

# MCCC News

MTA/nea

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## Breaking News: DCE Update

**T**he MCCC DCE Bargaining Team has reached a Tentative Agreement (TA) with management. The TA provides salary increases of 3.5, 3.5, 4 and 4 percent over the next four years. The first increase (3.5 percent) would be paid effective Jan. 15, 2014. These increases do not include several additional items in the package with a financial cost to management. Full details will be shared on the MCCC website, in chapter visits to be scheduled over the next several weeks and in the mailed out ratification package. Ballots will be going out

soon and will be due by Feb. 27, at 4 p.m.

Highlights of the language changes:

- Compensation for preparation time if a class is cancelled within seven days of first class meeting.
- Improved formula to calculate salaries for lab components of courses.
- Opportunity for adjuncts who teach at multiple Massachusetts community colleges to unify their top pay step across the campuses.

- Faculty who regularly teach multiple sections at a college will have some assurance that they will regularly be able to receive two course assignments.
- Improvements in the procedures for grievances.

DCE Bargaining Team: Linda Grochowalski, chair, Mark Bashour, vice chair, DeAnna Putnam, secretary, Gail Guarino, Tom Kearns, Candace Shivers; Joe LeBlanc and Donnie McGee, ex officio; Bob Whalen and Joe Rizzo, MTA consultants. ■

## BYLAW PROPOSALS

**Bylaw change proposals are due by March 1, 2014.**

**Send proposals to Bylaw Committee chair Claudine Barnes at Secretary@MCCC-union.org**

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## Dumbing Down the Curriculum

The commonwealth's community college reform is barely a year old and the effects on curriculum that many faculty feared are already becoming apparent. An uproar arose this past fall at Quinsigamond Community College over the college writing sequence requirements that made the pages of the *Worcester Telegram and Gazette*.

The new, complex funding formula rewards colleges for various performance measures such as graduation rates and completion rates for core courses like mathematics and college writing.

Community college presidents are vying for a limited pool of increased funding in what is essentially a zero-sum game. When one college receives increased funding, other colleges lose. There are a number of possible approaches colleges may take.

President Lane Glenn of Northern Essex Community College has said his approach would be to increase the full-time faculty rolls in order to strengthen academic advising as a way to support students towards graduation.

Another approach would be to make courses easier. And that seemed to be the strategy advocated last fall by President Gail Carberry at Quinsigamond. In spring of 2012 she approached the English Department about changing the composition requirements because only 60 percent of students pass the courses.

The department felt that the courses did need realignment, and they had pro-

posed conducting a study and making a formal proposal through the traditional college governance structure.

Rather than work with the department on its timetable, Carberry's approach was to use the strategic planning process to realign the composition sequence without the English Department's participation.

Carberry's motivation was made very clear at a Sept. 19 all college meeting. She stated that she had been trying to get the English department to reduce the rigor of their courses. Attendees reported that she went on to indicate that her intent was in

part to increase the college budget.

English was not the only department Carberry proposed academic changes to. The new strategic plan also proposes eliminating comprehensive and departmental exams from developmental English and math courses citing student "test anxiety" as the rationale.

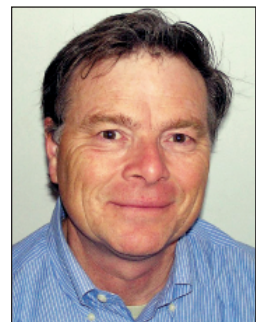
Quinsigamond has three college writing courses: English 100, English 101, and English 102. English 100 "Introduction to College Writing" is a preparatory or "bridge" course that, according to

*Continued on page 2*



Margaret Wong, MTA Board member from Quinsigamond Community College explained the curriculum change.

# Reflections on the Profession



Don Williams, MCCC Communications Coordinator

I have been planning to write a column reflecting on the changes in our profession over my three decades in the community college system, and a recent column in the Chronicle of Higher Education spurred me to do the column now. More about that later.

First, to my early experience as a full-time community college faculty member. The work-load was very different. We had office hours and student advisees in roughly the same numbers as now, but we taught 12 credits as a full-load. With word processors not available, and photocopiers rare, we used the old mimeograph machines with hand-written or typed content (which might be done by a secretary if you had the material planned in advance).

Now we teach more, we have to produce much of our materials by ourselves, and with email we are expected to be available 24/7 by our students. Lecterns, blackboards and chalk, were the only instructional materials usually found in the classrooms. Faculty offices had one phone for everyone in the office to share; most information came in intercampus mailboxes. Methodologies and technologies are rapidly changing, and besides keeping up with the changes in our academic disciplines, we continually have to adapt to these other advances.

Increased adjunct faculty use is a major change. When I started, I only knew of a handful of part-time faculty working during the day. Adjuncts largely worked in the Divisions of Continuing Education at the colleges, which conducted courses after 4 PM and weekends. Those divisions have disappeared, and now adjuncts represent seventy-five percent of the faculty across all days and times.

Collegiality has suffered, as much of the faculty (the adjuncts) who by contract are not compensated for department meetings or involved in college service. They are what former adjunct Michael Dubson called “ghosts in the classroom.”

Professional staff made up about one fifth of the MCCC Day contract membership, now they represent nearly one third, while the number of full-time faculty has remained roughly the same. With adjunct faculty working under the DCE contract, this shift has changed the character of the MCCC as members in professional staff positions have a much more difficult time participating in Union activities.

Administration positions have swelled. When I started, my college had one vice president, now we have five. We used to have three deans, now we have 10 (and counting). We had no assistant dean positions, and now I can’t keep track of their proliferation. Benjamin Ginsberg, in his book *The Fall of the Faculty: The Rise of the All-Administrative University and Why it Matters*, pointed out that in 1975 admin-

istrators and professional staff numbered 250,000, about half the number of professors. By 2005 there were 750,000, easily outnumbering the tenure-track faculty. As MCCC DCE Grievance Coordinator Joe Rizzo says, “The colleges hire more full-time managers to manage the increasing numbers of part-time faculty.”

To some observers these changes represent the deprofessionalization of the profession. Clerical work has significantly increased as part of faculty workloads. Canned courses (such as MOOCs) where instructors become “facilitators” are proliferating. The remedial math programs at many of our colleges reflect this trend.

In his *Chronicle* article titled “The Great Stratification,” Jeffrey Williams of Carnegie Mellon University, considers this trend to be greater specialization. He looks at the old image of “the professor” in a tweed jacket as a generalist without much differentiation across all of academia. Today, there is much more differentiation. Like Huxley’s *Brave New World*, he uses the terms of alpha and beta job categories.

At the top are senior administrators and super star faculty (the alphas). The next level are the rank and file full-time, tenure-track faculty who still have some influence in the operation of the colleges. Adjunct faculty come in below that. Professional staff positions range from high beta positions to much lower status in positions like tutors.

Williams compares this specialization to what has happened in medicine. There used to be only physicians and nurses, now there is a wide diversity of specialization with nurse practitioners, phlebotomists, physician assistants, etc. He points out that this specialization has resulted in a pyramid social structure that has managed to maintain employment and fairly compensate people at the various levels.

Higher education is seeing similar specialization, but instead of medicine’s pyramid structure, Williams sees something different. “Graphically, it is not really a pyramid, but a pancake-shaped bottom tier, a visible middle layer above it, and finally a barely visible aerie rising above them.” It is another example of the “winner-take-all” culture enveloping the nation at large. Just look at the compensation for college presidents compared to senior faculty.

Williams said, “The chief difference from medicine is the steep drop in pay, benefits, and job security for those who hold beta positions.” He cites two major factors for medicine’s better picture as the influence of professional organizations and their certifications and, especially for nurses, unionization.

We are facing changes from many directions—legislative, regulatory, technological, social—without a comprehensive vision of what the enterprise of higher education should look like. If we want to have any influence in the direction of higher education and the profession, the only real way we can do it is through our union. ■

## Dumbing Down the Curriculum . . . continued from front page

former chapter president Margaret Wong, does not transfer as a freshman writing course at any of the state universities except Worcester State. Fitchburg State does not award the course any college-level credit.

Wong says that Worcester State’s acceptance of QCC’s English 100 is an anomaly because the course requirements are well below the university’s stated composition course requirements.

The normal composition sequence at QCC is English 101 and 102. And these transfer to all the state universities for their composition requirements. What Pres. Carberry had put forward in the strategic plan was to renumber English 100 as English 101 and renumber English 101 as English 102, thereby bypassing the English Department’s academic oversight. The current English 102 would also have been renumbered and become an elective.

As at other community colleges in our system, QCC’s second semester composition course has the traditional focus on writing about literature. The college writing sequence at QCC directly aligns with thirteen of the other Massachusetts com-

munity colleges, and essentially aligns with Berkshire. Only Bunker Hill has different sequence requirements.

The state universities have largely moved away from this model, but a few, like Westfield State, still retain that focus. QCC English department Coordinator Sheila Booth was quoted in the *Telegram and Gazette* saying, “I do think that change is inevitable.” But she added, “We want to make sure that what we are teaching them is up to par.”

Pres. Carberry had said that the change is to better align QCC’s curriculum to Worcester State. But Wong pointed out that 500 QCC students transfer to a variety of four-year colleges, both public and private, only about 130 of them go to WSU. Tailoring the curriculum to one transfer institution is not to the students’ benefit.

The *Telegram and Gazette* did not go deeply into the course contents in its Oct. 20 news article, but in a subsequent editorial on Oct. 23 it strongly supported the importance of a quality education. The editorial’s concluding statements supported the faculty’s position: “In educa-

tion, substance and rigor are paramount. If the faculty cannot or will not support the curriculum they are being asked to teach, that is a sure sign of trouble in academia.”

The public debate brought a lot of focus on the issue and tensions rose on the campus as the proposed Strategic Plan moved towards approval at a trustees’ subcommittee on Nov. 20 and a final trustees’ vote on Dec. 5.

The faculty, through chapter president Susan McPhearson and Margaret Wong, made contact with the trustees, the public, and the Worcester State English faculty to enlist their support. In the end the trustees agreed that strategic planning was not the way to deal with curriculum issues such as the composition sequence. And both the strategic planning sub-committee and the full board of trustees passed a plan that sent the issue back to the English Dept. to do the study it initially proposed.

McPhearson said that the removal of developmental math and English exit exams did remain in the strategic plan.

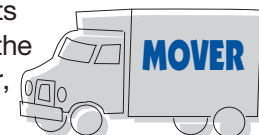
Community college presidents are under pressure from the governor and the legislature to increase graduation rates,

but there is no concomitant pressure to maintain high academic standards. It is essential for faculty and staff to stand up for academic standards and to make sure that quality and rigor are not lost in the balance. ■

## MOVING?

Please make sure the MCCC has your correct mailing address.

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Call the office at  
**1-877-442-MCCC** toll free  
or go online at  
<http://mccc-union.org/ChangeMyAddress/>





Joe LeBlanc,  
MCCC President

# In Era of Endless Challenges, We Struggle to Make A Difference

“We are creating Walmarks of Higher Education.” So reads a headline in a recent issue of *The Atlantic*.

The details are troubling. Some states have cut graduation requirements. The University of North Carolina may eliminate programs in history and political science. The University of Maine may cut physics. Idiots posing as governors in Florida, North Carolina and Wisconsin talk about “whether taxpayers should continue subsidizing public universities for teaching the humanities.”

We’re a nation in a hurry. We’re told to produce more graduates. Give them credit for life experiences. Offer more courses and programs online. Push those

MOOCs. Whatever you do, do it quickly.

These graduates must be molded to meet workforce needs. Companies are waiting. Train our students to make widgets even if widget making is a soul-draining job likely to be exported to the next low cost market waiting to be discovered and exploited by our corporate elite.

We’re told to consolidate. I’m still waiting for administrative consolidation. Community colleges now have provosts, vice presidents, associate vice presidents, deans, associate and assistant deans and other administrators doing work done less than a generation ago by a single academic dean and a few assistant deans.

Politicians and corporate think tanks push performance-based funding. They assert that resources are limited – in Massachusetts, state support to public higher education remains 31 percent below the

inadequate levels of FY01. Students are overwhelmed with debt. Higher education is expensive. Even elite institutions rely more and more on contingent faculty to deliver the goods cheaply to our students.

We’re living in a bad dream in a nation that has lost its way. Corporate titans need a new low cost market waiting to be exploited. Why not America? Drive down education costs. Demand efficiencies. Hire a few hundred more adjunct faculty. Offer endless MOOCs and ignore their 4 percent completion rate. In the end if it all falls apart, blame our overwhelmed students. Better yet, bash the faculty, especially those vulnerable adjunct faculty.

It’s not hopeless, however. The *Atlantic* article cites good work being done by the Campaign for the Future of Higher Education. The group asserts that the effi-

ciency craze is translating into lower quality. Performance-based funding that focuses too heavily on graduation rates will pressure faculty, especially vulnerable adjunct faculty, to pass more students.

But it doesn’t have to be this way. As the semester begins, fight back efforts to promote MOOCs and other half-baked ideas that shortchange our students to disregard our professions. Defend the rights of our adjunct brothers and sisters to teach well. Demand excellence in an academic environment that cherishes learning above all.

Endless efficiencies produce an inexpensive, tasteless and unhealthy hamburger at your local corporate fast food restaurant. Endless efficiencies allow your local Walmart to sell cheap poorly made products. Higher Education has nothing good to learn from rapacious corporate practices and much to lose. ■

## Duquesne Adjunct’s Death Raises Cries for Justice

*Margaret Mary Vojtko, an adjunct professor of French for 25 years, died underpaid and underappreciated at age 83*

By Daniel Kovalik

On Sept. 1, Margaret Mary Vojtko, an adjunct professor who had taught French at Duquesne University for 25 years, passed away at the age of 83. She died as the result of a massive heart attack she suffered two weeks before. As it turned out, I may have been the last person she talked to.

On Aug. 16, I received a call from a very upset Margaret Mary. She told me that she was under an incredible amount of stress. She was receiving radiation therapy for the cancer that had just returned to her, she was living nearly homeless because she could not afford the upkeep on her home, which was literally falling in on itself, and now, she explained, she had received another indignity – a letter from Adult Protective Services telling her that someone had referred her case to them saying that she needed assistance in taking care of herself. The letter said that if she did not meet with the caseworker the following Monday, her case would be turned over to Orphans’ Court.

For a proud professional like Margaret Mary, this was the last straw; she was mortified. She begged me to call Adult Protective Services and tell them to leave her alone, that she could take care of herself and did not need their help. I agreed to. Sadly, a couple of hours later, she was found on her front lawn, unconscious from a heart attack. She never regained consciousness.

Meanwhile, I called Adult Protective

Services right after talking to Margaret Mary, and I explained the situation. I said that she had just been let go from her job as a professor at Duquesne, that she was given no severance or retirement benefits, and that the reason she was having trouble taking care of herself was because she was living in extreme poverty. The caseworker paused and asked with incredulity, “She was a professor?” I said yes. The caseworker was shocked; this was not the usual type of person for whom she was called in to help.

Of course, what the caseworker didn’t understand was that Margaret Mary was an adjunct professor, meaning that, unlike a well-paid tenured professor, Margaret Mary worked on a contract basis from semester to semester, with no job security, no benefits and with a salary of between \$3,000 and just over \$3,500 per three-credit course. Adjuncts now make up well over 50 percent of the faculty at colleges and universities.

While adjuncts at Duquesne overwhelmingly voted to join the United Steelworkers union a year ago, Duquesne has fought unionization, claiming that it should have a religious exemption. Duquesne has claimed that the unionization of adjuncts like Margaret Mary would somehow interfere with its mission to inculcate Catholic values among its students.

This would be news to Georgetown University — one of only two Catholic universities to make U.S. News & World

Report’s list of top 25 universities – which just recognized its adjunct professors’ union, citing the Catholic Church’s social justice teachings, which favor labor unions.

As amazing as it sounds, Margaret Mary, a 25-year professor, was not making ends meet. Even during the best of times, when she was teaching three classes a semester and two during the summer, she was not even clearing \$25,000 a year,

and she received absolutely no health care benefits. Compare this with the salary of Duquesne’s president, who makes more than \$700,000 with full benefits.

Meanwhile, in the past year, her teaching load had been reduced by the university to one class a semester, which meant she was making well below \$10,000 a year. With huge out-of-pocket bills from UPMC Mercy for her cancer treatment,

*Continued on page 4*



One MCCC holiday event is the annual Executive Committee luncheon with the MCCC staff members Edy Stoddard and Angela Perno. This year’s attendees, from left, Stoddard; Joe LeBlanc, President; Dennis Fitzgerald, Day Grievance; Phil Mahler, Treasurer; Perno; Donnie McGee, Vice President; Liz Recko-Morrison, Berkshire At-large; Claudine Barnes, Secretary; Joe Rizzo, DCE Grievance; and Rosemarie Freeland, Greenfield At-large.  
(Photo by Don Williams)



## Write Us

### The MCCC News Welcomes Contributions.

#### Letters to the Editor

Only submissions by MCCC unit members will be accepted. Letters should be no more than 200 words in length. The author must include name and chapter affiliation, which will be published with the letter. Authors must provide the editor with contact information in the form of either email address, mailing address or telephone number. Letters will be published on a space available basis and may be edited for length and appropriateness. Not all submissions can be published.

#### Guest Columns

Guest Columns should be no more than 400 words in length. Columns by authors who are not MCCC members may be accepted. The author's name and affiliation will be published with the column.

#### Mail to:

Donald Williams  
North Shore Community College  
One Ferncroft Road  
Danvers, MA 01923

#### Or email:

Communications@mccc-union.org

# NSCC Facing Workforce Un-Development

Two important career programs at North Shore Community College are on the chopping block because of facilities problems. The programs, Cosmetology and Culinary Arts, were inherited by NSCC when the Essex Agricultural and Technical Institute's (EATI) post-secondary programs in 2000. Both programs have significant facility needs and have been housed in non-NSCC buildings that are slated for demolition, and the college has nowhere to house them. The Union met with management on Dec. 23 to bargain over the impact of these changes and is continuing to work on behalf of the affected faculty members.

The Cosmetology program, which for many years was the first program to fill when registration opened, is being forced to close. Its specific facility requirements, and the need for students to be actively practicing their skills, makes continuing the program without a site very difficult. The three faculty members in the program are slated to lose their jobs at the end of this academic year.

The highly popular program has 40 students every year. Students regularly pass the Cosmetology certification test at a 98 percent rate. And 98 percent of the graduates find work in the field upon graduation.

Culinary Arts was a program that was growing and being revitalized. The college plans to suspend enrollments and continue with the current students doing their didactic/lecture courses in the fall. The college is hoping to find facilities to continue with the practicum portion of the program in the spring of 2015. But this scenario leaves these faculty in limbo.

EATI was a county funded vocational education high school that also had some associate degree programs. When county government was eliminated in the 1990's, EATI lost its funding source. The college division was merged with NSCC by legislation, and ultimately the high school merged with the nearby North Shore Voc-Tech. And the merged North Shore Voc-

Tech is building all new facilities on the former EATI property.

NSCC had been scrambling to find a site for these two programs for two years. And a deal had been worked out with a private group, Higher Ed Partners (HEP), who would rehabilitate a building in downtown Lynn and provide facilities for these two programs as well as future educational partnerships. HEP had taken over the arrangements made between Bristol and Northern Essex Community College and The Princeton Review that also included providing building spaces. Despite promising through the summer and early fall that the Lynn building was going to be available, HEP suddenly cancelled the deal in December. ■

## Day Contract Raises

All members of the Day Contract Unit employed by Dec. 31, 2013—both full- and part-time—should have received a straight 1.75 percent raise as of Jan. 1, 2014, and it would be reflected in the Jan. 17 pay advice.

If you did not receive the increase, contact Day Grievance Coordinator Dennis Fitzgerald at [Grievance-Day@MCCC-union.org](mailto:Grievance-Day@MCCC-union.org)

There will be further 1.75 percent increases due Jul. 1, 2014 and Jan. 1, 2015. ■

## Duquesne Adjunct's Death . . . continued from page 3

Margaret Mary was left in abject penury. She could no longer keep her electricity on in her home, which became uninhabitable during the winter. She therefore took to working at an Eat'n Park at night and then trying to catch some sleep during the day at her office at Duquesne. When this was discovered by the university, the police were called in to eject her from her office. Still, despite her cancer and her poverty, she never missed a day of class.

Finally, in the spring, she was let go by the university, which told her she was no longer effective as an instructor—despite many glowing evaluations from students. She came to me to seek legal help to try to

save her job. She said that all she wanted was money to pay her medical bills because Duquesne, which never paid her much to begin with, gave her nothing on her way out the door.

Duquesne knew all about Margaret Mary's plight, for I apprised them of it in two letters. I never received a reply, and Margaret Mary was forced to die saddened, penniless and on the verge of being turned over to Orphan's Court.

The funeral Mass for Margaret Mary, a devout Catholic, was held at Epiphany Church, only a few blocks from Duquesne. The priest who said Mass was from the University of Dayton, another Catholic university and my alma mater. Margaret

Mary was laid out in a simple, cardboard casket devoid of any handles for pallbearers—a sad sight, but an honest symbol of what she had been reduced to by her ostensibly Catholic employer.

Her nephew, who had contacted me about her passing, implored me to make sure that she didn't die in vain. He said that while there was nothing that could be done for Margaret Mary, we had to help the other adjuncts at Duquesne and other universities who were being treated just as she was, and who could end up just like she did. I believe that writing this story is the first step in doing just that. ■

Reprinted from *Pittsburg Post Gazette*.  
Read more: <http://www.post-gazette.com/opinion/Op-Ed/2013/09/18/Death-of-an-adjunct.print#ixzz2nDGvAJs4>



## MCCC News

<http://mccc-union.org>

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Donald R. Williams, Jr.

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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. e-mail: [Communications@mccc-union.org](mailto:Communications@mccc-union.org)

## Know Your Day Contract

### January 2014

**Jan. 29** Course materials (Form XIII-E2) for Fall semester must be distributed to students and submitted to supervisor before end of drop/add period (p. 51)

### February 2014

**Feb. 1** Summary Evaluation returned (p. 52)  
**Feb. 1** First Year Professional staff evaluations completed (p. 53)  
**Feb. 1** Sabbatical Recommendations forwarded to boards of trustees (p. 25)  
**Feb. 10** Summary evaluation rebuttals due (p. 51)  
**Feb. 15** First year professional staff evaluation conference (p. 52)  
**Feb. 20** Course materials returned (p. 51)  
**Feb. 28** New full and part-time hire list due MCCC

*N.B. Dates may vary depending on the first day of classes. Most of these dates are "last date" standards. In many instances the action can be accomplished before the date indicated. Page numbers refer to the printed 2012-2015 contract.*

One card, endless savings

Take a look at what just 10 MTAB programs can save you this year!

Program	Savings
Car Rentals	\$90
Discounts through Access	\$1,802
Home Mortgage	\$850*
Hotel Discounts	\$180
Magazine Subscriptions	\$217
MTA Discount Directory	\$600
MTA Vacation Center	\$420
Propane	\$400
Purchasing Program	\$90
Wireless Services	\$127
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,776</b>

\*Based on a transaction of \$285,000.

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