

MCCC News



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MARK THE DATE MCCC Delegate Assembly

**Saturday, April 25,
9:00 A.M.**

**Courtyard by Marriott
75 Felton St.
Marlborough, Mass**

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NEA/AFT Higher Ed Conference: A Wide Variety of Ideas to Share

Nearly 600 NEA/AFT Higher Ed members met in Orlando over spring break for a conference titled “Advancing Equity On & Off Campus.” It was a timely topic. With the growing inequality in society, there are many ways higher education is affected.

The NEA holds an annual higher ed. conference, but in every other year it combines with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) for a joint conference. The AFT is a member of the AFL/CIO and it represents many big city teachers’ unions like New York and Boston. And although its overall membership is smaller than NEA’s, it represents more college faculty and staff. AFT only represents one campus in Massachusetts: UMass Dartmouth.

Massachusetts was well represented with about a dozen attendees, almost all from the MCCC. Our members attended a variety of workshops and shared what they learned when they had breaks and over meals.

A wide variety of workshops were offered that followed a few general themes: bargaining, organizing, and political action. Colleagues from across the nation shared the challenges they are facing and responses they have developed to those problems. Besides the workshops, there were a number of inspiring speakers who generated further discussion.

In his welcoming remarks, Tom Auxter, president of the United Faculty of Florida, an NEA-AFT affiliate, talked about the intrusive corporate influence creeping into colleges. He focused on the extreme case at Florida State University that was uncovered by a freedom of information request in 2011.

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NEA President Lily Eskelsen-Garcia gave a passionate speech on the importance of activism at the NEA/AFT higher education conference. (Photo by Don Williams)

Speaker Condemns Corporatization of Higher Ed

The Keynote Speaker at the NEA/AFT Conference was Henry Giroux, the Global Television Network Chair in Communications and Professor of English and Cultural Studies at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. He is the author of over 60 books on education and society; among his recent titles are *Dangerous Thinking in the Age of the New Authoritarianism* and *Neoliberalism’s War Against Higher Education*. The corporatization of public higher education is one of his key concerns.

His academic speech was not only about public higher education, but it also looked at the larger societal changes over the past 35 years that are driving the changes public colleges and universities are facing. It is the shift away from the shared public institutions to private, corporate entities where the individual triumphs over community.

The increasing economic inequality between the 1 percent and the rest of society creates an inequality of power

as well. When the few have the money to control politics and the public discussion, the 99 percent are left out of the discussion.

He decried the “contradiction between democratic values and market

forces,” where the “yardstick of profits is the only measure that counts.” He fears that democracy itself is threatened when society accepts those measures. And higher education is both a target of those forces and a threat.

Higher education has always been a threat to the established order. Universities should be subversive forces. The whole intention of liberal arts education is to question and challenge, to critically evaluate social and governmental processes, to be empowered to speak out on public issues, and to inspire the civic imagination.

Ideas like measurable student outcomes are antithetical to deep learning, and the reduction of education to job training lead to a reduction in civic participation. Students who are burdened with enormous debt have not had any voice in the changes that are affecting them, and they are being robbed of the opportunity of a more human education.

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Internationally known social critic and author Henry Giroux gave the keynote speech on the corporatization of higher education at the NEA/AFT conference.

(Photo by Don Williams)



MCCC participants at the NEA/AFT Higher Ed. conference mixed with members from other states over dinner. Clockwise from left, Cathy Boudreau, MaCC; Jerry Comcowich from Hawaii; Kenn Anania, MaCC; Candace Shivers, MtWCC; Lois Powers, UMass; Secretary Claudine Barnes; President Joe LeBlanc; and Vice President Donnie McGee. (Photo by Don Williams)

NEA/AFT Higher Ed Conference . . .

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The Koch brothers had donated \$4.6 million to the University's economics program with the condition that they have partial control over the hiring of five faculty members and their performance reviews, along with some influence over the curriculum including the required reading of *Atlas Shrugged*.

Auxter also explained some of the unusual ideas Florida Governor Rick Scott has about public higher education. Gov. Scott believes that a bachelor's degree should cost \$10,000. Currently in Florida it costs about \$45,000, and Scott thinks it could be reduced by eliminating liberal arts courses and focusing on technical subjects. Auxter said, "We need to challenge these ideas." He pointed out that liberal arts graduates may have low starting pay right out of college, but over their careers they end up earning as much or more than their tech peers.

NEA President Lily Eskelsen-Garcia gave an address on Friday where she invoked the memory of labor pioneer Mother Jones who she has included in her book about people who have led social change titled *Rabble Rousers*. She was followed by keynote speaker, Henry Giroux, who urged college and university professionals to fight against the commercialization of higher education. (See related article.)

AFT President Randi Weingarten gave passionate remarks on Saturday about the importance of unions and member involvement. She pointed out that as the numbers of private sector union members has declined, so has the rate of pay raises. Still, workers in unionized workplaces earn, on average, 28 percent more than workers not covered by unions.

In a workshop titled "Fighting Higher



Maria Maisto, President of New Faculty Majority, was a presenter in an NEA/AFT workshop titled "Solidarity with and Among Contingent Faculty."

(Photo by Don Williams)

Education Corporatization," Kim Geron, Vice President, California Faculty Association, explained the erosion of California's system that was once the envy of the nation. Set up in the early 1960's by Gov. Pat Brown to serve the public good, the system was essentially free to students and widely accessible through community colleges, state colleges and the university system. Now tuitions have risen significantly, access is being reduced, and the state has even turned over a portion of Sacramento State to a private, for-profit college.

MTA Vice President Donnie McGee moderated two workshops that focused on state legislatures and funding for public colleges. One presenter pointed out that current funding levels for public higher education are at the same levels as 2008. And Massachusetts is even worse.

Presenters from New York and Vermont detailed the campaigns that they

created to increase legislative support for higher education. Frederick Kowal, President of the United University Professionals in the SUNY system, detailed the struggles they have had with Gov. Cuomo that includes his intrusion into curriculum matters as well as cutting budgets.

He explained the coordinated legislative plan they developed that included increased state share of costs, increase full-time faculty by hiring current adjuncts, and student loan forgiveness for adjuncts.

Linda Olson from the Vermont state colleges detailed their campaign called "Reclaiming the Promise for Affordable Public Higher Education in Vermont," or more simply "Reclaiming the Promise." It plays on a promise the legislature made years ago to keep higher ed. affordable.

She said that Vermont has the nation's highest level of support for K-12 education but the lowest for higher ed., at 15 percent of the cost. It was noted that Vermont community colleges have no full-time faculty.

The Vermont campaign included a Facebook page, newsletter, postcards, and state house visits with students. Despite some ups and downs, the campaign has found legislative sponsors who have proposed tax increases to pay for the plan. Olson said, "The campaign has created a culture of activism." And it has changed the public image of higher education and its value to the state. They haven't succeeded yet, but there is promise.

The conference addressed the range of issues facing public higher education today. And Massachusetts is facing many of them. There were no simple solutions, but there were a lot of ideas that the attendees could bring back home. ■

MCCC in the News

The MCCC and its efforts to obtain information about limitations on adjunct teaching assignments has been mentioned by *The Boston Globe* in both an article and an editorial connected to its investigation of state government withholding information.

The MCCC filed a state freedom of information request for emails and memos from all 15 community colleges pertaining to limiting adjunct faculty to only two courses and any references to the Affordable Care Act.

Under the state public records law, agencies are allowed to assess reasonable charges for searching for and reproducing the requested information. The first college to respond, Holyoke, said that they would require a few hundred dollars to provide the information. The other colleges came back with charges of \$10,000 and more.

The *Globe* pointed out that Roxbury requested the highest fee at \$18,648, and the total assessment of all the colleges was \$132,000. The *Globe* has had its own issues with state agencies stalling and assessing unreasonable fees for public information.

MTA has provided an attorney with expertise in this area to appeal the college charges. As the article explained, Secretary of State Bill Galvin's office is the arbiter of what information is available to the public, and the costs to supply the information, but his office has no power to enforce its rulings.

The *Globe* reported that Galvin has ruled that the 14 community colleges must recalculate their charges to reasonable levels. But the *Globe* also noted that in 2014 out of 50 appeals, Galvin only approved 10. ■

Corporatization of Higher Ed . . .

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Reducing academic labor costs is one of the corporate ideas that has gained currency. He pointed to the fact that now there are 1.5 million college faculty and one million of them are part-time. He likened their plight to indentured servitude calling it the "shameful Walmarting of the faculty." People whose employment is precarious, and who are living in near poverty are less likely to fight back.

In closing, he urged people to celebrate civic literacy. Work against the disempowering notion that there is no hope. We have to go on the defensive that higher education is a public good and reclaim its egalitarian promise. ■

Confronting Attacks on Our GIC Benefits

It's too late to change the increased co-pays, deductibles and prescription drug costs scheduled to whack us on July 1, but we can do something about the latest outrage against state employees proposed by Gov. Charlie Baker.

The GIC's Benefit Decision Guide sets up the situation nicely: "The House 1 budget proposes changing all EMPLOYEE contributions to 25 percent regardless of date of hire. However, whether or not this takes place will not be known until the Commonwealth's FY'16 budget is enacted. Please keep this in mind as you are weighing your health plan options."

Thanks for the warning. If the Governor gets his way, my family's share of the UniCare State Indemnity Plan will increase from \$534.01 to \$643.07 a month. That's an additional \$1,308.72 a year. That's real money. It would undercut negotiated salary increases. When combined with the hikes in co-pays, deductibles and prescription drug co-pays, it would hit our family finances significantly. For this issue enlightened self-interest will spur me to contact my state representative

and senator repeatedly to convince them to leave the proposed split increases out of the House and Senate budgets.

I'm not alone. A colleague contacted me recently about the Governor's mean-spirited proposal. "This would be devastating to my family - we had \$5,000 out of pocket [expenses] last year on co-pays and deductibles and other uncovered costs - and I assume it would be equally harmful to many others," he writes. "Will there be an MCCC presence at the lobby day? What can we do to increase pressure on the state?"

This member gets it. We're in this fight together. Without grassroots member action, we'll likely lose and set-up ourselves for more attacks on our professions and benefits next year. Our union fought against the increases for new hires in 2003. We lost that fight to keep everyone at 20 percent. It was a tough economic and political environment in the early Romney years, but we gave it a very good fight. That effort set the stage for successful legislative campaigns over the next decade.

You may or may not be affected by the proposed changes. That's irrelevant. Lobby Day will have come and gone by the time you read this column. That's ok. It's but one event and this year's legislative battle is just beginning. You'll soon receive an MTA GIC Bulletin with tear off postcards. Please read its call to action. Think about the stakes. Consider the messages we must send to the legislature and the Governor.

Contemplation is wonderful, but it feels even better when it's followed by action. Please act. Tear off your postcards. Mail them to your state representative and senator. Include a short personal note. Do it right away. Run to the post office. That stamp (and follow-up calls and emails, of course) will be the best investment you can make in yourself and our profession this year. Thank you. ■



Joe LeBlanc, MCCC President

Agency Fee Payers- Please Join Us

The MCCC has been reaching out to community college professional employees who have chosen "agency fee" over Union membership. For part-time members the difference for Union membership is about the price of a cup of coffee per week. Belonging offers many times that in benefits to faculty and professional staff.

Belonging Has Value.

There are pragmatic values to union membership

- You get a \$1 million NEA Professional Liability Insurance policy.
- You get MTA Legal Assistance if needed for employment related incidents.
- You get discounts on insurance, financial services, travel, and wellness through MTA.
- You get discounts on recreational activities like museums, theater, sports, and lodging throughout Massachusetts and New England using your MTA membership card.

But membership has intangible values, too

Over 99% of the full-time faculty and staff belong to the union. About 3,000 adjunct faculty and part-time staff belong. They've recognized the importance of a unified voice in preserving the rights of community college faculty and staff. They've recognized the vital need for advocacy on a state-wide level.

If you're agency fee, please join us.

Call us at 1-877-442-MCCC.



MCCC Vice President Donnie McGee moderated two workshops on political action at the NEA/AFT conference. (Photo by Don Williams)

Visit The MCCC Online!

<http://mccc-union.org> / Toll Free Phone: 877-442-MCCC

The MCCC website is the best and most up-to-date source for late breaking developments. Additional documents of interest and import to Day and DCE unit members have been added.

The MCCC Webpage is a valuable resource for MCCC updates, job opportunities and linkage to the NEA and MTA resources available to MCCC unit members.

Calendars of MCCC meetings, and committee assignments may be found there.

Additionally, MCCC events and news are available, as well as "old news" in the form of archived newsletters. Bookmark the site for frequent referral.

MOVING?



Please make sure the MCCC has your correct mailing address. This affects receiving the newsletter, elections, important mailings and notices. Call the office at 1-877-442-MCCC toll free or go online at <http://mccc-union.org/ChangeMyAddress/>

— ADJUNCT/PART-TIME CORNER —

The MCCC welcomes adjunct faculty to contribute their perspectives to a regular guest column in this space. Submissions should be no longer than 400 words and sent to MCCC Communications Coordinator Don Williams at Communications@mccc-union.org

Adjunct/Contingent Faculty Network at NEA/AFT Conference

Faculty who are not in tenure track positions were well represented at the NEA/AFT Higher Ed. conference. There were several workshops that gave them opportunities to compare notes with peers from other states as well as to forge alliances with tenure track faculty.

Maria Maisto, President of New Faculty Majority, was one of the presenters in a forum titled “Solidarity with and among Contingent Faculty” that discussed how to promote dialogue between the diverse higher ed. workforce: full-time non tenure-track, part-time, adjunct, and graduate employees.

John Glovsky an adjunct from Cabrillo College in California said, “It doesn’t matter what we’re called – part-time, adjunct, contingent – they’re all names for a bad job.” He talked about the campaign to get more courses for adjuncts who, by contract, were limited to 80 percent of full time teaching load, while some full-time faculty took on overload sections that brought them to 180 percent of the normal load.

Pointing out that “The power inequity is a big detriment to solidarity,” Glovsky explained how adjuncts worked with the full-time faculty to bring more fairness to the work assignments. He went on to say, “if you’re not at the table, you’re on the menu.” And he urged adjuncts to get involved in governance.

A full-time lecturer at California State University at Los Angeles explained the process whereby the poorly paid, un-benefitted contingents like her

were able to work with the full-time faculty to win raises and benefits by convincing the full-timers to take smaller raises to fund the improvements.

Unemployment benefits for adjunct faculty was the topic of a workshop, and while there have been some problems in Massachusetts, this is one area where we are better off than in many states.

Another workshop presented methods for leveraging media to fight for justice for contingent faculty. As the plight of the growing numbers of adjunct/contingent has become a point of mass media attention, there is an opportunity to get their message out. Social media is a great tool for organizing and engaging in the public discussion. ■



MCCC News

<http://mccc-union.org>

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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. email: Communications@mccc-union.org

Know Your Day Contract

April 2015

- April 6** Dean’s leave of absence recommendations due (p. 27)
- April 15** Dean’s tenure recommendations due (p. 40)
- April 15** Title changes announced (p. 60)
- April 16** Patriots Day holiday (p. 23)
- April 25** Professional Staff unused vacation days in excess of 480 hours (64 days) converted to sick leave at end of last pay period in April. (p. 22)

May 2015

- May 1** President’s tenure recommendations and sabbatical notification due (pp. 38 & 25)
- May** Last Day of classes Faculty submit college service and student advisement form (p. 49)
- May 21** Tenure decisions due (p. 40)
- May 30** Professional staff College service and student advisement forms (p. 53)
- May 31** Memorial Day observed

NOTE: 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. ■



Write Us

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.

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