

MCCC



News

The Official Publication of the *Massachusetts Community College Council* / Volume 13, Issue 8 / May 2012

Another Successful Delegate Assembly

The annual MCCC Delegate Assembly on April 28 at the Courtyard by Marriott in Marlborough went off without a hitch. Although commitments were slow to come in this year, in the end 95 members attended which well exceeded the quorum number.

MTA President Paul Toner gave a presentation that focused on the pressing issues facing MTA members, and especially higher ed. His first topic was the "Stand for Children" ballot initiative that would take away seniority as a protection against layoffs for public school teachers. The "Stand..." organization has been around since 1996 advocating for education "reform." Now led nationally by Jonah Edelman, the organization has taken a decidedly more anti-union turn and has been sponsoring similar initiatives across the states.



MCCC President Joe LeBlanc made his opening statements to the Delegate Assembly ending his presentation with an appeal for members to be more involved in their chapters. On the platform from left are Vice President Donnie McGee, Secretary Gail Guarino, and parliamentarian Patti LeGault. (Photo by Don Williams)

Toner said that MTA adamantly opposes the proposition. The proposition is opposed by school committees and the Department of Education, but the public doesn't always look into the deeper ramifications of the plan. MTA is fighting the ballot question in the courts because the wording is overly complicated and misleading. But MTA is also seeking some legislative intervention. Although the proposition is only directed at K-12 teachers now, every unionized public employee should be concerned about the trend this represents.

As the Union representative on the Board of Higher Education, Toner shared his unique insights on The Boston Foundation's initiative to shift the community college missions more toward workforce development. He said that even some members of the BHE who supported the essentials of the plan were dismayed at the way the plan was unveiled in a surprise announcement in Gov. Patrick's State of the State Address.

Toner said that he has had discussions with Paul Grogan, Director of TBF, and he agreed that some of the amendments MTA was proposing in the legislature would be improvements. Toner went on to say that we should talk with our opponents as well as with our friends. He pointed out that one friend we have in industry is Ratheon CEO William

Swanson, who is himself a graduate of a California community college. Finally, Toner urged every member to be engaged in the policy debate.

The Union has created four awards to recognize the efforts of members in different activities. This year three members were recognized with awards.

The Raymond C. Lemieux award for outstanding service to the MCCC, MTA and NEA was presented to Gail Guarino of Cape Cod Community College, the outgoing MCCC secretary. The award was presented by Claudine Barnes, her CCC colleague and successor as MCCC secretary. While citing Guarino's many statewide and national Union activities, Barnes added that she had occupied, "literally every Union position at the Cape."

The John A. Palmer III award recognizing the Union efforts of adjunct faculty was presented to Harry Bowen of North Shore Community College by Linda Grochowalski, who was last year's

recipient. In her presentation she noted that Bowen had been a full-time faculty member since the 1960s where he had long been a Union activist. Now retired, he has continued to teach part-time and has helped to bridge the gap between full- and part-time members by serving as a DCE chapter grievance coordinator and member of the Adjunct Committee.

In accepting the award Bowen stated his strong support for adjuncts saying, "They are underpaid and underprotected." He said that retirement and long seniority gives him the opportunity to advocate for adjuncts with some impunity.

The newly created "Donnie McGee Strategic Action Award" for a member who does exceptional work in the area of political action fittingly went to MCCC Vice President Donnie McGee herself. President LeBlanc presented the award. Noting that the role of Strategic Action Coordinator has traditionally assigned to the MCCC Vice President, he said that McGee's efforts and successes had overshadowed those of her predecessors (including himself).

LeBlanc particularly noted McGee's dogged shepherding of two pieces of legislation through to passage: the 03 Bill that gave retirement credit to members who had worked at part-time staff positions before becoming full-time; and the ORP Bill that would provide faculty an opportunity to move from the optional retirement plan to the state retirement system.

The major responsibility of the Delegate Assembly is approval of next year's budget. Treasurer Phil Mahler presented the budget and went over significant aspects. Although technically a deficit budget, the Union has significant cash reserves that will be drawn down to a still healthy level. With no dues increase proposed, there was little discussion, and the budget passed easily.

Contention did come up over a proposal by Trudy Tynan of Holyoke Com-

Continued on page 2

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Kenn Anania (center) of Massasoit Community College and Clark Grain (right) of Roxbury Community College confer at the MCCC Delegate Assembly. (Photo by Don Williams)

What About the Other 75%?

It's graduation time, and that's always a great moment for reflection and assessment of the past academic year. I relish attending graduation; although attendance is required for full-time faculty and staff,



Don Williams, MCCC Communications Coordinator

I do it gladly and haven't missed a single graduation in my three decades of teaching.

Watching our students march across the platform is incredibly rewarding. Many have struggled to overcome seemingly overwhelming obstacles – academic, financial, social, and physical – to get to this point. And we all share in these students' success. We see them with brighter futures ahead because of their time at our community college. And we all feel that what we do has enormous impact and value.

The positive emotions of this time of year momentarily override the clouds of criticisms that we seem to face every year. The college budgets never seem to match the needs; our low graduation rates are regularly waved in the press to undermine support for the colleges; and this year The Boston Foundation and Gov. Patrick have questioned our entire mission.

But seeing our students graduate also raises the question, "What about those who don't graduate?" State-wide our graduation rates are listed by the federal government as about 25 percent.

We all know that these statistics are flawed because they count only first-time college students who graduate within three years. Many students come to community college after attending another institution, so they don't count. Some diligently take courses part-time over several years while they work and raise families. And many others, like my own state representative, went to community college and transferred to a 4-year college without graduating from the community college. These are successes.

Even with these successes, we still have a significant number of students who don't graduate and who don't go on. What about them?

A core principle of the Massachusetts community college mission is open admission. We take anyone who meets minimal high school equivalency, and despite limited finances the colleges try to make room for everyone who applies. Within this group of students there are many who are not ready for college-level work. They are immigrants, they have learning disabilities, they are working too much at jobs, and some – let's face it – are unmotivated and are in college because they don't know what else to do.

Harvard University boasts a 98 percent graduation rate. And their 2 percent of non-graduates includes billionaires like Bill Gates and Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg. Their acceptance rate is only about 7 percent of applicants. They fill an incoming class with high school valedictorians who are the cream of the crop – highly motivated, with records of success. Getting into Harvard is very hard, but once you're in, it's a forgone conclusion that you'll graduate.

Community college is easy to get into. We take almost everyone, but we do hold them to high standards. It's getting out of

community college that's hard. Our mission demands that we give everyone an opportunity, and our ethics drive us to do whatever we can to help students be successful. But for an unmotivated student with no direction it's especially problematic.

There's an old adage in Anglo Saxon jurisprudence that it's better to let 10 guilty men go free than to convict an innocent one. Something like this ratio could be reversed for community colleges. We'd rather admit 10 students that we know might fail than to turn away one who could succeed. And those students who don't finish don't leave the colleges without a benefit. They do learn things, and they are better off than before they came.

But the community college mission is being questioned across the nation. States like California and Florida that have traditionally been very strong on community colleges have cut enrollments by as much as 9 percent. Over 400,000 fewer students are now attending community colleges despite increasing student demand. Although we haven't seen this in Massachusetts yet, it's clear that our traditional mission is being reassessed, and it is important that MCCC members be involved in the public debate. ■

Day Grievance Issues

Day Grievance Coordinator Dennis Fitzgerald gave his spring report at the MCCC Executive Committee May meeting. He detailed a number of issues that he is working to resolve.

His first issue is the increasing trend of colleges not renewing members' contracts. Not only is the incidence of nonrenewal of probationary employees increasing, but a disturbing trend is colleges notifying members in January, rather than the contractual March 1 date. These employees are put on "paid administrative leave" in January and they are required to turn in keys and are escorted off campus by security personnel.

This process does give the dismissed member six months pay without them having to work, and some have seen that as a benefit in finding new employment. But the process marginalizes these members. Fitzgerald said it causes speculation about what the member might have done to deserve this treatment and casts aspersions on the member. Also it is a waste of money to pay someone not to work, while hiring part-time help to fill the position.

So far this situation has been seen at Bunker Hill, Mt. Wachusett, Quinsigamond, and Springfield Tech. If the process is being done at this number of colleges, it is clear that the others are aware of it, and they may be contemplating similar action. Fitzgerald said that the timeline for filing grievances at these campuses has passed, but that going forward chapters should pressure their college presidents to follow the contract language for non-renewals.

In two situations full-time members

who were non-renewed and had seniority in DCE simultaneously had their contracted DCE courses for the semester taken away as well. DCE Grievance Coordinator Joe Rizzo filed grievances for those members and was able to get them paid for the contracted DCE courses.

Fitzgerald is also looking into getting health insurance for part-time staff who work between 18.75 and 37.5 hours per week. State law requires that these people get health insurance, but that has not been followed. The MTA is advancing a lawsuit to get insurance for adjunct faculty who teach over half-time, but depending on the resolution of that case, a separate case may have to be filed for part-time staff.

Another issue he cited is some colleges trying to put non-contractual limits on use of the Sick Leave Bank. AFSCME and the state university (MSCA) contracts do allow for some of these limits, but the MCCC contract does not. Fitzgerald said that a 1999 Arbitration decision upholds the MCCC position. He recommended that the Union take a page from the management playbook and file for an injunction to prevent Middlesex Community College from taking a member off of the Sick Leave Bank.

Finally he noted that Mt. Wachusett is posting faculty positions with a requirement that they "infuse civic engagement in curriculum" and that they join some community organizations. This infringes on academic freedom and contradicts the contract on college service which should be "mutually agreeable" and not mandated.

Delegate Assembly . . .

Continued from front page

Community College to reduce the dues for part-time faculty and staff. While all part-time members pay reduced dues, some pay a much higher percentage of their earnings than full-time members. Tynan and her supporters argued that it is an issue of fairness, but the dues structure is not determined by the MCCC alone. NEA and MTA have a system for setting their portions of the dues collected by the MCCC.

On the advice of parliamentarian Patti LeGault, President LeBlanc ruled Tynan's proposal out of order because it did not



MTA President Paul Toner discussed issues facing MTA members, and especially regarding community colleges, at the MCCC Delegate Assembly.

(Photo by Don Williams)

address the impact on the overall budget that was being passed at the Assembly. Proponents were disappointed, but they were encouraged to work with the Parliamentarian and the Treasurer to fully address all the implications and to bring the motion back before the body next year.

Later in the meeting Susan Dole, Bunker Hill chapter president, and Cathy Boudreau, Massasoit chapter grievance officer, spoke at the same time to highlight some significant management actions that members should be aware of. One is the proposed changes to the student grievance policy that would allow management to change student grades. Another is the state's plan to require every employee to report their attendance on a weekly basis.

But the most significant issue is that at some colleges, including Bunker Hill, Springfield Tech, and Mt. Wachusett, MCCC members who are probationary employees (in their first four years) have been told in January (instead of the contractual March 15) that they will not be renewed, and then they are escorted off campus by security. [See related Grievance article.] They urged members to put their college presidents on notice that this is not acceptable.

In his closing statements President LeBlanc urged full-time members who serve on search committees to give every consideration to part-time members who apply for positions. ■

Utterly Transformed: Patrick Wins The Battle To Control Community Colleges

The blood feud is nearly over. The Governor and his corporate, media and political friends have won. It's hard to predict exactly how the Governor's outside section will play out when the budget is signed into law in early summer, but it's certain the community college system will be more centralized and more focused on workforce development. For better or worse, the Governor's plan will transform our colleges.



Joe LeBlanc,
MCCC President

Legislators rejected our position on the Governor's outside section: "The MCCC believes the only way for community colleges to promote student success and responsiveness to community and workforce needs is with an open, inclusive and transparent process... the MCCC opposes Outside Section 30 of the Governor's budget." Our board of directors recommended that the plan be sent to a study committee

where this plan could be fully vetted.

From the start, the process hasn't been open and it hasn't been inclusive. If we were asked for input, we would have demanded an adequate foundation budget before moving to a performance-based funding system. We support a more equitable funding system, but adequate funding must come first. Inadequate funding forces our colleges to rely on adjunct faculty – more than 5,000 in the last academic year. Inadequate funding shortchanges our students.

The House and Senate rejected amendments to protect our community college's multi-faceted missions in state statute. Our position demanded continued support for the many ways we serve the Commonwealth.

Rejection of Senate amendment #371 leaves one wondering about promises to support our traditional transfer role. This language would have reassured our front-line faculty and professional staff: "The purpose of the state's community colleges shall be to provide open access to high quality, affordable academic programs and courses, and grant associate degrees and certificates in accordance with the provisions of this chapter. The community colleges shall provide academic preparation for transfer to four-year education institu-

tions, career entry into high demand occupational fields, developmental coursework, lifelong learning opportunities, job training, retraining, certificate and skills improvement."

But this is election season. Our union's position - based on facts and our students' and members' needs – has been mostly ignored. We are still waiting for answers, however. Will the new community college system address these issues?

- Assure a guaranteed funding stream for any expansion of workforce development programs.
- Address the proliferation of poorly paid and non-benefitted part-time faculty and the negative impact this trend has on services for students.
- Examine the problem of an increasing number of students needing remedial courses. Include the broader education community in this discussion.

In *The Price of Civilization*, Jeffrey D. Sacks portrays America as a cynical and divided nation increasingly ruled by the interests of corporations and the wealthy. He argues for a new path to prosperity, one that encourages a mindful analysis of our problems and working together to make our nation the best it can be.

So, let us take responsible, collective

action in the months ahead to strengthen education, an issue Sacks rates as critically important: "The first decisive issue will be education. The path to national prosperity, life satisfaction, and sustainability in the twenty-first century will depend heavily on education, and especially on a large proportion of today's young Americans being able to complete higher education, albeit a higher education that has fashioned to fit the needs of our times."

The Governor's heavy-handed approach to utterly change our system has been unfortunate, but we will demand that our voices be heard as this conversation continues. ■

Wanted:

DCE Bargaining Team Members

The MCCC is in the process of forming a team to negotiate a successor DCE Collective Bargaining Agreement. The team negotiates with the employer over wages, hours, and conditions of employment.

The team is made up of 5 DCE members plus the MCCC President and Vice President *ex officio*.

Interested members would benefit from participating in the Collective Bargaining training that is conducted at the MTA Summer Conference at Williamstown in August.

Applications will be due September 15, 2012.

For information or to submit a letter of interest contact:

MCCC President Joe LeBlanc
President @mccc-union.org ■

Members in The News

Howard Tinberg of Bunker Hill Community College has been elected Chair of the Conference of College Composition and Communication (CCCC). It is the world's largest professional organization for researching and teaching composition, from writing to new media. ■

The Value of Membership

Adjunct faculty and part-time staff will be renewing their MCCC memberships as the new academic year begins. You have two membership options: agency fee or Union member. Everyone working in a faculty or professional staff position in a Massachusetts community college is a member of the MCCC Unit. Because the union works to negotiate and maintain the collective bargaining agreements, everyone is required to pay the agency fee. We hope you will (Please) consider the option of full MCCC union membership. Belonging has value.

There are pragmatic values to union membership

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

But there's a value in just belonging

Nearly 100% 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 currently a union member, we hope you'll continue with us for the next year.
- If you're not currently a union member, we hope you'll join with over 5,000 of us in a vibrant organization that's working hard on your behalf.

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:

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Or email:

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CORRECTION

In the last issue it was reported that all amendments to the House of Representatives budget regarding community colleges had failed. The one filed by Rep. Marty Walsh did in fact pass.

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.



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

President Joe LeBlanc presented Donnie McGee with the first Diana "Donnie" McGee Award for political action.
(Photo by Don Williams)



Harry Bowen (left) of North Shore Community College was presented with the John Palmer Award for his efforts on behalf of adjunct members. Pictured with Bowen are President Joe LeBlanc and Linda Grochowalski, last year's Palmer recipient, who nominated Bowen for the award.
(Photo by Don Williams)

Gail Guarino (right) gets a laugh from the comments of Claudine Barnes who nominated her for the Raymond Lemieux Award for distinguished service to the Union.
(Photo by Don Williams)

