

MCCC News



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Activists—students, faculty, staff, and administrators—packed the Gardner Auditorium in the State House to hear presentations by state officials, legislators and students to begin the March 8, Higher Ed. Lobby Day. (Photo by Don Williams)

Mark Your Calendar

MCCC Delegate Assembly

Sat. April 28

Courtyard by Marriott
Marlborough, MA

Higher Ed Advocacy Day: Voices Singing in Unison

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Over 400 higher education advocates descended on the State House on March 8 to make their voices heard in support of Massachusetts' public colleges and universities. Co-sponsored by PHENOM, MTA, and a newly formed group called Educate MA, representatives from every level participated.

From Secretary of Education Paul Reville and Commissioner of Higher Ed. Richard Freeland, to college presidents, to union officers and rank and file faculty, staff and administrators, to students and alumni, all joined together with one voice to press for more funding.

The official program began with presentations in the Gardner Auditorium. Secretary Reville and Commissioner Freeland began by thanking the partici-

pants for helping them make their case to the legislature. They were followed by two key legislators, Joint Higher Education Committee chairs Sen. Michael Moore and Rep. Thomas Sannicandro, who also praised the participants for their efforts and assured support.

Presentations from students told their stories of struggling to pay for college as they plan to use their educations to contribute to the economy and The Commonwealth. Bristol Community College student Nicole Collins was especially moving as she explained her background as a first generation college student whose initial aspirations for direct job training expanded as she learned more and realized her full potential. Now she plans to become a veterinarian. Of community col-

leges she said, "We shouldn't have to compromise our missions or our goals."

At the end of the presentations group leaders, many of them MCCC members, gathered constituents from each state senatorial district to take to their respective legislators. The Senate was in session, and many senators were available to meet. The House of Representatives was not in session, but participants were able to meet with aides. Participants were urged to follow up with their representatives and to encourage their friends and colleagues to do the same.

Participants were well prepared to make their cases. UMass students had come on busses, and were clearly prepped. MTA members had met earlier at MTA headquarters on Beacon Hill. Educate MA (educateMA.org) distributed three sophisticated press cards, produced by public college students and graduates, that on one side had the story of a student who had to delay his or her education because of prohibitive costs. They represented UMass, a state university, and three community colleges. Each had a different message on the reverse side about how public higher ed. is a benefit to the state.

Massachusetts has cut higher education funding by 42 percent over the last decade. We are near the bottom of all states in funding, and we have been one of the most aggressive states in cutting higher education. The foundation of this state's economy is its educated citizen base. Stu-



Co-Chairs of the joint committee on Higher Education, Rep. Thomas Sannicandro—Ashland (left) and Sen. Michael Moore—Millbury, both addressed the audience in the Gardner Auditorium. (Photo by Don Williams)

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Community College Reform Proposal Ignores Key Issues



Donnie McGee, SAC
Chair and MCCC
Vice President

Community Colleges are in the news, both nationally and here in Massachusetts. President Barack Obama and Governor Deval Patrick have both indicated how critical these colleges are to the economic well-being of our states and our communities. Their proposed solutions, however, are shortsighted. Both offer new revenues that would require these institutions to fix what they refer to as a “skills” gap in the labor market. But these plans don’t address key problems in the community college system. And they ignore the complex nature of what these institutions actually do. The Patrick plan does not provide the reform that our Massachusetts community colleges currently need.

Patrick’s recent proposal ignores the fundamental principle upon which these institutions were founded: to provide access to affordable, quality higher education for all. The overarching goal of these institutions is not simply to educate students for one specific career path, but rather to prepare them for lifelong learning and civic engagement by providing them with transferable job skills that all employers seek in the 21st century: the ability to communicate, collaborate, create, compute, and critically analyze data in a given context. Community college degree programs and accreditation criteria all emphasize these essential skills. Patrick’s plan also ignores the fact that these colleges already focus on workforce needs and are engaged in multiple employer partnerships across this state.

The Governor’s proposal earmarks funding for only one aspect of a very broad set of interrelated institutional responsibilities. Students targeted for workforce training by Patrick’s plan would still strain the limited academic resources available to all students. More than 50 percent of our students plan to transfer to four-year colleges to further their education. With increased emphasis given to workforce programs, the ability of these colleges to support the transfer and professional aspirations of entering students could be seriously compromised.

Patrick’s plan completely disregards the challenges that the open door admissions policy at these institutions poses for student success. The state’s community colleges open doors to everyone in the community and currently enroll more than 137,000 students. But many of these students enter with gaps in academics and confidence; many lack clear career goals. More than half of entering students need remedial classes in reading, writing or mathematics before taking the courses required in career, certificate or transfer programs. Unfortunately, community colleges are hiring far fewer full-time educators to provide the instruction and related academic support services these students need.

Statewide, more than 75 percent of Massachusetts community college faculty are part-time employees. These adjunct faculty are responsible for much of the developmental instruction provided to the students most academically-at-risk. Unlike full-time faculty, contingent faculty do not advise students. The academic advisement, mentoring, counseling, and tutoring services that students need are under strain and understaffed due to budget cuts, increased enrollment, and the whole-scale shift to part-time hiring. The money attached to Patrick’s workforce proposal does not address the current in-

stitutional needs for full-time educators or the support services that would promote student retention and success.

Most problematic, the Governor’s proposal ignores the substantial funding gap that exists between what the state provides and what community colleges need to serve all students effectively. State funding has declined by 42 percent over the past decade. Funding to community colleges has been cut by nearly 17 percent in the past three years. In 2010 Massachusetts ranked 48th in the nation for state and local support for public higher education as a share of personal income.

Students are now paying more than their fair share of college costs with ever-increasing tuition and fees. Community colleges cannot close student achievement gaps when their most vulnerable students are unable to afford these increases. Those who remain in college often work more and then, study less. Some will drop out with a mountain of college

debt, shattered dreams, and a ticket to nowhere. If not funded adequately, the current system will fail both students and communities.

Governor Patrick’s reform proposal does not address the real and significant challenges that impact college success. Community colleges can’t be strengthened without adequate and predictable resources for all enrolled students. The Governor’s plan ignores the complicated nature of the students that we serve and the challenges that a decade of declining resources and increased enrollments have created. To ignore these challenges in a top-down, rush-through-the-budget reform proposal invites failure. This state can no longer afford to give lip service to the critical importance of public higher education. If we want community colleges to transform lives, the workforce, and our communities, we must fund these institutions properly. And we must do it soon. ■

Whose Community Colleges?



Don Williams, MCCC
Communications
Coordinator

The recent push from The Boston Foundation (TBF), followed up by a proposal from Governor Patrick can be seen as an attempted corporate takeover of community colleges. This plan would put bureaucrats in

Boston in charge of determining missions of community colleges driven by the needs of big business.

While the Foundation does some valuable civic activities, if you look at who TBF is, you will see a large component from corporate Boston. Its Board of Directors includes people with involvement in corporate law, venture capital, finance, and private equity firms. They are overwhelmingly graduates of exclusive private colleges – particularly Harvard University.

Their study, which recommended that our community colleges become more focused on workforce development, did not involve any representatives of the system administration. Aspects of it were released to the press without advanced notice to the college administrations, so they had no chance to prepare responses. But Gov. Patrick obviously knew, because he followed up on the study with comments in his state of the state address and in a subsequent legislative proposal.

To drive the plan forward, TBF engaged one of Boston’s top Lobbying/PR firms, Rasky/Baerlein, that created an advocacy group, The Coalition for Community Colleges, to go out and promote their agenda with the press. Gov. Patrick did his part with Op Ed pieces in large and small newspapers across the state.

So what’s their agenda all about? Certainly we all want increased employment in the state. And with the increasing sophistication of the workplace, we can all agree that an educated workforce is what Massachusetts most has to offer to businesses. But what kind of education is the question.

Industry wants to hire people who are specifically trained for their particular needs. They are looking for people who are pre-trained on the software that they use, trained on the machines that they use, and trained on the processes that they employ. These are often industry- and company-specific and have little applicability beyond those specifics. Once upon a time there was something called on-the-job training, companies seem to have walked away from that.

A recent survey by an HR organization found that in the past decade companies that offer tuition support to their employees have dropped from 70 to 60 percent. So business is less inclined to invest in its own people. They are expecting someone else to invest in their workers. Employees are expected to prepare themselves, and in professional employment that has usually been the case. But expect-

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Higher Ed Advocacy Day . . .



Nicole Collins, a student from Bristol Community College told the audience in the Gardner Auditorium about her experiences trying to pay for college and her career aspirations. (Photo by Don Williams)

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dents who attend the elite private colleges in the state generally leave when they graduate. The majority of citizens attend our public colleges and universities, and 80 percent of them stay here and contribute to the economy. Massachusetts needs to invest in this, its most valuable resource.

The message to legislators was to increase overall funding for operations by 5 percent, to increase student aid by 5 percent, and to preserve the collective bargaining reserve fund for future raises that is a new policy. Community college participants also carried the message that Gov. Patrick’s proposal for realigning the mission of community colleges is ill advised. ■

Message to State Policy Makers: Listen to Our Students



Joe LeBlanc,
MCCC President

Well-meaning efforts to reform our community college system may be undermining our students' interests. When it comes to goals and aspirations, our students can speak for themselves, but students - real students, not a handful of hand-picked friendly faces - are mostly missing in this critically-important conversation about the future of public higher education.

I wonder how our students feel when they've passed the MCAS exams, graduated from high school and then end up taking remedial courses in college. I wonder how they balance academics, work

and family responsibilities. How do they manage to pay fee hikes? Why do they persist?

Our students are often the first members of their family to go to college. In this era of endless budget cuts, I sometimes wonder why they bother at all? When asked "What are you doing at Northern Essex?" about half of my students say they want to earn a bachelor's degree. They may or may not complete their associate's degree, but they do plan to transfer to and graduate from a four-year college.

About a quarter are enrolled in a program like nursing or criminal justice, associate's degree programs that will give them a shot at a job and a career. The rest aren't sure about careers after graduation. NECC is a good place to explore college. They may end up like many of my best students. They sign up for a class or two. They like it. They rediscover that learning is fun and that it sure beats working in a mindless, pointless job.

Much has been written about Section 30, the Governor's outside budget measure that would direct our community colleges to focus more on workforce needs. A recent WBUR story covered all the familiar arguments. It also looked at another angle: the reporter actually asked Northern Essex students about their goals. One student is studying to become a drama teacher. Another dreams of becoming a nurse. She may transfer to a four-year college or stay at Northern Essex. A third is exploring his options. He finds himself learning, opening his mind and thinking about his future.

In the frenzy of claims and counter-claims about the Governor's proposal, most stakeholders have weighed in. Some support the plan. They say it's all about

accountability, efficiencies, and adjusting our missions. Spend a little more and rejigger the system and good things will happen. It's imperative that we move TODAY to train workers to fill those 120,000 jobs.

Others oppose the plan. They say community colleges are already doing a good job in an anemic funding environment. There's no need to become like Virginia where workforce training is the central mission. This Commonwealth is different. Our students aspire to... Wait a minute, what are their aspirations?

Our students choose college for many reasons. I can't speak for them, but do suggest that it's time to talk to them. It's time to listen to them and focus our efforts on better helping them to achieve their dreams for college and for life. ■



Holyoke Community College students Ashley Cote (left) and Cheryl O'Connell demonstrate outside the State House on March 8. (Photo by Don Williams)



Administration and Union joined forces at the Higher Ed. Lobby Day on March 8. Here Mass Bay Community College President John O'Donnell (left) shared lunch with Mass Bay Chapter President Chandra Panse and professional staff members Julie Schleicher and Robyn Ross. (Photo by Don Williams)

Whose Community Colleges . . .

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ing low income people to pay to train themselves for lower paying jobs is less viable. So now companies want the government to pay.

What do our students want? Massachusetts community college tuition and fees currently average \$4545 per year. Because students pay about 50 percent of the cost of their community college education, and the state contributes only about 25 percent, the students should be driving the community college agenda.

My college, North Shore, has over 57

degree and 63 certificate programs. Over 50 percent of the students are in transfer degree programs, and only about 7 percent in certificate programs. The rest are in two-year career degree programs.

Clearly, the overwhelming majority of students don't want to spend their money on short-term training programs. They want degrees that lead to careers and not just a short-term job. If we are to truly be "community" colleges, then the communities should determine the missions and not have a centralized, corporate entity driving the agenda. ■

Members in the News

Jeri Warren, an adjunct faculty member at Mt. Wachusett Community College, has developed a new approach to public speaking. *Show Don't Tell: A Guide to Purpose Driven Speech*, is not only a guide to public speaking, but a personal tool to help with everyday communication. This book shows how to make verbal communication comfortable and ef-

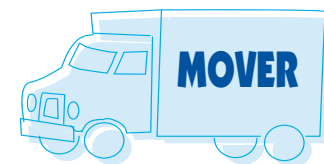
fective for today's student. Warren combined her dance, theatre and speech backgrounds to develop 33 exercises that provide the student with the necessary skills needed to take the giant leap from the back row to the podium. *Show Don't Tell: A Guide to Purpose Driven Speech* is available on Amazon, iBooks, Nook and at the MWCC Bookstore. ■

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/>



Know Your Day Contract

March 2012

- March 30** Department Chair evaluations (p.68)
March 30 Preferred schedules and course submitted (p.40)
March 31 Department chair vacancies announced (p.67)
March 31 Fall assignments to faculty, fulltime schedules to chapter (p.41)

April 2012

- April 6** Dean's leave of absence recommendations due (p.26)
April 15' Dean's tenure recommendations due (p.38)
April 15 Title changes announced (p.59)
April 16 Patriots Day holiday (p.21)
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. 21)

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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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

DCE Contract Tip Evaluation

Student evaluations are conducted each semester and are conducted during the second or third to the last week of the course. A classroom observation must be conducted prior to the unit member attaining reappointment rights. Classroom observations can only be conducted after that point for stated written reasons. The evaluator must use the classroom observation form found in the DCE contract.

The DCE Collective bargaining agreement and other relevant documents are available on the MCCC website <http://mccc-union.org/dcecontract.htm>. A hard copy of the DCE contract can be obtained from your local MCCC chapter. ■

Tentative Day Bargaining Agreement

The Day Negotiating Team reached a tentative agreement with the employer on March 7, 2012. The Union intends to bring the agreement to the Day membership for ratification as soon as details are finalized. Notification will be sent to members detailing when the vote will take place.

Duration:
2 years, July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2015

Raises:
1.75% across the board raise for all unit members during the first payroll period in July 2013
1.75% across the board raise for all unit members during the first payroll period in January 2014
1.75% across the board raise for all unit members during the first payroll period in July 2014
1.75% across the board raise for all unit members during the first payroll period in January 2015

Academic Credentials:
During the life of this contract, unit members who earn a new degree shall receive a raise at the rates listed in the classification charts in the current contract. All other points are suspended during the life of the new agreement.

Retirement:
The one-year notice required in order to collect the early retirement bonus is waived for all unit members who retire between the date of execution of the agreement and August 31, 2012. For unit members who retire between September 1, 2012 and August 31, 2013 the one-year notice requirement is reduced to six months.

Trigger money protection:
The Employer has agreed that the Union will maintain all rights to the trigger money until the raise in July 2013 is paid. Once this raise is paid, we agree to withdraw all rights to the trigger money. The language involved in the trigger language protection is currently under review by the Union.

Professional Staff Language improvement:
The E-7 job description form for professional staff shall be updated annually and within 30 days of any substantive and ongoing changes to job responsibilities. A minimum of 14 calendar days notice shall be given for all regular and ongoing changes to the work schedules of professional staff unit members.

Holidays:
The Bunker Hill and Evacuation Day Holidays are eliminated. For all current bargaining unit members faculty shall be given one additional personal day and professional staff will be given two additional personal days instead.

FMLA:
Remove the language stating that FMLA leave shall not run until after sick leave and sick leave bank are exhausted. Representatives from the Union and the Colleges shall meet to negotiate a new simpler form to be used in place of the FMLA leave form.

Dismissal:
The process for unit members to challenge dismissals has been streamlined.

Health and Welfare Fund:
The amount that the Employer contributes to the health and welfare fund (the dental insurance fund) shall be increased in each contract year by \$1.00 per member, per week. ■



Constituents met with Senator Steven Baddour at the Higher Ed. Lobby Day. From left Joe LeBlanc, MCCC President; Nita Lamborghini, NECC; Chantal McGovern, NECC student; Nora Sheradan, NECC-MCCC; Emily Round UMass student; Pam Donahue, NECC-MCCC; Sen. Baddour; Dina Brown, NECC-MCCC; Jeff Bickford, NECC; Victoria Czaia, NECC student; Prakesh Patel, NECC; and Parker Moody, NECC student. (Photo by Don Williams)