

# MCCC News



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## Breaking News

# Presidents Drop Contract Objections

**A**s this issue of the *News* was readied for print with a call for member action, and after three months of controversy over the DCE contract, on Apr. 25 the college presidents agreed to accept the terms of the contract covering adjunct faculty.

The basis of the delay was over an increase in the workload calculation for lab hours that the MCCC had long sought to increase from the existing 67 percent (or 1 hour of pay for 1.5 hours worked). As negotiations concluded, attorneys for the presidents put forward a new calculation of 74 percent.

After reviewing the provisions, both

teams shook hands on the agreement and proceeded to the ratification process. Besides the lab ratio increase, the agreement includes a 3.5 percent increase for this current semester and raises of 3.5, 4 and 4 percent for each of the next three years, as well as some positive language changes.

As the Union was preparing the ratification vote, the presidents' attorneys claimed that they made a math mistake on the lab ratio, and it should have been 71 percent. Members overwhelmingly approved the contract on Mar. 27, and the MCCC pursued various avenues to secure a resolution. Chapter leaders contacted their college presidents urging them to resolve the impasse. As the Union was preparing a public protest campaign—be-



MCCC members from Quinsigamond Community College protested the DCE contract delay outside the council of presidents' meeting. Pictured from left are Lisa Cook, Kathi Lewando, Anne Shull, Chapter President Susan McPherson, and MTA Director of Higher Ed. Joey Hansen. (Photo by Scott McLennan)

ginning at the Apr. 25 meeting of presidents at Quinsigamond CC—the presidents agreed to accept all provisions of

the contract. Raises for this semester will be retroactive, including the new rates for lab instruction. ■

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## MTA Higher Ed. Conference: Meeting of the Minds

The MTA Higher Ed. Conference held at the Westin Hotel in Waltham on Apr. 11 and 12 was a huge success with over 180 members from all the higher ed. locals. There were several useful breakout sessions, finished off with a plenary session that included presentations and a question and answer session with Commissioner Freeland and other senior management members from the Department of Higher Education.

The event began Friday evening with a cocktail reception and dinner that included a question and answer session with MTA

President Paul Toner and Vice President Tim Sullivan. Attendees had the opportunity to meet the candidates running for MTA President and Vice President. Toner is term-limited and a successor will be elected to replace him; Sullivan is also term-limited and is one of two candidates running to succeed Toner. The election is held at the MTA Annual Meeting.

There were two sessions of presentations held before lunch. They included presentations on the Optional Retirement Plan conversion, collaborative bargaining training, national trends in higher ed., po-

litical action in Massachusetts, LEAP assessments, effects of Affordable Care Act on adjuncts, and what not to do on line.

The presentation titled "Opt-Out Legislation for Certain ORP Participants: What's it All About?" during the first session was highly attended. Vice President Donnie McGee and retirement specialist Richard Nunes from the Department of Higher Education explained the details of the Section 60 legislation that will allow participants a one-time opportunity to convert from the Optional Retirement Plan.

*Continued on page 2*



MTA President Paul Toner (left) introduced the panel of senior staff from the Department of Higher Education: Commissioner Richard Freeland, Senior Deputy Commissioner Carlos Santiago, Senior Director for P-16 Alignment Susan Lane, Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance Sean Nelson, Director of Learning Outcomes Assessment Bonnie Orcutt, and MTA Vice President Tim Sullivan. (Photo by Don Williams)

## A Former Adjunct Reflects

By Michael Dubson

Bunker Hill Community College

March 2014 marks seven and a half years since I have held a fulltime faculty position. For fifteen years before, I worked as a career adjunct. I worked at nine different colleges, teaching at least eight classes a semester. Much of my non-class time was spent commuting. Boxes in the trunk of my car held my materials. I worked six day weeks, some days beginning at 8:00 a.m. and not ending until after 10:00 pm.

Once I had my Master's, resumes went out; job offers rolled in. One school even hired me over the telephone. I thought that proved I was really good. God, was I naive!

I worked without insurance, without retirement, with no, or minimal, job security and often with abuse. I blush with embarrassment when I think of the things I swallowed in order to maintain fragile employment.

A white female department chair told me that as a white man, my chances for full-time employment were very low. Was that legal? Did it matter? A challenge wouldn't have gotten me a job. An unbelievably dysfunctional dean told me I wasn't smart enough to be full-time. She blustered on into her own self-destruction. A department chair ignored my availability form and scheduled me for ONE early morning class I couldn't do. When I pointed this out, she raged at me like some cigar-chomping Hollywood producer, snarling, "You'll never work in this school again!"

Yet, there was always the ever-present ache of possible fulltime employment. I can't count how many times some dean or chair said, "We want to hire you." I was given a journalism class, and without staff, budget or support, was to produce a student publication. This Houdini endeavor was accompanied by dropped hints of becoming head of a journalism program. After three semesters of my at home typesetting, then duplicating at the copy center, a request for funding was finally granted. Afterwards, the school

initially refused to pay the printing bill.

It amazed me how institutions who pride themselves on being deliverers of knowledge and truth could harbor such liars; how institutions who promote tolerance and equality for every politically correct category could create and abuse their own underclass; how institutions who promise hope to students create hopelessness in those students' teachers.

I went to graduate school because I wanted to be a community college teacher. But as the years went on, I began to

wonder how long should I chase a dead dream? What to do next? I tinkered with acting, publishing and writing to find creative fulfillment. I held part time jobs for extra money, where I learned the low economic value of teaching experience.

The year I was hired, I had all but given up. In fact, I almost didn't even apply, not until the last minute. Since September 2006, my life has stabilized by having one job in one place. I have been given many opportunities and have received recognition and rewards I never would have before.

Before, I walked the halls invisible or snubbed. Now colleagues, current and former students all speak to me. My self-esteem has gone up while the suppressed resentments have evaporated. I have made many people eat their words, even if they don't know it, and I've enjoyed every bite.

I hope for new and long term career adjuncts, this world is now better, or is getting better. ■

[Dubson was featured in the March 2001 and November 2007 issues of the MCCC News.]

## MTA Higher Ed. Conference . . .

*Continued from front page*

retirement Program (ORP) into the State Employees Retirement System (SERS).

McGee explained the background of the legislation and the phases of the implementation beginning on May 1, 2014 and wrapping up Oct. 27, 2014. Only people in the ORP prior to the IRS letter dated Sept. 30, 2013 will be eligible to convert. Eligible ORP participants will be contacted about the process directly.

She thanked the many people whose hard work over the past eight years made this conversion possible: MTA Legal Services Director Lee Weisinger, Higher Ed. Director Joey Hansen, Governmental Director Jo Blum and Governmental Relations Representative Sean King.

McGee then introduced Richard Nunes who is the Retirement Director for the Department of Higher Ed. by saying, "Although he was initially on the other side of the issue, he has become a terrific partner in making this happen."

Nunes gave a very detailed presentation on various aspects of converting an ORP pension into the SERS. He will be in charge of doing the cost calculations for members to buy in to the state program. He urged those people to get ready to access all their financial resources in advance of the October date because in some cases it will cost more than the assets they have in their ORP accounts.

The calculations are complex, and it will take time to get them done for all those who wish to convert. Priority will be given to employees who have imminent plans to retire. Nunes expects that the initial payout calculations will be pretty accurate, but that for any particular participant the exact amount won't be determined until they actually sign the paper work for SERS conversion. He expects that the difference will be small.

Most of the attendees were among the hundreds of ORP participants across the many MTA higher ed. components who are expected to want to convert, and they had the opportunity to ask questions.

In the second session a presentation by MTA attorney, Ira Fader, titled "What not to Wear, Do, E-Mail, Tweet or Blog: 'Netiquette' and the Law for Professional

Employees" drew a large audience. He opened with the comment, "Welcome to my paranoid world," as he began to discuss the problems educators are facing as we all adapt to evolving social norms on privacy.

Fader recounted some situations he has seen both in defending MTA members and in the general public where employees thought they had privacy and found that they did not. He pointed out that anything done on a college computer is not private, and can be accessed by the employer and can also be accessed by anyone in the public under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) under Mass. General Laws Ch. 4 Section 7 (26). Even using one's own computer through a college web portal may be accessed. He urged attendees to "build a wall between your public world and your private world."

After the buffet luncheon, senior staff members of the Department of Higher Education gave presentations and took questions from the audience: Commissioner Richard Freeland, Senior Deputy Commissioner Carlos Santiago, Senior Director for P-16 Alignment Susan Lane, and Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance Sean Nelson.

### Atty. Ira Fader:

#### *"Welcome to my paranoid world"*

Each presented their concerns and intentions for the future of higher ed. in the state. Commissioner Freeland pointed out the need to work together to advance the Vision Project he has championed. He cited the many challenges facing higher ed. in Massachusetts. We are number one in the country for the need of an educated work force: 70 percent of jobs here require some form of post-secondary education; two-thirds of Massachusetts youth go to our public colleges and universities.

Yet state support for public higher ed. has declined. Dr. Santiago noted that the high period for public higher ed. across the nation were the years from 1947 (the GI Bill) to 1979, and there has been declining support since then. Nelson, the finance director, pointed out that at one



*MTA attorney Ira Fader gave a presentation at the MTA Higher Ed. Conference on "Netiquette," and the evolving social norms on workplace privacy that had important lessons for college faculty and staff.* (Photo by Don Williams)

point the state paid 80 percent of the cost of a student attending a public college, and now it is only 9 percent.

Commissioner Freeland said, "There are higher expectations from us now, as the public asks 'what is the return on our investment?'" He added, "Support flows towards quality." So we all must show that public that we are providing good value.

Members had the opportunity to ask questions of the panel, and there were many. MCCC members were especially vocal. Betsy Smith asked how we can be delivering full value when over 70 percent of community college faculty are adjuncts on short-term contracts with very little support. The issue was raised that the status of community college students, who are often disadvantaged, has always made our institutions at the bottom of the higher ed. pecking order. Also, with movement to cut down on remedial education, members questioned if we are moving away from our open enrollment admissions policies.

The Commissioner said he hopes to get funding to improve the full-time part-time ratios, and he reiterated the commitment to community college open enrollment.

In all, it was a very successful conference. Members learned a lot, and the dialogue with the Department of Higher Education was extremely valuable. ■

## 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/  
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Due to a printer's error, an incorrect version of this column was published in the print version of MCCC News, April 2014. Following is the text as it should have appeared.

## Our Members Demand Respect, Confront Injustice



Joe LeBlanc,  
MCCC President

The votes are counted. In a record turnout our members said YES. Adjuncts from the Berkshires to Cape Cod supported the new DCE Agreement by an overwhelming and record-breaking margin of 2001-92. That's not a typo. The first 3.5 percent salary increase is retroactive to the beginning of the spring semester.

But wait. Management wasn't ready to pay the increases. They claimed we didn't have a "meeting of the minds". They said we didn't have an agreement to increase the lab ratio from a .66 to .74. We disagreed and filed an unfair labor practice charge at the Division of Labor Relations. We waited for management to see the light.

Instead management dithered. This behavior

continued at an in-person hearing at the DLR. We rejected their offer to settle over issues that had nothing to do with our Agreement. With the spring semester ending soon, it was time to increase pressure. It was time to take our case to the public.

I reiterated my requests to chapter leaders to meet with their college presidents to demand that they ratify the Agreement as negotiated. I requested that they also reach out to trustees. We planned a series of protests at public events over the next month. I requested intervention by the Governor, Education Secretary, Commissioner of Higher Education and other political leaders.

After learning about a Presidents' Council meeting planned for April 25, I asked our Quinsigamond chapter and others to picket. They responded in grand style. On a cold spring day, our members exhibited their solidarity. Full- and part-time members showed their college community that we are one union. We work hard. We serve our students and this Commonwealth well.

We are patient, but don't push us too far because we will confront injustice whenever and wherever it occurs.

Other challenges are coming up, of course. The Commonwealth appears to be kicking the can down the road over Affordable Care Act implementation. No one knows when the state will fulfill its moral and legal obligation and provide its 3100 to 4100 qualifying contract employees with health insurance. In two years tax penalties will be assessed. Perhaps the state is thinking of going the corporate route and paying the employer fines instead. We'll see about that.

Our members demanded respect with our new DCE Agreement. They accepted nothing less than the contract negotiated and sealed with a handshake in January. In coming months, we will act in support of better college budgets, more full-time faculty and professional staff, more equitable treatment of adjuncts and part-time professionals, a new Day Agreement and the best college education possible for our students. ■



Richard Nunes, Department of Higher Ed. Retirement Director, gave a detailed explanation of the ORP conversion process at the MTA Higher Ed. Conference. Participants in the ORP are being contacted about the process, which begins on May 1, and closes on Oct. 27 of this year. (Photo by Don Williams)



MCCC Quinsigamond member Dale LaBonte demonstrated outside the college presidents' meeting to urge acceptance of the DCE contract.

(Photo by Scott McLennan)

## DIRECTORS' NOTES

At the February meeting of the MCCC Board of Directors Meeting the following actions were taken.

- Hilaire Jean-Gilles presented his Fall 2013 Research Report. He reported on the changes in full-time faculty, professional staff, and non-unit professionals at each community college. The report included information on new hires and their corresponding salaries in the fall. It also assessed part-time faculty and professional staff numbers as well as the number of members with dual unit status (Day/DCE).
- Barbara Madeloni, candidate for MTA President, made a presentation to the Board in support of her candidacy.
- The Board appointed Karen Carreras-Hubbard (BeCC) and Aaron Levin (HCC) to the Salary Structure Ad Hoc Committee that will investigate systems to consider for the next Day Contract negotiations.
- The Board entered into executive session to discuss the tentative DCE agreement.
- Edy Stoddard of the MCCC office staff reviewed the furniture selections for the new conference room.

### Visit The MCCCOnline!

<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.

### Savings Add up When You Use MTA's Free Rx Card

If you purchase medications that are not covered by insurance, you may be missing out on valuable savings. MTA members are eligible for a **free** prescription drug card which can be used at more than 56,000 pharmacies nationwide on both brand name and generic medications.

Discounts average 30% but can be as high as 75%. Call us at 800-336-0990 to request your card or visit [mtabenefits.com](http://mtabenefits.com). ■

## McCourt Addresses SERS Retirement Issues



MTA Retirement Consultant, and Mass Bay CC member, Ed McCourt is available to consult with members over SERS retirement issues. Here he met with member Paul Laverty of Mt Wachusett at the MCCC Office in Worcester. (Photo by Phil Mahler)

## Know Your Day Contract

### April 2014

**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 2014

**May 1** President's tenure recommendations and sabbatical notification due (pp. 38 & 25)

**May 4** MCCC Delegate Assembly

**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

*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. ■*



## MCCC News

<http://mccc-union.org>

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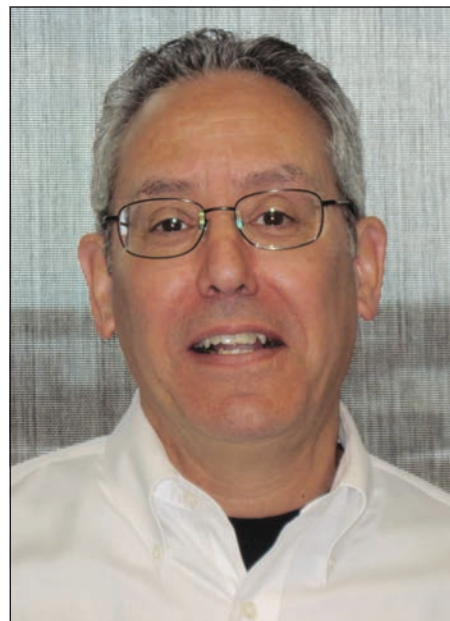
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The MCCC News is a publication of the Massachusetts Community College Council. The Newsletter is intended to be an information source for the members of the MCCC and for other interested parties. Members' letters up to 200 words and guest columns up 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)

## Dental Insurance Problems?



To report any problems with the Met Life Dental Plan contact Rick Ponticelli, the MCCC representative to the Health and Welfare Trust, at [rpontice@northshore.edu](mailto:rpontice@northshore.edu). ■

## Roberta Albano, Chair of the MCCC Nominations and Elections Committee Reported The Results of the MCCC Elections

### Officers

President Joseph LeBlanc .....	384
Vice President Diana (Donnie) McGee .....	393
Treasurer Philip Mahler .....	387
Secretary Claudine Barnes .....	377

### Adjunct/Part-time Directors

Linda Grochowalski .....	151
Elizabeth (Betsy) Smith .....	116
Randeen Zanca .....	96

### DCE Contract Ratification Vote

Yes .....	2001
No .....	92

## Write Us

### The MCCC News Welcomes Contributions.

#### Mail to:

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#### Or email:

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### 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.