MCCC

MASSACHUSETTS COMMUNITY COLLEGE COUNCIL

# ADVOCATE

September 2025 E-News Issue

**DAY Contract Ratification Materials Coming Soon!**

*Above: Rank and file and MCCC Board members express concern at this month's meeting on September 19th with Commissioner Noe Ortega. (Photo provided by Paul Johansen.)*

## MCCC Board Appeals to Commissioner Noe Ortega

**Commissioner Noe Ortega joined the MCCC Board of Directors meeting at 3pm on September 19th. He was accommpanied by Alex Morr from the Labor Relations Division of the Department of Higher Education (DHE), and Michael Dannenberg, Deputy Commissioner for Policy.**

**Board members expressed concern upon learning about potential delays of the Wage Equity Study, which was recently approved as a line item in the State budget. This study is crucial to our coordinated campaign to improve wages and workload for all our members. Ortega agreed that the pace of bureaucracy is frustrating, and said he would do what was in his power to ensure the process didn't stall.**

**Members were not encouraged by Ortega's words, since we are very aware that even when contract negotiations result in financial wins, money can be slow to arrive, as it was in Fall 2023 for DAY contract members. With crushing low wages for faculty and staff, legislative delays add insult to injury; and MCCC board members were not shy about saying so. "Our members are rightfully impatient" based on their experience**

*Continued on p. 3*

## MCCC Members Attend Labor Day Parade

**by Paul Johansen**

*Left: Paul Johansen and Vice President Joe Nardoni among Union supporters gathered at the Labor Day Parade in Boston on September 1, 2025.*

*(Photo provided by Paul Johansen.)*

For many decades, the Greater Boston Labor Council (GBLC) has held a Labor Day breakfast, bringing together a wide array of unions in solidarity at the Park Plaza Hotel. This year, in response to the unprecedented political attacks from the Trump administration, the GBLC took to the streets in its first-ever Labor Day parade.

The Mass Teachers Association (MTA), of which MCCC is a part, was one of nearly 100 partner organizations (Boston's First Labor Day Parade | Greater Boston Labor Council) that began assembling at the State House hours before speakers took to the microphones at 10am. The theme of the parade, echoed nationwide from Boston and Baltimore to Seattle and Washington, DC was "Workers Over Billionaires" (Workers' Labor Day).

As unions arranged themselves up and down Park Street, they heard fiery talks from union leaders and politicians, including Governor Maura Healey. The roughly one-mile parade route passed by a number of key locations, including: the very first public school in what would become the United States (1635) on School Street; offices of union-busting corporations like Republic Services on State Street (where Teamsters Local 25 has been on strike) and BlackRock; and Faneuil Hall, where the first Building and Construction Trades Union Council met in 1834.

The parade ended at City Hall Plaza, where unionists heard from additional speakers and politicians, including Boston Mayor Michelle Wu, Senator Ed Markey, US Representative Ayanna Pressley, and striking Association of Flight Attendants-CWA President Sara Nelson

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## Top News


- From the Desk of Claudine Barnes
- Real Talk from Renae Gorman at STCC
- A Cup of Joe: Why Your Actions Matter
- DCE Drop Zone
- Spotlight: Kym Lakowsky
- OC Buzz: Constitution Day Rally!
- Mass Bay's Caryl Casson On Stepping Up
- It's Time for a Change - R.L. Whitman

**29 Sep - 4pm - MCCC All Chapter Presidents Meeting [ZOOM LINK].**
**3 Oct - 10am - MCCC Executive Board**
**4 Oct - 10am-2pm - Organizing Workshop: Democratized Bargaining - REGISTER**
**7 Oct - 3:30-5:30pm - DCE Bargaining Negotiations - REGISTER as a Silent Rep.**
**8 Oct - 4-5pm - Organizing Bi-weekly meeting. Come one/come all! ZOOM LINK.**
**17 Oct - 10am - MCCC Board of Directors meeting**
**19 Oct - No Kings Day**

September 2025

## *from the desk of* President Claudine Barnes

MCCC Members, I hope that this Fall semester has started off well and that all of you were able to take some much needed and deserved time off this summer.

First, I want to welcome new members and encourage those of you who have not joined the union to do so (mccc-union.org/join/). We recognize that it can be challenging to pay union dues when you are first starting your career at a community college or when you are part-time. But I would argue that the benefits are well worth it. Our union is the best form of protection that we have against not only the forces driving the federal government and impacting education in ways we never imagined but also we are the best form of protection for you and our profession on your campus. We work for economic justice, for social justice, for diversity, equity and inclusion for our members and in our classrooms, for workplace safety and reasonable workloads, and we serve as a place to join together and work towards common goals in an era where everything and everyone feels so splintered. We provide services from grievance to legal assistance, collective bargaining, and legal services. And members have the benefits provided through MTA Benefits (www.mtabenefits.com). But most importantly, whatever we accomplish occurs because we work together. The more of us that join and support the union, the better outcomes we achieve for ourselves and by extension our students.

Some news to report....

Your MCCC leadership has been working hard to ensure that there is MCCC representation in the group that will be conducting the salary equity study for the MCCC that was included in the approved state budget. Our hope is that we will have representation from each of the constituencies that we represent: full-time and part-time faculty and staff.

The CHEQA (Commission on Higher Education Quality and Affordability - https://www.mass.edu/strategic/cheqa.asp) has drafted its final report which will be voted upon at our next and last meeting. I encourage you to look through the materials on the website and be ready to join us in enacting the recommendations that cover student success, financial aid, and the recruitment and retention of faculty and staff.

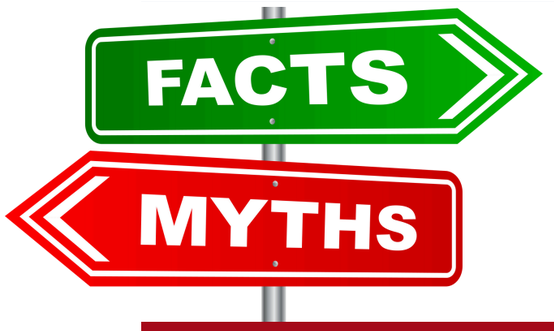
The Day Negotiations Team has finally received a signed MOA on a one-year agreement. We are currently working on ratification materials and hope that they are in the mail to members within the next few weeks. I will send more information to chapter presidents soon and we will also be posting all of the ratification material on our website.

In July I communicated the challenges we have with our Day contract funding process as outlined in MGL Chapter 150E. Good news to report, on September 22 the Public Service Committee is having a hearing on HB 2820/S 1364, An Act Streamlining State Employee Collective Bargaining. If this bill is ultimately approved by the legislature, it would speed up the approval process and release of funds for collective bargaining.

Please consider joining one of our many MCCC committees in your chapters or statewide. There is always a place for you within MCCC.

As always, please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

*~Claudine*




# To Fulfill the Promise of Free Community College, We Must Support the People Who Make It Possible

**by Renae Gorman**

*Renae Gorman wows the crowd at the MTA May Day rally/march in Springfield, MA. Watch the video above. Her article was originally published in the Springfield Republican in May 2025.*

As students across Massachusetts prepare to walk the stage at community college graduations, many will do so thanks to the state's bold investment in Free Community College. This new initiative is a game-changer for access to higher education—but without a parallel investment in the people who make it work, that promise is on unstable ground.

At Springfield Technical Community College, and at the 14 other community colleges across the Commonwealth, faculty and professional staff are facing a crisis of unsustainable workload, low compensation, and stagnant support. We are committed to our students. We are proud to teach, advise, and guide the next generation of healthcare workers, engineers, educators, and entrepreneurs. But many of us are burning out—and burning through our own savings—just to stay in these roles.

Faculty in Massachusetts community colleges earn far less than their peers in other states. The average full-time faculty salary is approximately $64,000, while faculty in neighboring states like Vermont and New York start nearly $20,000 higher. And when adjusted for cost of living, we lag behind systems in places like California—even though Massachusetts is now one of the most expensive states to live in.

This is not just a problem of recruitment. It's a problem of retention, morale, and long-term sustainability.

The Massachusetts Community College Council (MCCC), which represents faculty and professional staff at all 15 colleges, has launched a wage equity campaign to address this systemic underpayment. You likely saw the billboards in May calling on state leaders to invest in the educators who keep our campuses running. But what may not be as visible is the toll this inequity is taking on those of us working every day in classrooms, advising centers, labs, and online learning spaces.

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## JOB POSTING

### Classification Compensation Specialist

**A union member selected to perform these duties will receive either one course release per semester or a Step 3 stipend equivalent, and a ½ of a Step 3 stipend for the summer on a schedule to be determined in consultation with the MCCC office staff.**

**LEARN MORE & APPLY**

# A CUP OF JOE

**MCCC VP**
**Joe Nardoni**

## Why Your Actions Matter

As my article for this issue of the Advocate, I will share with you the statement I gave to the Joint Committee on Higher Education on September 11th, in support of the Adjunct Bill of Rights H.1429/S.930. (The H and S designate that this Bill was presented to both the House and the Senate.) I will be revising this in some detail to add to the written testimony our members can provide to the Committee up until the Committee acts on the Bill. This is a broad deadline that could run from between 60 and 90 days from the date of the hearing, based on past experience, according to Sean King of the MTA, and represents a great opportunity for our DCE members to fully explain just how hard it is to make a go of it while being paid so poorly and denied benefits that by all rights under Massachusetts law most of them have already earned, were it not for a lamebrained decision by the courts depriving them of both a fair accounting of their work and their basic humanity. Interested DCE union and unit members can use these links to submit their testimony to the chairs of the Joint Committee. Please send your testimony via email to both chairs, using the links below:

Dave.Rogers@mahouse.gov
Jo.Comerford@masenate.gov

***Here is my statement:***

*Chairs Comerford and Rogers, and members of the Joint Committee. I am Joe Nardoni, the Vice President of the MCCC. On behalf of our members, I thank you all for your support of the Wage Equity Study for our FT faculty and Professional staff members. It is a giant step towards securing economic justice for our members covered under the DAY contract.*

*I thank you also for the opportunity to speak about the history of a grave, generational economic and professional injustice done to our DCE members by the DLR and the court system, an injustice only the Legislature can fix by passing H1429/S940, the Adjunct Bill of Rights.*

*When the MCCC unionized our DCE members, we argued strenuously against forcing us into two units. We made the point before the DLR, a point that has since been confirmed over generations, that creating a two-tiered system would lead to the establishment of a permanent underclass of faculty.*

*That is exactly what happened because of the DLR ruling.*

*Today, our DCE members receive a substandard proration of full-time faculty's substandard salaries, a salary that fails to honor their professional acumen and experience. They have no job security and limited academic freedom. They have no access to the quality healthcare provided by the GIC, even though many of them teach an aggregate full-time load of classes or more at the Community Colleges. Our members have no access to the State Retirement System, but are forced to contribute to a criminally-substandard OBRA plan that fails to keep up with inflation, with no commensurate contribution from the employer. Many are actively discouraged from participating in the life of their college. On top of that, they have no clear pathway to a full-time position, so they often get stuck with part-time work for a decade or more, as has happened to many of our members. One community college I know of recently hired a full-time faculty member who had been part-time for 15 years.*

*Even worse, when we have tried to rectify this situation in the courts, they ruled that a person, for purposes of employment, is not the same person when they teach the exact same courses at two different colleges. Never mind the obvious nonsense in this ruling. This is a morally-repugnant decision that denies the continuous personhood of our DCE faculty, because not only does it deny them fair credit for the work they have done for the Commonwealth, but also denies their very existence at one of the colleges they have worked for.*

*That's why I have come to the hearing today, to put this issue before you. We ask that you exercise your oversight authority to make a positive change for our colleges and our members, by working to pass the Adjunct Bill of Rights that will provide both the* ***funding*** *and the*

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*Continued from p. 1*

## MCCC Board Appeals to Commissioner Noe Ortega

with supplemental budgets and bureauocracy," said Barnes.

Mt. Wachusett Chapter President Candace Shivers was hopeful when the State agreed to fund the wage study, since if it was concluded in March, it would be available in time for the next budget cycle in '26. In that case, wage equity could be achieved in the next round of bargaining. When Ortega revealed it could be May 2026 or later, Shivers protested that community college educators would potentially have to wait at least a year for any financial relief.

VP Joe Nardoni asked the Commissioner specifically if the DHE intended to tie the wage equity study to the report by The Commission on Higher Ed Quality and Affordability (CHEQA), stating that this would enrage members. Nardoni was emphatic: "Delaying will only cause great unrest on our campuses!"

"The CHEQA report is not coupled to the RFQ in a way that it would be delayed," responded Ortega. This "RFQ" is a request for bids from vendors to complete the study. As to the timeline, Ortega assured the Board that the DHE would do what they could to ensure the study would be available in the '26 budget cycle, but still hedged his bets saying the DHE could not control vendor expediency.

Nardoni also asked why MTA leadership was recently included in the process when the bill is about the MCCC. "We need full participation throughout the process, including in the discussions of choosing the vendor," as well as, "what information and which states are going to be used in the study." Nardoni argued, "We need to make sure that [. . .] this RFQ is focused only on the members of the Massachusetts Community College Council."

Barnes expressed support "that everyone working in Massachusetts higher education should be getting the salaries they deserve." That support extends to a broader equity study that could be a result of the CHEQA report. However, she made it clear that community college educators are the ones bearing the brunt of the wage crisis in our state. "The concern is that if the focus turns in any way to be on the broader equity study of all of higher ed, the community colleges and our needs will get lost." she declared. "If we are lumped in a broader project, we lose out, and that means the students lose out, [and] the institutions lose out."

MCCC Director and Organizing Co-Chair, Stacie Hargis told of teaching an additional five courses each semester to make ends meet in a state where community college educators earn on average $34,000 less than a living wage. She eloquently tied the DHE's goals of student success and mobility directly to wage equity: "If you concentrated on us and our silent crisis [. . . ], you would see that you would meet all your mission's goals."

Hargis pressed for Ortega's commitment: "Can you promise that you will work with us to have no delay on this wage study so that our silent crisis can start to see some real relief, and we can get some real recognition from this state that community colleges have it worse than other public education?"

DCE Bargaining Chair, Deanna Putnam reported on the College Presidents' insulting offer of a meager raise for adjuncts below the Governor's parameters, essentially proposing a pay cut while adding workload in recent negotiations. "The promise and hope of equity, the promise and hope of Mass Educate, it is a LIE, based on what you are all doing." She gave an example of Bunker Hill dragging its feet on backpay owed to members from as long as four years ago, noting this forces downward mobility for community college educators, while the DHE touts upward mobility and success goals for students. "We will not be quiet, and it is going to get more and more volatile," Putnam assured the Commissioner and his colleagues.

Ortega seemed to listen. It remains to be seen if actions will follow. Certainly, the MCCC will need to keep the pressure on!

*"Why Your Actions Matter" continued from page 3.*

*direction that will end this generational injustice. Help fulfill the promise of free community college by reporting this bill out favorably. I thank you for your time and consideration.*

I want to finish up by making these points.

During the hearing, where two different bills about adjunct rights and professional advancement came up, it was clear that the Legislature wants to do something about it. Why? Because they received hundreds of emails about it. This is the level of response we must generate to move our legislative proposals through the legislature.

It is easy for the Legislature to get bogged down in the details of how to execute whichever bill passes into law. When I learned about the second law, H.3498, I read it and realized that it has some significant benefits that I think would help us execute the elements of the Adjunct Bill of Rights, that I hope will also help the Legislature see how they can be executed in practice. I made a motion that asked for HELC's (Higher Education Leadership Council) endorsement on combining the language from H.3498 that would be helpful to the Adjunct Bill of Rights in an amended bill and the Council endorsed that idea. I asked that the motion work that way because during the discussion we had, Sean King noted that the Legislature was unlikely to pass two bills covering the same topic. I will therefore be working with MTA Government Relations to come up with language tweaks, which I will work to have finished before the next HELC meeting for their review and endorsement of the modified bill, so that MTA GR (Government Relations) can carry the tweaks to the bill forward to the Committee. Be looking for a Strategic Action Alert to come out next month about that when it is finished, so you can generate hundreds more calls to have the Joint Committee favorably report out an amended Adjunct Bill of Rights.

There will be multiple opportunities for our members to weigh in this semester on a variety of bills the MCCC Board has endorsed. We will need hundreds of responses for each one, so be ready. When we respond in large numbers, our voices are heard.

Conceive it, Believe it, Achieve it! We will not be denied!

Joe Nardoni
MCCC VP

## JOB POSTING

### Office Support Specialist

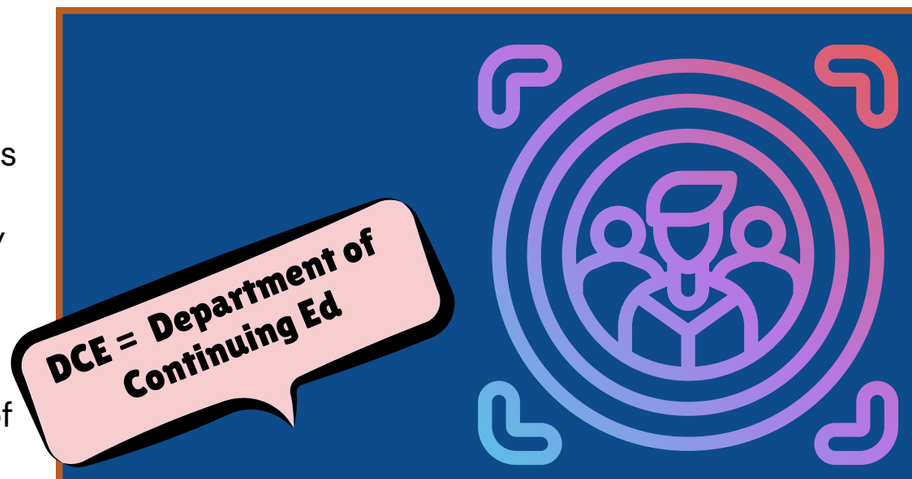
**Compensation for FT faculty will be 1 course release per semester plus a stipend of $1,000, as well as an additional stipend of $5946 for the summer months. Given that there is not enough time to allow for a FT faculty member to arrange for a course release this fall, a FT accounting faculty member will have the one-time option to receive a stipend for the Fall, 2025 Semester. Equivalent release time hours will be available for a FT professional staff member should one be selected to fill this position.**

**LEARN MORE AND APPLY**

*Roxbury CC members show their spirit as they welcome the Fall semester.*

# DCE DROP ZONE

## *VITAL NEWS FOR ADJUNCT/CONTINGENT FACULTY*




### ONGOING DCE NEGOTIATIONS WITH MANAGEMENT

by Mark Bashour

Since the end of June, the MCCC DCE Contract Committee has met twice with Management concerning our next contract. While I would like to tell you that we achieved great progress, that simply would not be true.

Sadly, Management has still not offered us a salary increase that goes beyond the Governor's parameters for state employees. Neither have they offered a salary increase that even matches Gov. Healey's parameters. This has been a big disappointment.

What has brought great encouragement and optimism to our committee is the presence and input of DCE Silent Bargaining Representatives (SBRs).

SBRs are DCE and Day Unit members who show up for negotiations. While attending our meetings, Management sometimes refers to them as silent "observers." We have pointed out that they are more than "observers." They are members representing full- and part-time professors teaching DCE courses witnessing the progress of our talks.

SBRs have both the right and the role to monitor our talks and relay this information to other DCE members. Also, silent reps can share with the DCE Bargaining Committee their viewpoints and ideas.

This was very much the case at our most recent negotiation last month. We consulted extensively with the SBRs to assess what they were thinking. Several shared their positions on what they believed we should do and explained why. They provided a new perspective on how we should respond to Management's offers. They also gave us an entirely new perspective when we took a poll on how to deal with one specific issue.

We had more than sixty silent reps attending that mid-August meeting. Imagine what message was sent to Management when they saw that many part-time and full-time members in a meeting in the middle of August. Imagine how much more of an impact it will have when we have one hundred or more SBRs at our upcoming meetings this Fall!

There are plenty of reasons to believe that this can be done, and done regularly. Some silent reps have expressed their desire, if need be, to organize rallies to be held throughout the state. With so many SBRs in attendance this summer, it is not hard to envision such an occurrence. Rallies can be very effective events that draw local and statewide attention and public support.

Management wants us to believe that they have the bulk of power and influence, and that the Union has relatively little. That is not the case. The numbers of full- and part-time faculty who teach DCE courses are more than four thousand strong. We teach the vast majority of courses at our fifteen state community colleges. We are the "cash cows" of our institutions, and we have the numbers to back our value when asking for some very fair and realistic terms in our contracts.

The most important service that any academic institution provides is quality classroom instruction. Data supports that DCE members contribute mightily in that area. Although our talks have not gone the way that we had hoped so far, this is something we can change. Our actions as bargaining committee members, silent representatives, and part-time and full-time union members will make all the difference.

Sign up here to be a silent representative.

*DCE Drop Zone contributor, Mark Bashour, is an adjunct professor at Quinsigamond Community College. He also serves on the DCE Bargaining Team*

# Spotlight

## Kym Lakowsky

**Kimberly "Kym" Lakowsky is an educator with over 20 years of experience and a strong dedication to supporting students and colleagues. She began her career in New Hampshire as a German teacher, then returned to Connecticut to work in special education classrooms while completing her master's degree in Secondary Education. After earning certification in Social Studies, she spent nearly a decade teaching both German and Social Studies before moving to Cape Cod to teach German at a local high school.**

**After the pandemic disrupted her position, Kym began teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages at Cape Cod Community College. She quickly discovered that this was the most rewarding work of her career. In addition to ESOL instruction, she supports students through the workforce program CCAPE by helping them gain essential technology skills. She balances these roles with weekend work in Provincetown and with raising two sons who share her interest in history, travel, and paranormal investigations.**

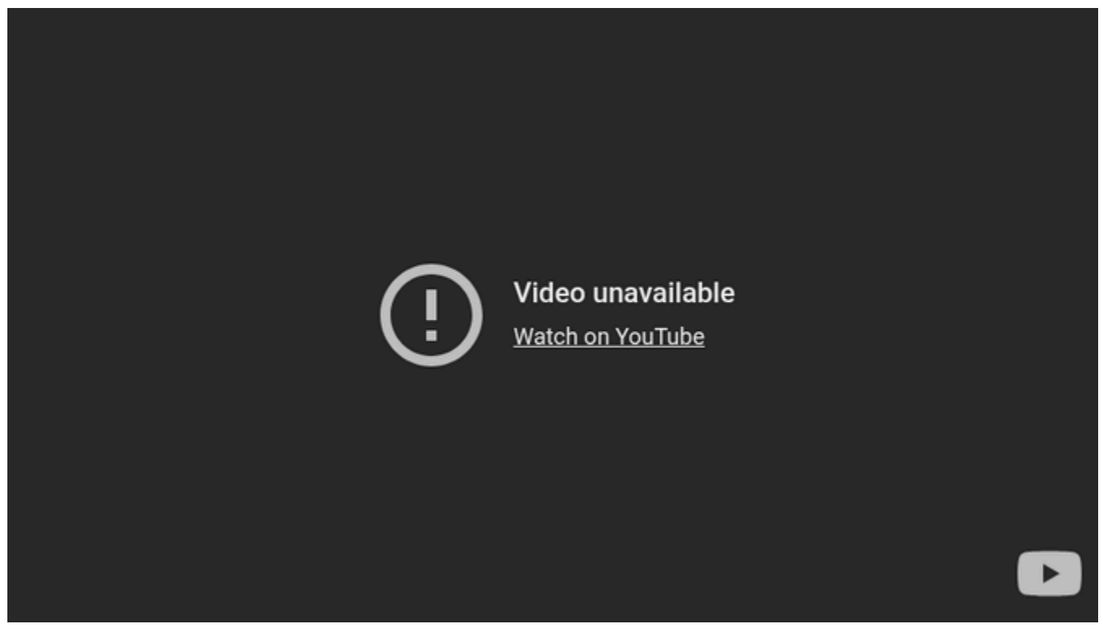
**Kym has been involved in union work throughout her teaching career. At Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School, she played a key role in one-on-one outreach that built participation, energized actions, and ultimately resulted in a stronger contract settlement. She joined the MCCC as soon as she was hired at Cape Cod Community College. She currently serves as their chapter secretary and was recently elected to the MTA Board of Directors. Her leadership style emphasizes listening, organizing, and encouraging colleagues to take part in collective action. Kym explains, "I lead by example, but based on many evaluations of my leadership style I create other leaders when I'm in the position to do so… I want to know the work will be carried on after me and with me."**

**Kym identifies respect as the greatest challenge facing higher education employees. Respect, she explains, must be reflected in workload, pay, and treatment. She believes that initiatives such as free community college, while beneficial for students, have created additional burdens on faculty and staff without sufficient support.**
**Looking ahead, she has pledged to continue advocating for higher education and ensuring that faculty voices are represented. "I promise to be transparent and fight for higher ed and not let it be pushed aside," she says. Members can reach her at fraulako82@gmail.com with concerns to bring forward to the MTA Board.**

***Spotlight* is researched and written by Colleen Avedikian, MCCC Secretary and Professor of Sociology at Bristol *Community College*.**

*Colleen Avedikian is a Professor of Sociology at Bristol Community College, where she has taught since 2014. A native of Lawrence, Massachusetts, she earned a master's degree in Sociology from Northeastern University and a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Public Policy from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. Her doctoral research focused on adjunct faculty organizing at public universities in the United States.*

*Dr. Avedikian has previously served as Secretary and Vice President of the Bristol Community College chapter and has served as MCCC Statewide Secretary since 2022. She is the current Chair of both the MCCC Personnel Committee and the Bylaws and Rules Committee. In addition, she represents the Bristol Chapter on the Strategic Action Committee and serves on the MCCC Organizing Committee.*
*She resides in Westport, Massachusetts, with her husband, Dan Avedikian, Professor of Mathematics at Bristol CC, and their son, William.*




**Training & Professional Development**

## Solidarity School

- **10/15 - Wed. 4-7pm Location TBD**
  ***Bargaining for All: Winning Immigration Justice at the Bargaining Table***
- **10/20 - Mon. 4-5pm Virtual**
  ***Teaching Online: Educator Rights Under Political Fire***
- **11/15 - Sat. 10-2pm MTA Central/Worcester**
  ***Civil Disobedience & Nonviolent Direct Action***

**Exact details to come on MTA website.**

*Continued from page 1.*

## *Labor Day Parade*

Throughout the day, spirits were high as union siblings chanted together and sang in solidarity. In addition to wearing t-shirts from their locals, people made signs expressing their outrage at attacks from Washington, DC, including: "Once Proud Vet", "Sympathy is no Substitute for Action," "Justice and Fair Pay for ALL WORKERS," "Hands Off our Healthcare, Research and Jobs!," "Hands Off our Neighbors," "Vaccinate RFK Jr's Brain Worm,""Overthrow Project 2025," "Fight Ignorance, Not Immigrants," and "Hands Off My Education" to name just a few.

Roughly 20 MTA locals, of the 400 total, sent noticeable contingents to the Labor Day parade, primarily from the metro Boston region. MCCC had a handful of representatives.

Photos of the parade can be found on my Facebook page HERE. To watch Part I of a two-part video of the entire parade, see the Youtube inset to the left of this article. You can find Part II at this link: https://youtu.be/4xdOv8jzAys.

**Union Skills**
*Winter Conference*
**Jan. 24th 2026 ~ Boston**

**New! Organizing HQ at https://mccc-union.org/**

*Bristol Chapter has organized weekly standouts beginning this September to show solidarity for both local and statewide issues.*

# Constitution Day All-Member Rally!

The MCCC held an All-Member Zoom Rally on National Constitution Day - Wednesday, September 17th - as a kick-off to the Fall semester. We are organizing to prepare for mobilization as we push forward on our coordinated campaign to improve wages and working conditions for all of our members.

Earlier in the week, the Organizing Committee (OC) set "Hustle Agents" to work, using the Hustle app to mass-text over 5000 members about the rally. As a result, over 125 union members were in attendance at the 7pm event.

OC Co-Chair, Stacie Hargis welcomed members and set the tone to honor Constitution Day by reminding us that Unions stand on the right to free speech, associatio,n and assembly.

Vice President, Joe Nardoni listed "wins" over the past two years, including the repeal of WEP/GPO, securing full-retirement benefits for educators. [Learn more about the Social Security Fairness Act here.] He also discussed the recent inclusion of a long-sought wage equity study into the State budget, which is step one in addressing the silent crisis community colleges are facing as a result of substandard wages for community college education workers in Massachusetts.

President Barnes gave the status of Day Contract Bargaining as we close-in on ratification on a one-year contract in October. She shared discouraging news regarding DCE Contract Bargaining, wherein Management continues to hold firm on an unacceptable offer of less than the Governor's parameters of a 3.5 % wage increase for adjuncts.

Guest speaker, Adam St. Jean, Bargaining Co-Chair from the Mass Society of Professors-Lowell (MSP-Lowell) roused members with a report on major wins recently secured at the bargaining table through democratized bargaining and collective action. He encouraged the MCCC to do the same. St. Jean was accompanied by Maria Hegbloom, an experienced Union organizer and MTA Field Rep who supported MSP-Lowell throughout negotiations. [*See bios of St. Jean & Hegbloom below.*}

The rally called members to action to build Organizing Squads on each campus to prepare for mobilized actions in the coming months to support contract bargaining and to fight to require legislators to address wage equity in order to fulfill the promise of free community college.

Strong efforts are underway to increase membership, engage current Union members, and to prepare for significant coordinated action. Coalition-building with sister unions like MSP-Lowell, is one of the ways we can educate and inspire our members to stand together on winning better wages and workload for all.

## Organizing Committee (OC) Buzz

**The OC is activated. Join the movement!**

- Members are wearing blue Fair Pay t-shirts on Tues & Wed each week. Take pics and share with angelina@mccceducators.org.
- Chapter OC Squads are forming to prep for collective actions. Show your support!
- Small actions like t-shirts, buttons & standouts are just the beginning of our escalation. Member participation is key!
- The OC needs regional team leaders and campus point people to help organize. Contact angelina@mccceducator.org
- Be a media spokesperson for news interviews - tell your story & highlight talking points. Contact Stacie Hargis to learn more.
- Help spread the word: post on social media, "like," "follow," and forward MCCC posts.
- We hope to form a student engagement team to strategize student support for our campaign. To be a part of this team, contact Angelina.
- Plans are underway for regional Legislative in-district meetings. Attend, wear shirts, make noise! Logistics coming soon.
- OC HQ now up on MCCC website. Former link still valid: https://bit.ly/m/fairpaymccc.
- Maximize resources to on-board new members: engage New Member Liaisons, host events, encourage 1-2-1 conversations & share Promise Cards and Union swag.
- OC meetings have moved to Wednesday at 4pm. Join us on 10/8: ZOOM LINK.

## Guest Speakers Share "How to Win Big" at MCCC Rally

*Adam St. Jean is a Teaching Professor of Biomedical Engineering at the University of Massachusetts Lowell and has been an active union member and organizer for over a decade. He began his union work in 2014 at the University of New Hampshire, where he helped organize non-tenure-track teaching faculty and later served as contract administrator and co-lead bargainer. After joining UMass Lowell in 2018, Adam became involved in the Massachusetts Society of Professors Lowell, serving as College of Engineering Representative, Clinical and Teaching Faculty Representative-at-Large, and now Vice President. He was also one of the originating members of the MSP Contract Action Team, a rank-and-file–driven group that organized actions and influenced bargaining during the COVID-19 years—work that helped strengthen a more democratic, member-driven approach to the union's campaigns. Adam also serves on the MTA Board of Directors representing Higher Ed Region 47H and has extensive bargaining experience at both UNH and UML, most recently as Co-Chair of the MSP bargaining team at UMass Lowell.*

*Maria Hegbloom is an organizer working for the Massachusetts Teachers Association. She comes into this work after 15 years as a faculty member in the English department at Bridgewater State University. In her faculty career she served in a variety of roles within the Massachusetts State College Association (MSCA) including chapter and statewide president, legislative committee chair, and bargaining chair. As a member, she also served in MTA leadership as the Higher Ed representative on the Executive Committee. Most recently, she worked as the Field Representative/Organizer with MSP-Lowell during their past negotiation cycle and supported the team and members as they worked to achieve a more democratic bargaining model, deepened their ability to engage members in bargaining actions, and built their power at the table.*

# Chapter President On the Value of Stepping Up

**by Caryl Casson**
**Chapter President at Mass Bay**

At a recent union event, attendees were asked to think of their best day at work and how it transformed things not just personally, but also for students and even their college.

I thought of a couple of things, and then I realized that neither would have happened had I not become union chapter president. That was my best day at work, and it was, indeed, transformational.

In spring 2023, I became chapter president at MassBay. We're in Wellesley, a town with one of the highest costs of living in Massachusetts. Few professors, staff, or students can afford to live locally, so there's not much sense of community. I knew people in my department somewhat, my division, a little less, and the rest of the college hardly at all.

All that changed when I became chapter president. Suddenly people knew me, and I got to know them. The first professional day, I left my humanities bubble, chatting with people in admissions, or chemistry, or nursing. It was nice.

I arrived at my first monthly meeting with the president armed with a list of things I'd tried but failed to achieve as a member of various committees. He listened and acted quickly when he could. It turned out that going right to the boss got things done. At each union meeting, I rattled off our achievements, and I gathered more things to work on as I began to understand departments outside my own and needs I had never considered.

When things go off track at an institution it is often because one person gets things wrong and the next keeps doing the wrong thing. Without corrections, the errors are compounded. As union president, I discovered workload computation sheets, which faculty hadn't been seeing. I learned about E7s and that some departments weren't using them. After I started working on grievances, I examined the student complaints process and discovered it wasn't being applied according to the contract. Often these were honest mistakes that had been baked in for years. It wasn't just me who had things to learn, but also the managers. I would never have understood any of this if I hadn't become chapter president, and I learn new things about the contract and people's work daily. As a result, MassBay becomes a better place for us all.

Early in my tenure, I learned something personally transformative. A situation arose in nursing, and I wondered if it could apply to me. Sure enough, the Interim Salary Adjustment Memorandum of Agreement of September 2022, about which I had never heard, could be applied to my department. In fact, HR had already used the Memorandum to raise the salary of a junior English professor but had failed to apply it to the rest of us. My ignorance of the Memorandum meant that, had I not become chapter president, it would perhaps have been conveniently forgotten.

This Memorandum, hard won for us by the union in another fight, transformed my life and those of my colleagues. It allowed us to take on fewer DCE classes, which helped our students. The salary review the union is currently fighting for will be transformative for everyone. As MLK said, "Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability but comes through continuing struggle." Join the struggle today. Become active in your chapter, run for office. It will transform your relationship with colleagues, with your institution, and you never know what you will discover.

*Caryl Casson is chapter president at MassBay, where she has been full-time faculty in the English department since 2013. Before that, like many members, Caryl cobbled together a living from adjunct work, logging countless miles on I-91 to teach at GCC, HCC, STCC, Smith, and UMass.*

*L to R: Renae Gorman, Thomas Lee, Amanda Berthiaume, Anthony Rondinelli, Joe Maciaszek, and Ashley Pease showing their true colors (Union blue) at STCC's Welcome Back Picnic in September.*

*continued from page 2 "To Fulfill the Promise of Free Community College."*

**Here in Springfield, the challenges are acute. Our faculty and professional staff are being asked to do more with less—more students, more advising, more program development, more administrative tasks—with no corresponding investment in time, pay, or support. Qualified adjuncts are being turned away from course assignments. Students wait in long lines for advising. Administrative leadership is increasingly absent from campus. And when we raise these concerns, we're told they're off the table.**

**Most recently, at the bargaining table, management has refused to discuss faculty workload—a core issue for our members and a fundamental part of wage equity. Let's be clear: workload is compensation. When job expectations grow but compensation and support do not, that's a hidden pay cut. To refuse to even engage on this issue is to ignore the reality we are living.**

**We've also raised these concerns with the STCC Board of Trustees as part of the presidential evaluation process, urging them to include broader campus voices in their review of leadership. So far, that feedback has been excluded.**
**This is about more than a contract or a spreadsheet. It's about whether the people responsible for delivering on the promise of Free Community College are being respected, supported, and paid fairly for their work.**

**We want Free Community College to succeed. We believe deeply in the mission. But without action on workload and wages, this model isn't sustainable.**

**The state has made a major investment in access. Now it must make a parallel investment in quality—and that means supporting the workforce at the heart of every campus. Because if the educators and staff walk away, the promise walks with us.**

*Renae Gorman, PT, DPT, EdD, OCS, CHSE is the Program Coordinator for the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program at Springfield Technical Community College, where she teaches across the curriculum. She earned her entry-level physical therapy degree from D'Youville College (now D'Youville University) in Buffalo, NY, and went on to complete both her Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) and Doctor of Education (EdD) degrees at the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences. Dr. Gorman is a Board-Certified Clinical Specialist in Orthopedics and a Certified Healthcare Simulation Educator. She has been actively involved in the American Physical Therapy Association, Massachusetts Chapter (APTA MA), serving in various leadership roles including Chief Delegate and Vice President. At STCC, she currently serves as Chapter President and has previously served as Director and Vice President.*

Middlesex Community College members and one supporter attended the Lowell City Council meeting on 9/23 to speak to a motion from the council asking the State to set aside $200 million from the more than $2 billion generated by Fair Share as a first step toward stabilizing public higher ed funding that supports students, faculty and staff. It was a great opportunity to speak about our silent crisis and offer the facts about our experience as outlined in our Promise Cards. *L to R: Stacie Hargis, Jeff Caplan, Mike Williamson, Tao Williamson and Ashli Ree.*

# COMMUNITY BLOG

## *Member Voices*

## "It's Time for a Change"

**by R.L. Whitman**
**Professor of English and Humanities**
**Bunker Hill Community College**

This year the MCCC will be bargaining system-wide for a new contract. For the first time in many years, we will be demanding significant changes in our compensation and working conditions. We will be pushing strenuously for a much higher wage because for more than 20 years we have received sh*%ty increases. As a result, faculty and staff constantly leave our colleges to look for decent wages elsewhere. I support these changes, and I am very angry that full-time and adjunct faculty, as well as full and part-time staff currently do not get paid a living wage in one of the richest states in the country.

Why don't I leave? The answer is simple. I got lucky and I made money elsewhere, and at better wages. I came back because I love the community colleges, I love the students, and I love my colleagues. But the ridiculous crap with bad working conditions and pay has been going on for 25 years and it is time for a change.

Overall, the compensation that community college educators earn is disgusting. And for many, working conditions are awful. The constant bleeding of faculty, staff, and especially part time teachers is a blight on the (not so) great state of Massachusetts.

Community college employees start with a historically low wage. . . and then it gets worse. Secondly, workers in the system should be compensated when they do extra work, but that isn't always the case. We all do too much for free.

Next, we have to better compensate adjunct professors who are not paid fairly for their labor. Of course we lose faculty, staff, and adjuncts to other high wage states. With the cost of a car or public transportation, just getting to the college drains their resources. There are travel-related costs when teaching at various colleges around the state and attending college meetings in hopes of getting a full-time job. How about the cost of food? Oh, yes, I see my colleagues regularly at our excellent food bank. We pay low wages to highly trained teachers, feed them a bit, and exploit their labor while ignoring the cost of developing high quality curriculum.

Adjuncts are consistently dismissed and undervalued. At Bunker Hill, 60% of all classes are taught by adjuncts. 60%! This is shameful and disgusting. We have the most highly trained professors in the country. Why don't we hire them as full-time workers, particularly when the money from those adjuncts goes directly to the college. So, why doesn't the college have the money to "BUY" new full-time faculty?

Instead of building more parking perhaps we can hire more full-time professors from the adjunct pool to support more students!

It is no surprise that we can't hire good professors, and those we get are usually gone in a few years because current salaries make it impossible to stay. So, the priority is obvious: fair compensation.

Also, we must take better care of our staff. My colleagues across the MCCC often hear these responses from Management when issues of workload and inadequate compensation are raised: "This is part of your work load," "It's in the contract," "The President sets the table," and of course, "We can't afford it." These are a set of lies that have become so much the norm that most of us either accept it, believe it, or head out the door.

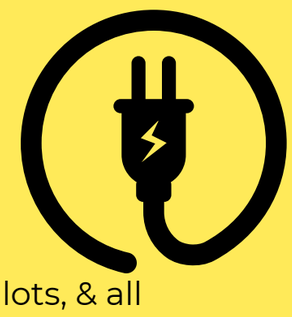
Yes, now we have free community college! Isn't that great? But nothing is free for our workers!

When are we going to have the faculty and staff to support new professors for our new free tuition students? We can't do this until the exploitation stops. We need real reform and we need it now.

We need real wages for ALL faculty.
We need real wages to support our staff and students.
AND We need wages and working conditions for a 21st century community college system in the Commonwealth.

In solidarity,
RL Whitman, BHCC

## *Get Plugged In*



**Focus your skills in ways that matter!**

**Nominations and Elections Committee**

- Support democracy!
- Oversee & verify nominations, signature, ballots, & all procedures to ensure equal treatment & access to the election process.
- 2-year term

**Personnel Committee**

- Develop, maintain & recommend revisions of the personnel policies of the organization.
- Periodically review job descriptions & annual performance evaluations for MCCC employees.
- 2-year term

**Bylaws and Rules Committee**

- Support governance
- Implement Policies & Procedures of amending the Bylaws & the Standing Rules as adopted by the Board of Directors & on Amendments to the Standing Rules.
- 2-year term

***WE are the UNION***
***Donate a little time to the process!***

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**Secretary: Colleen Avedikian**
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**At Large Members:**
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Mark Linde
JP Nadeau
Candace Shivers

**MCCC Board of Directors:**

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JP Nadeau (BrCC)
DeAnna Putnam (BHCC)
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Stacie Hargis (MiCC)
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Laura Mondt (NECC)
Margaret Wong (QCC)
Ben Anilus & Dr. Jalal Ghaemghami (RCC)
Joe Maciaszek (STCC)
Mark Linde (DCE-Pt Rep) (from MaCC)
Kelly Boylan (DCE-Pt Rep) (from CCCC)

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