

MCCC News



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Conference Highlights Union Strengths

On Oct. 23 MCCC held a very successful Fall Conference with over 90 members attending a variety of breakout sessions on topics of vital interest to members. Guests included significant members of the General Court along with MTA Vice President Tim Sullivan.

Sullivan brought greetings from the MTA and lead the members in a moment of silence to honor murdered Danvers teacher Colleen Ritzer whose body had been found that morning. He went on to praise the MCCC as one of MTA's most active and effective locals. He also singled out Vice President Donnie McGee for making the MCCC the most effective local in political action and cited the ORP legislation as a particular example of the union's effectiveness.

The keynote speaker was Rep. Paul Mark from Hancock in western Mass. In

his speech titled, "The Relevance of Unions Today," he proudly announced that he was, and continues to be, a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). For many years he was a wire splicer for Verizon. And the benefits provided by his union contract gave him the ability to pursue higher education starting at Springfield Technical Community College, then to Southern New Hampshire University, to UMass Amherst for a Masters Degree and on to Suffolk University Law School for a law degree.

Initially encouraged by the Boston Teachers Union to run for a legislative seat, he said, "It is very important for more union members to run for office." Currently, there only four legislators who are union members. With unions under attack across the nation, he said, all union members need to be engaged in three key activities: organizing, educating, and engaging in political action.

Mark also praised the other legislators in attendance for their dedicated work on behalf of public colleges and their faculty and professional staff members.

Breakout sessions covered the gamut of member interests. Grievance coordinators Dennis Fitzgerald and Joe Rizzo conducted sessions on contract enforcement for the Day and DCE Units respec-

tively. Fitzgerald had a major focus on preserving academic freedom, which will be increasingly threatened by the way community colleges are being restructured. He warned members that the trend of departments choosing to use common objectives, outcomes, and materials is a serious threat to academic freedom. Rizzo also noted that adjunct faculty do not even have input into the selection of these common materials.

Chapter presidents Aaron Levin (HCC), Joe Nardoni (MxCC) and Steve Russell (NECC) were joined by MTA consultant Maura Sweeney in a session on strengthening chapter leadership. Margaret Wong led a session on MTA's Full Capacity Locals project with a particular focus on organizing adjunct faculty, and getting them more engaged in improving their working conditions.

Professional Staff Committee members, led by Karen Carreras-Hubbard, held an open discussion on how communications can be improved between members across all 15 campuses. She shared some important information as examples of what members would want to have communicated to them.

Retirement is always a hot topic at the conference. This year found an added twist, Ed McCourt who is an MCCC

Continued on page 2

Nominations Open November 1

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**Nominations close on
Jan. 30, 2014.
Election is online in March.**



Rep. Paul Mark (Hancock) gave the keynote speech at the MCCC Fall Conference. He stressed the importance of organized labor and detailed his own experience as a card-carrying member of the IBEW. (Photo by Don Williams)

Legislators Honored at MCCC Fall Conference



The MCCC recognized three legislators at the Fall Conference for their strong support of community colleges by presenting them with crystal bowls. From left Sen. Michael Moore (Millbury) and Rep. Tom Sannicandro (Ashland), chairs of the Joint Committee on Higher Education, Sen. Michael Rodrigues (Westport), MCCC Vice President Donnie McGee and President Joe LeBlanc. (Photo by Don Williams)

The MCCC recognized three state legislators for their support of higher education at the Fall Conference on Oct 23. They were presented with crystal bowls with the MCCC logo, their name, and the inscription: MCCC Legislative Award – 2013, Friend of the Community Colleges.

Vice President Donnie McGee first presented the awards to co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Higher Education Chairman Sen. Michael Moore and Chairman Rep. Tom Sannicandro for their leadership and advocacy on behalf of students, educators, and our community colleges.

After years of tight budgets and major changes in higher ed McGee first noted the efforts of the recipients in fighting for a 10 percent increase over last year's budget—no small feat when higher education is considered "discretionary funding" and is often the target of cuts when the state is short of money.

Continued on page 3

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Robber Barons Attack Public Worker Pensions



Joe LeBlanc,
MCCC President

As we recover from Wall Street's assault on the economy in 2008, keep your hands on your wallets. The moneyed class has begun a feeding frenzy on public workers' retirement funds.

Grandma's public pension has been slashed in Detroit. Rhode Island State Treasurer Gina Raimondo has taken from working class retirees and given to the venture capitalist class in the Ocean State's Retirement Security Act of 2011.

So writes Matt Taibbi in the Sept. 26 issue of *Rolling Stone*. In Rhode Island, state pension funds are being sent to hedge fund "managers" who sometimes produce stupendous returns on investments, but more often trail the returns produced by less expensive index funds. The Robber Barons always extract their secret fees, however.

Taibbi explains. "A hedge fund will refuse to take a state's business unless it provides legal guarantees that information about its investments won't be dis-

closed to the public." Pay out billions and keep the dirty details secret.

So far the public is buying it. Worker benefits are slashed and hedge fund managers reap the proceeds. In Rhode Island, hedge fund managers are collecting \$2.1 billion in fees alone, while retirees will lose \$2.3 billion in COLA adjustments over the next 20 years.

The blame the retiree/public worker mentality is spreading. "In state after state politicians are following the Rhode Island playbook, using scare tactics and lavishly-funded PR campaigns to cast teachers, firefighters and cops—not bankers—as the budget-devouring boogymen responsible for the mounting fiscal problems of America's states and cities," Taibbi writes.

By indirectly paying fees to venture capitalists, union workers end up underwriting Manhattan Institute and other anti-worker agendas that advocate for endless shakedowns of public workers and corporate tax breaks.

The American Federation of Teachers is shining the light on this problem in its report titled *Ranking Asset Managers*. The report exposes "asset managers [who] have directly backed initiatives that harm the retirement security of plan participants..." That's our retirement security under assault with propaganda campaigns funded with our own money.

AFT's Watch List includes asset managers connected to these organizations:

- StudentsFirst – Its policy on pensions "explicitly notes that states should move away from defined benefit plans."

- Show-Me Institute – Created by billionaire Rex Sinquefeld, this right-wing organization "routinely advocates for pension privatization."

- Manhattan Institute – "A leading advocate of forcing teachers and other public employees into the same defined contribution 401(K) plans that failed to provide financial security for millions of Americans."

It's working out splendidly for the Robber Barons. Right wing Think Tanks attack defined benefit pension plans as a luxury the public can no longer afford to fund. Meanwhile, states borrow from pension funds to finance other needs in tough times.

Public workers contribute most of the funds necessary to fund state pensions. The balance should be made up in the state budget in what is called an Annual Re-

quired Contribution (ARC). Massachusetts, an affluent state that does not contribute to Social Security for its public workers, had a funded ratio of 73.8 percent in 2012. (Note: pensions should be funded at 100 percent.) This ratio peaked at 94 percent in 2000. If market trends continue in 2013, the ratio will likely climb this year.

Taibbi warns future retirees, however. "We have an unfunded-pension-liability problem because we've been ripping off retirees for decades" – but the solution being offered is to rip them off even more."

While this is presently a more burning issue for workers in some cities, towns and authorities, our union is monitoring the situation locally. We expect nothing less than excellence from Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission and demand that PERAC be a good steward of our retirement system. Your response to calls to action will be critically important as we work to insure the state is accountable to its public workers. ■

Letter

REFORMING MCCC ELECTION TIMETABLE

One very important point Betsy Smith made while considering a run for President of our union is that our union's current campaign calendar which prohibits obtaining and filing of signatures until November, and denies potential candidates access to union email and mailing lists until certification occurs, makes it very difficult, if not impossible, for any candidate to successfully challenge an incumbent in our union.

Further compounding the problem for potential candidates is the fact that busy local chapters are reluctant to give those candidates time to speak at their meetings, until they are certified as official. Betsy's recommendation that potential candidates be allowed to obtain signatures and be certified as candidates beginning in September is an excellent one that should be adopted by our union.

Harry Bowen, North Shore Community College

Journal Reviewers Wanted

NEA's peer-reviewed journal of higher education, *Thought & Action*, an 180,000-circulation journal that offers a combination of practical and theoretical information about union-led higher education, is seeking additional members for its editorial board.

Editorial board members review submissions to the journal, and also help distribute the calls for papers among their networks of colleagues and friends. Typically each reviewer receives three to five manuscripts a year from the journal's editor, and is asked to make a judgment as to whether each one should be published, revised

and resubmitted, or rejected. Those judgments should be returned to the editor within four to six weeks of receipt of the manuscript. Authors do very much appreciate a thoughtful, critical review of their work. (Sample reviews are available if this work is new to you.)

To see the 2012 issue of the journal, go here: www.nea.org/thoughtandaction.

To see the new call for papers, go here: www.nea.org/home/56705.htm

Editorial board members must be members of NEA.

For any questions, please email the editor, Mary Ellen Flannery, at mflannery@nea.org. ■

Fall Conference Highlights . . .

Continued from front page

member from Mass Bay and a retirement advisor for MTA, had two special guests. He was joined by Patricia Conley from the State Retirement Board, who herself had retired from state service and then returned to work for the retirement board, along with George Medelinskas who had recently retired from Northern Essex. They were able to relate some of the issues that came up in their personal experience.

Conley was also able to give concrete information about state retirement policies. She urged anyone contemplating retirement in the near future to go to the Boston office at One Winter St. 8th floor or the Springfield office at 436 Dwight St. #109A. Members can just walk in for retirement counseling between 10:00 AM and 3:00 PM. Members can also call 800-392-6014 and get some answers to their questions such as when they reach full retirement benefits.

Maryann Robinson from MTA ben-

efits conducted a session on the various benefits available to MTA members. She handed out member benefits brochures that usually come with annual membership materials. She was joined by a representative from Berkshire Bank, who discussed their discount mortgage program that can save members thousands in interest and in legal closing costs. There was also a representative from Met Life promoting their Dental Plans that are available to adjunct faculty. Met Life also has programs for full-time members that can add benefits, such as orthodontic coverage.

The conference closed with a wrap-up from President Joe LeBlanc, and a raffle for five \$100 door prizes for those who stayed until the end. LeBlanc expressed his gratitude to the conference committee members Susan McPherson, Chandra Panse, Suzanne VanWert, Randi Zanca, and especially Chairperson Liz Recko-Morrison for arranging such a successful event. ■



One of the perennially popular sessions at the MCCC Fall Conference is on retirement. Ed McCourt (in jacket and tie at center) an MTA retirement advisor was joined by recent retiree George Medelinskas from Northern Essex Community College (at the left of McCourt) who related some of his personal experience and by Patricia Conley from the State Retirement Board who was able to answer many of the attendees' specific questions. (Photo by Don Williams)

MCCC's Smith Receives McGee Award

Dr. William Brooks Smith was presented with the MCCC's McGee Strategic Action Award at the Fall Conference. Typically the award is presented at the annual MCCC Delegate Assembly with other awards recognizing the work of members, but Smith was unavailable at that time.

Smith, who is retired from full-time teaching at Cape Cod Community College, has been part of the MCCC's Strategic Action team since 1998, beginning with then President Phil Mahler.

Smith has a natural affinity for working in the political arena, and he has used that skill to build relationships with people in the legislature. He knows how to connect with everyone – whether they are administrative aides, legislative staff, or the legislators themselves.

In nominating him for the award, MCCC Vice President Donnie McGee said the following: "Through multiple and various interactions with those at the State

House, Brooks builds relationships that are respectful and mutually informative. These relationships enable MCCC leaders and legislators to work together to support political resolutions that are in the best interest of the MCCC."

Smith has said, "The issues that I have focused on include, first and foremost continuing to establish a positive presence of the MCCC with legislators; second and closely tied, lobbying for legislation critical to the success of MCCC."

"We need to be both vigilant and politically active to insure that we have a voice in both preserving what we have fought so hard for and in obtaining what is necessary for our members."

Smith continues to work tirelessly to make sure that the interests of MCCC members are well represented in the legislature, by attending events in Boston and in districts and spending significant time in and around the statehouse. ■



Brooks Smith (center) was presented with the MCCC's Donnie McGee Strategic Action Award at the Fall Conference. Beside him are MCCC President Joe LeBlanc and Vice President Donnie McGee herself. (Photo by Don Williams)

WANTED

Salary Structure Committee Members

The MCCC is seeking members for an Ad Hoc committee to investigate and recommend changes in the salary structure of full-time day members.

The current 2013–2015 contract eliminated much of the Classification Study salary structure. While that system is still used for initial placement of newly hired members, most of the provisions for existing members are gone. For the duration of this contract there is no more salary increases for promotions, post-tenure review, and new certifications.

The committee will be working in advance of negotiations for the next contract and will be providing information to the Board of Directors to recommend to the next bargaining team.

Interested members should contact President Joe LeBlanc for more information at President@mccc-union.org. ■

Legislators Honored . . .

Continued from front page

McGee said, "This money will allow campuses to freeze tuition to minimize student debt and can be used to maintain programs that will promote student success. Also exciting: more full-time faculty and professional staff are being hired on some of our campuses."

She also praised them for their participation in the legislature's Public Higher Education Summit Group, which meets monthly in the State House. They have also worked with this group and with the unions and students to orchestrate several very successful Higher Ed Lobby Days which have highlighted the importance of funding public higher education in the Commonwealth.

Sen. Michael Rodriques was recognized for his outstanding work in moving the bill that would allow participants in the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) to transfer into the State Employee Retirement System.

McGee noted that approximately 3000 higher ed. employees, 500 in the community colleges alone, are in the ORP. And while many are happy with the plan, many indicated that they were not fully informed about the program, and that they were rushed into a decision.

For more than 4 years, and with the help of many legislators, the MCCC had tried to get a bill passed to allow members who had opted for the ORP to transfer their coverage to the State Employees' Retirement System (SERS).

McGee explained that Sen. Rodriques had been an early and devoted supporter of ORP reform, and he saw an opportunity for action. Two years ago, pension reform legislation was moving through the General Court, a

bill with a lot of support on both sides of the aisles. Sen. Rodriques was able to get the ORP language attached. McGee noted that members will soon be seeing the fruits of that victory.

Each of the legislators honored has personal connections to Massachusetts public colleges. Sen. Moore is a graduate of Quinsigamond Community College, Sen. Rodriques is a U Mass Dartmouth graduate and his wife is a Bristol Community College graduate. Rep. Sannicandro's son attended Mass Bay Community College. ■

Write Us

MCCC News Welcomes Contributions.

Letters to the Editor

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

Guest Columns

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

Mail to:

Donald Williams
North Shore Community College
1 Ferncroft Rd., Danvers, MA 01923

Or email:

Communications@mccc-union.org



Winners of the five \$100 raffle prizes at the Fall Conference were (from left) Liz Recko-Morrison, BkCC; Susan McPhearson, QCC; Ann Grandmaisson, NECC; Ken Takvorkian, MWCC; Laura Horgan, MxCC; and they were joined by MCCC President Joe LeBlanc. (Photo by Don Williams)

Know Your Day Contract

November 2013

- Nov. 21** Unit Personnel Practices Committees elected by chapters p. 38 (39).
- Nov. 24-25** Thanksgiving Holiday.
- Nov. 25** Professional Staff must use one of the three off campus days p. 46 (48).

December 2013

- Dec. 1** Applications due for Sabbatical Leave beginning July 1 for professional staff or Fall semester for faculty. p. 24 (25)
- Dec. 22** Last day fall semester can end p. 44 (45)
- Dec. Last Day of classes** Faculty submit college service and student advisement form (p.49)51
- Dec. 25** Christmas p. 23 (23)
- Dec. 30** Professional staff submit documentation of performance of duties and responsibilities including, but not limited to a log student advisement, if appropriate, and college service activities p. 51 (53)



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Jan. 30, 2014.
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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. First cited page numbers are from the 2009-2013 Agreement, numbers in parentheses are from the new 2012-2015 Agreement.

Massachusetts Community College Council Nomination Form - 2014

A candidate must file this form (or a copy) with the MCCC Elections Committee to arrive by Thursday, January 30, 2014, 4 p.m. **Nomination papers that arrive late will not be accepted.**

Check all that apply.

MCCC OFFICER *

- President
- Vice President
- Treasurer
- Secretary

MCCC DELEGATE

- MTA Annual Meeting Delegate
Boston, May 9 - 10, 2014
- NEA Representative Assembly Delegate **
Denver, Colorado, July 1 - July 6, 2014

MCCC AT-LARGE DIRECTOR***

- Part-time/Adjunct Director (2 positions)

*Nomination requires signatures of at least 50 MCCC members. **Candidates for NEA/RA may submit biographical statements. ***Nomination requires signatures of at least 10 MCCC members.

Name _____

Full Home Address _____ Tel # _____

College _____ Tel # _____

MCCC Membership: Full Time Day Part Time Day DCE

For ALL Candidates: Gender Female Male
 Black Caucasian Asian Pacific Islander
 Hispanic-Chicano Native American

On Web http://mccc-union.org/Nominations_2014 Download signature forms – http://mccc-union.org	OR	By Mail Elections Chairperson MCCC 27 Mechanic Street, Suite 104 Worcester, MA 01608-2402
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Signature _____ Date _____
(Signature may be typed)

Deadline: MUST BE RECEIVED by Thursday, January 30, 2014, 4 p.m.

**Bio or Statement for NEA-RA Candidates only (Optional) - 50 word limit (1 word per box)

Instructions

1. Type or print clearly using both upper and lower case letters as you expect the final statement to appear.
2. Insert no more that one word per box except when combining letters (ex. MCCC) or hyphenated words.
3. Insert punctuation in the same box immediately after the word you want it to follow.



MCCC News

<http://mccc-union.org>

Editor:

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Donnie McGee

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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