

Massachusetts Community College Council

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Dear Colleagues on the Council of Presidents,

Working together across a variety of situations, from bargaining to shared governance this last year has been a model that produces the greatest opportunity for a collegial atmosphere. This makes academia a great place to work for both the administration and our members, and most importantly, promotes the greatest student success.

We were confident your recent assistance in helping win a wage equity study for our members was a sign of a strong commitment to our work together. We looked forward to finding further ways in which we can collaborate for the good of our institutions and our students in the coming year. But a recent communication indicated that the Presidents no longer wish to work with us, nor do they view us as colleagues, and even worse, not entitled to our constitutional rights.

Your current course of action makes a mockery of collegiality and any college mission towards student success. The Presidents have stated that in order to provide course releases for our core DAY unit Negotiations Team members, the following preconditions must be met:

- Agreement to meet in person.
- Discontinuation of silent bargaining representatives (SBRs) at negotiations.

We are outraged by this action. Your position is ill-conceived and coercive to the point of being de facto blackmail. Furthermore, it does not comport with the collective bargaining law.

The consequences of this position are:

- Unit members working hard to ensure our students' success are devalued;
- Lack of trust that the Presidents in fact want to work with us to ensure the wage equity study gets completed quickly enough to be implemented as part of the upcoming bargain for a successor contract;
- A lack of knowledge of the role past practice has played in the working relationship between the Presidents and our DAY members disregards our relationship built over unbroken successive bargains for 30 years or more;
- This sudden shift is patently capricious and arbitrary, which suppresses our constitutional rights of assembly, representation and free speech;
- With such short notice, colleges are left with no way to plan for the absences of either our core Negotiations Team members or your administrative personnel. We would have to implement a bargaining schedule with a majority of evening and weekend meetings.

Furthermore, case law supports our position that it is our right to include silent bargaining representatives who

watch the proceedings and it is true that most, if not all of our colleges have the space to accommodate this. Your position is clearly inconsistent with the published guide to the collective bargaining law, which states that “neither party may coerce the other party in its choice of a bargaining representative.”

In the spirit of collegiality, we urge you to maintain a past practice that has worked for three decades, and support robust, transparent, and fair negotiations. As we look around us, we are starting to see the decay of long-established institutions, including attacks on higher education. Now is the time for us to work even closer together to thwart these attacks.

Respectfully yours, united in a shared desire to make the Massachusetts Community College system equitable, affordable, and sustainable,

The MCCC Board of Directors