracts that will, when I do retire, provide me with a livable income. This is currently not true for my colleagues who have come on board since that time, because they need an even larger advance than I received to make it possible for them to have a job with a living wage and build towards a secure retirement.

Our colleges are currently suffering under a long-term, systemic failure to fully fund our operations, which leads to our faculty and professional staff being both underpaid and overworked. Our colleges are reporting multiple failed searches. Our candidates walk away from our job offers because our salaries are too far below the cost of living in Massachusetts to live on. Massasoit Community College has had 7 failed searches to fill one faculty position for their night nursing program, which must have a certain number of FT faculty members in the program in order to meet their accreditation standard. Indeed, recent data compiled by MIT as of 2/14/24 shows that the current average salary of faculty members at Middlesex Community College is over **$51,000 less** than the before-tax income needed to support a 1-parent, 1-child family in Middlesex County. These economic factors impact our professional staff members as much as they do faculty and prevent our colleges form hiring the additional staff that the report suggests will be critical to provide both the wraparound and person-to-person services our students will need to succeed.

This is a partial list of the hard facts of our situation. We are underpaid to the extent that:

- Some of our members have had to use their college's food banks to get fresh vegetables for their children. Others have to choose cheaper, less-healthy foods for their families.
- Our junior full-time faculty and staff have trouble paying their student loans.
- Our senior full-time faculty and staff have trouble keeping up with the payments on the PLUS loans they took out on behalf of their children.
- Other members have had to move out of state in order to afford housing. (I myself had to move from my home in Lowell because I could no longer afford the upkeep. If my salary had kept pace with the cost of living during that time, I would not have had to move.)
- Fully half of our DCE courses are taught by FT faculty and professional staff who have to work extra to make ends meet. Many of our members often teach 7 or more courses every semester in order to make ends, meet, and some teach as many as 9 or 10.
- As a result, the community colleges are unable to hire the high-quality, diverse faculty and staff we need to help our students succeed. There have been 25 failed searches at Middlesex alone in the past three years, and several critical positions still remain unfilled. The reason? When candidates view their salaries

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Correction

In the April issue there was an error at the end of the Salary Survey article in the difference between the average salary of an MCCC faculty member is $43,000 below the living wage of $124,000.

Vice President Nardoni's Testimony...

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in comparison to the housing costs here in the Commonwealth, they realize they cannot afford to move their families here.

We are also systemically overworked. Not only is our standard workload of five courses per semester more than our counterparts in both the State Universities and UMass, the teaching we do is more difficult, because our students come to us underprepared, needing a variety of specialized interventions that we need additional training to provide. In addition, we are expected to advise students, serve on college committees and help recruit the high-quality diverse faculty and staff our colleges need. Our work is mission critical to the success of public higher education in Massachusetts and it is not being fairly valued.

- Our professional staff are given extra work beyond their normal duties without the lead time needed to plan how to accomplish these tasks. The most recent and perhaps extreme example of this happened with the quick implementation of MassReconnect.
- The chronic overworking of our faculty prevents them from developing the kind of mentoring relationships with students we know they need in order to reach their full potential, one of the reasons many of us went into teaching in the first place.
- The chronic overworking of our faculty makes it impossible for us to fully take advantage of important new pedagogies that could transform student success at our colleges.
- The chronic overworking of our faculty is creating a crisis in their physical and psychological well-being, which in turn often damages their family lives as well as their professional relationships.
- We are losing highly-qualified, high-performing faculty members to other states. One such faculty member recently left a job at Massasoit and went to Florida, where he received more money, had a lower cost of living, and received a workload reduction. This flow out of our colleges will accelerate if the legislature does nothing about it.
- The chronic low pay for our professional staff members causes them to take on additional teaching work, second jobs or to leave their positions for the private sector, depriving our students of the experienced advisors, financial aid and transfer counselors, and enrollment staff they need to start college and maximize their chances to stay the course through graduation, leaving them with student debt and nothing to show for it.

We are therefore requesting that you pass legislation that supports the legislative and budget priorities of the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges. In addition to that, we ask you on behalf of our members to enact legislation through budget amendments that:

- Establishes and funds a Public Higher Education Wage and Working Conditions Commission, provides that community college workers shall have representation on that commission and that those members of the commission shall be selected by the MCCC, and will also provide an immediate interim salary adjustment of $15,000 per FT faculty and professional staff member at the Community Colleges at a cost of $35,500,000, said funds to be appropriated from Fair Share revenues to start, and then included in the Community College's regular appropriations going forward.
- Mandates that any part-time community college faculty member who teaches the equivalent of at least 2 three-credit courses per semester or 4 three-or-more credit courses per calendar year, at one or more campuses in the community college system or at any other public institution of higher education, including a division of continuing education, regardless of funding source, including but not limited to subsidiary account CC, or any part time community college professional staff member who works at one or more community colleges or at any other public institution of higher education whose cumulative weekly hours worked at all campuses, including hours teaching courses if applicable, is half time or more for two or more semesters per calendar year, shall be eligible for benefits, including health insurance and access to SERS and the ORP and appropriates Fair Share money to be put in a trust fund to cover these costs, and that the funds so specified shall be replenished as needed.
- Mandates that the cost of employee fringe benefits, including but not limited to the cost of pensions and health insurance for employees of the community colleges, shall be the obligation of the Commonwealth, and appropriates the corresponding funding from Fair Share revenues to start, and then becomes part of the regular appropriations for the community colleges.

These requests represent a great starting point for ensuring that we will have the increased numbers of high-quality, diverse FT faculty and staff, as well as the capable part-time faculty and staff we need to provide the instruction and support services our students need to succeed. ■

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MCCC News

http://mccc-union.org

Editor:
Donald R. Williams, Jr.

President:
Claudine Barnes

Vice President:
Joe Nardoni

Secretary:
Colleen Avedikian

The MCCC News is a publication of the Massachusetts Community College Council. The Newsletter is intended to be an information source for the members of the MCCC and for other interested parties. Members' letters up to 200 words and guest columns up to 400 words will be accepted and published on a space-available basis. The material in this publication may be reprinted with the acknowledgment of its source. For further information on issues discussed in this publication, contact Donald Williams, North Shore Community College, One Ferncroft Road, Danvers, MA 01923. email: Communications@mccc-union.org

Know Your Day Contract

Professional Staff work beyond the Academic Year. The dates below do not affect faculty.

June 2024

June 1	Written notice stating preferred work assignment for professional staff submitted each year to supervisor (p. 59).
June 1	Develop E–7 Form with supervisor. E–7 Form serves as basis of evaluation for the year. E–7 includes job description items (goals), objectives (if mutually agreed), and activities/ methods (Appendix p. 123).
June 25	Professional Staff unused vacation days in excess of 375 hours (50 days) converted to sick leave at end of last pay period in June 2022. After the last payroll period of June 2022 leave in excess of 375 hours (50 days) shall be forfeited at the end of the last pay period in December of each year. (MOA 4/28/2021)

July 2024

July 1	Notification of professional staff work assignment due from supervisor (p. 58).
July 1	Off-Campus Days–3 days off campus for activities outside of those assigned (conferences, catching up on literature in the field, etc.). They may be taken in increments of a half-day or more. The 3 off campus days begin with fiscal year (p. 59).
July 31	College President or designee returns E–7 form to professional staff member

President's Report...

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Day Negotiations Team, ex-officio

DCE Negotiations Team, ex-officio

Distance Education Team, ex-officio

Joint Study

Various chapter meetings, meetings and calls with members, office staff, chapter leaders, college presidents, etc.

Testified during many arbitrations in particular about Distance Education.

Numerous interactions with the legislature including in-person testimony as well as dozens of emails, phone calls and the submission of written testimony.

Communications with the Board of Higher Education

MTA Winter Skills

MTA Presidents' and Regional Presidents' Meetings

Upcoming MTA Annual Meeting ■