

MCCC News



The Official Publication of the *Massachusetts Community College Council* / Volume 14, Issue 2 / October 2012

Roxbury CC Under the Gun

Roxbury Community College has been the focus of a series of critical articles in the *Boston Globe*. Some of the issues were aired last spring, particularly related to underreporting of federally mandated reporting of on-campus crime statistics. These, among other issues, led to the resignation of RCC president Terence Gomes in June.

The most recent articles followed up on the investigation of failures in Clery Act crime reporting, including alleged sexual assault by a former administrator and professor. These failures may go back over a decade. Instances of retaliation against whistleblowers who reported the violations have also surfaced.

But the articles have gone further in exposing mismanagement and a lack of accountability in other areas. Reporter Mary Carmichael pointed out irregulari-

ties in federal financial aid distribution. An advising software system that was installed misclassified courses that were eligible for financial aid and had serious errors that were known for years but were never addressed.

Facilities suffered as well. The cafeteria had been converted for temporary use during the federal census and was never reopened as a cafeteria. The college could not find the money to outfit all classrooms with white boards, so some blackboards were painted white as a solution.

Yet the college was able to give raises to the five highest paid administrators, which the *Globe* said averaged approximately 32 percent since 2005. Gomes himself received a 40 percent pay increase between 2005 and 2012.

There have been a variety of other questionable practices that have come to light, and Wayne Budd, a well-respected

former federal prosecutor has been asked to investigate these.

RCC has had the lowest graduation rates in the system. Enrollments have suffered, and many students who live in RCC's area say they prefer to attend Bunker Hill Community College. In fact some people have proposed merging RCC with Bunker Hill, but the college has a lot of support in the community, and a merger would be unlikely.

Gov. Patrick has been filling vacancies on the board of trustees. The search for a new president will begin later this academic year, with the expectation that a person will be in place by the end of next summer.

This will be the first community college president hired under the new provisions signed into law last July. The Board of Higher Education will have a much greater role in selecting presidents. ■

New MTA Director of Higher Ed

After a year-long search, the MTA appointed a new director for its higher education division early in August. His name is Joey Hansen, and he brings a fresh perspective to the position.

Hansen is a native of Vancouver, British Columbia, and much of his experience is with public unions in Canada.



Newly appointed MTA Director of Higher Education, Joey Hansen, has been attending MCCC Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings to get a feel for the union's needs.

(Photo by Don Williams)

He has been attending meetings of the various MTA higher ed. locals to become acquainted with their different situations and needs, but he has been especially focused on the MCCC, MTA's largest local.

At his first meeting with the MCCC Board of Directors, Hansen introduced himself and his background. His principal experience was as President of the Canadian Unit Public Employees (CUPE) local union. This union was a combination of government employees roughly like a combination of AFSCME, SEIU, and NEA educational support specialists, but not teachers or faculty.

He also explained that university students have a union in Canada, and that he did extensive work with their union at one point in his career. His greatest strength is in organizing, and he sees that working with students in Massachusetts has potential because as the state has cut appropriations to colleges, the burden of funding falls on the students. As this continues, it leads to serious reductions in wages and benefits for faculty and staff.

An example of his organizing was at the University of British Columbia where students faced a tuition increase he helped develop a campaign with the theme, "All we want is nothing." His advice in orga-

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MCCC Fall Conference October 24, 2012

Courtyard by Marriott
75 Felton St.
Marlborough, Massachusetts
Doors open at 3:30—Session 1 workshops begin at 4:30

Directions

From I-495 (North or South) take Exit 24B (Route 20 West/Northborough). Take first right onto Felton St. (before Shell gas station). Hotel is on right.

Workshops

- 1. Mandated Reporting: A Guide to Your Obligation(s) in the Classroom**, facilitated by Bob Whalen, MTA
- 2. Who is this Weingarten? Essential elements of the day contract**, facilitated by Dennis Fitzgerald.
- 3. Social media: Friendship and Citizenship in the Digital World**, Laurie Houle, MTA Legal
- 4. Professional Staff issues: It's time to organize**, facilitated by Karen Carreras-Hubbard
- 5. Retirement:** Ask experts Ed McCourt and a rep. from the State Employees Retirement System
- 6. Examining our dues structure:** Candace Shivers, chair, MCCC Dues Structure Ad Hoc Committee
- 7. It pays to be a member:** Joey Hansen, MTA Higher Ed. Director
- 8. DCE Bargaining Team listening session:** facilitated by Joe LeBlanc. Meet our new DCE Bargaining Team and let them know your priorities for our next contract.

Other program highlights:

MCCC Legislative Awards: Sen. Marc Pacheco and Rep. Ellen Story will be honored as "friends of the MCCC"

Campaign update by Angelique Pirozzi, MTA Political Action Team Coordinator

Raffle with cash prizes, good food, chocolate cake, conversations with union colleagues and MORE.

Please register in advance at the website: mccc-union.org

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What Kind of America Do You Want?

This fall, more Americans are eligible to vote than ever before. But many will not



Donnie McGee,
SAC Chair and
MCCC Vice President

exercise that right. They don't have the time. Their votes don't matter. These elections won't affect them. Or so they say. Such apathy, cynicism, or disengagement from the political process seriously impairs the effectiveness of democracy – and cedes power recklessly. What happens at the ballot box – and what doesn't – affects us all.

In a recent Fall River primary 20 percent of eligible voters elected a new State House representative with a margin of only 24 votes. What kind of voter mandate is that, and from whom? Though democracy is often messy and fraught with error, if we sit on the political sidelines this fall, we, too, bear some responsibility for the mandate at the polls – or lack thereof. More importantly, we cannot afford to gamble on the future of this country.

Note what's at stake this year.

We have a President who believes in a government that will serve all the people, not just the wealthiest two or three percent. He wants, as does Senate candidate, Elizabeth Warren, a more equitable tax system, one that will support needed investment in infrastructure, public education, safe communities, and health care for all. This platform means jobs, equal

opportunity, and safety nets for seniors and those most vulnerable.

Obama and Warren also understand that investing in public education strengthens our communities. Obama has kept interest rates low on college loans, increased Pell Grants, and protected students against the onslaught of for-profit colleges which too often exhaust financial aid awards and sell students a ticket to nowhere. Obama has promised to invest billions of dollars in community colleges.

These colleges are the last bastion of hope for a better future for many students across this Commonwealth, especially those in our Gateway Cities. Students develop the confidence and competence to get to where they want and need to be. These colleges support workforce development and create an educated citizenry. And they provide working and middle class students, our students, a real shot at the American dream. Barack Obama and Elizabeth Warren get this.

A very different future is being offered by Mitt Romney, Paul Ryan and Scott Brown. They have no real interest in pathways to prosperity for all. This trio would diminish funding for public education, privatize more schools and colleges, abandon a fair and comprehensive health care system, and support special subsidies to Big Oil. They would deny tax cuts to the middle class unless the wealthiest two percent could retain the tax advantage they've been privy to for more than a decade.

Two trillion dollars would be cut from Medicare and the program converted to a privatized voucher system. Social Security would be under attack. Success would be measured by the number of public programs eliminated and the dollars saved.

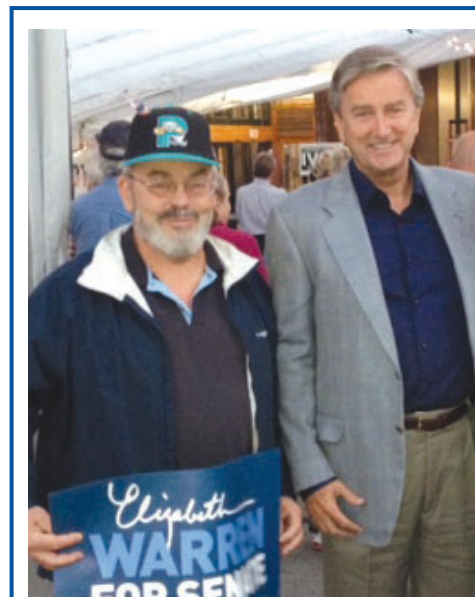
And the figures in the Romney/Ryan/Brown budgets simply don't add up. Our country would fall right off that looming fiscal cliff. Each of these candidates believes in that trickle-down economics fiction. Never mind that the unprecedented

profits from huge corporations have yet to trickle down and give a boost to this nation's economy or create the jobs so promised. Never mind that a disproportionate burden would be placed on those most vulnerable in terms of taxes paid, fees increased, and services eradicated. There is no credible economic solution with these budget plans, nor any fairness here.

Elections are all about deciding who gets what and who will pay for it. The decision-making happens at the polls. The future really is in our hands. And the choices are clear.

So what kind of America do you want? One that cares about the collective well-being of all its people? Or one that focuses on tax breaks for mega-corporations and the billionaires behind them? Do you want a government that stands for equity on Main Street or recklessness on Wall Street?

The choice is yours. Your vote matters. America's future depends on it. Make your voice heard on November 6th.



Peter Flynn, MCCC political activist from Northern Essex Community College (left) met with Congressman John Tierney at a Democratic rally in Newburyport. Tierney, a Salem State University graduate, has been a strong supporter of higher education. (Photo by Don Williams)



Members of the MCCC Board of Directors did a visibility action in Worcester supporting President Obama and Elizabeth Warren (Photo by Don Williams)

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<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.

MTA Higher Ed Director . . .

Continued from front page

nizing is, "Start small—start easy, and get a few successes. People won't join if they think they're not going to be successful."

Hansen came to the U.S. to go to law school in Florida and has decided to pursue a career in this country. He is still learning about the academic and political landscape in Massachusetts, but he brings a lot of energy to the position has been getting around to all of the various MTA locals. This election season has also been a total immersion experience in Massachusetts politics. ■

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.

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
One Ferncroft Road
Danvers, MA 01923

Or email:

Communications@ mccc-union.org

The Vision Project: Time to Lead, Time to Address Injustices

It's hard to argue with the essence of the Vision Project, the Board of Higher



Joe LeBlanc,
MCCC President

Education's plan to address "the need for excellence in public higher education." Indeed, the Commonwealth must educate and produce "...the best-educated citizenry and workforce in the nation." We all know that most

jobs require an associate's degree at a minimum and the Commonwealth is expecting us to deliver record numbers of graduates by 2020.

Record numbers of Massachusetts high school graduates are enrolling at our public colleges. In an era of stagnant state support – we'll get to that sore point later – 52 percent of our students now study at a public college or university.

Commissioner Richard Freeland and his underfunded and understaffed Department of Higher Education have produced the Vision Project, highlighting seven essential outcomes for success. Again, it's hard to argue against any of them:

College participation: We must raise "the percentage of high school graduates going to college" while insuring they are ready to do college work. Massachusetts is already a national leader here. We lead the nation in proficiency in math and reading exams, but we haven't fully addressed the achievement gap for our Latino and African-American students.

College completion: We must increase the completion rate for degree and certificate programs. Every sector trails in this benchmark of six-year graduation and student success rates. Again, our African-American and Latino students are trailing their peers in nine states, including Connecticut, Florida, Ohio and Washington.

Student learning: We must boost student learning through "better assessment and more extensive use of assessment results." Our allied health national licen-

sure exams pass rates are excellent, but we trail leading states by 7 percent.

Workforce alignment: We must better align our degree and certificate programs with present and future employer needs. Our colleges and universities have met state targets for the last two years, but 2020 goals will be tough to meet. DHE materials do not show private college contributions to better workforce alignment. We may also take some comfort in the fact that most states are doing a poor job in aligning their college programs.

Preparing citizens: This late but essential addition proposes that we provide our "students with the knowledge and skills to be active and informed citizens." This outcome can be succinctly summarized and is best achieved by insisting that all our students begin with a foundation in the liberal arts.

Closing achievement gaps: All students must learn. All students must be provided an opportunity to persist, achieve, thrive and enjoy their lives. The present achievement gaps are unacceptable and an embarrassment to this Commonwealth.

Research: Our University system drives this economic development outcome, and it all (perhaps) produces a happier, healthier, better off Commonwealth.

There's much to like here. The plan is bold. It's ambitious. But here's the problem. New money is arriving in performance-based dribs and drabs when we need a deluge. Great things are expected of us in a system that provides an inadequate foundation of state support: \$5,600 per student versus \$8,300 per student in leading states.

The Commonwealth aspires to become a national leader. It's hard to argue against this big and bold vision, but something needs to change in a community college system where adjunct faculty are teaching two-thirds of courses, including most gateway courses essential to student success. These adjuncts work for an inadequate salary—our union is trying its best to negotiate for more money in their paychecks – and NO benefits from the Commonwealth.

Even the grandest vision of excellence will fail unless such injustices are addressed. ■

Guest Column: The Politics of Trustee Appointments

In February 2011 Governor Patrick sent a proposal to the legislature that would centralize community college governance, and diminish local autonomy, by taking away the authority of trustees to choose college presidents—our most important responsibility—and elect our own board chairs. As with the November 2011 Boston Foundation report—titled, without apparent irony, "The Case for Community Colleges"—the ostensible purpose of the proposal was to improve workforce development in the state. Like the Boston Foundation report, the proposal was put forth without any consultation with either trustees or faculty. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of trustees, faculty, student leaders, and college presidents across the Commonwealth, as well as many business leaders statewide, opposed it.



John Nelson was a faculty member at North Shore Community College for 35 years before retiring. He later served for seven years on the North Shore Board of Trustees.

As chair of the Board of Trustees at North Shore Community College, acting on behalf of our entire board, I wrote and disseminated a response to the Governor's proposal. While committing ourselves to improving workforce development, our board offered three main criticisms of the proposal: (1) Centralizing power within one component of state government—community colleges—was an illogical, roundabout way to tackle the broad, complex problem of workforce development. (2) Excessive focus on specialized technical training might distort or undermine our overall mission. (3) Loss of local authority would make governance of our colleges more remote, less knowledgeable, and less responsive to the real stakeholders: students, faculty, and regional communities and businesses.

At the time the statewide trustee association, the MCCTA, had no elected president, and I was asked to serve as ad hoc chair of association meetings held to formulate a response to the Governor's proposal. In this role I helped to compose and signed a letter to the Governor that opposed centralization, and I engaged in a WBZ radio debate with Secretary of Education Paul Reville. Trustees and faculty also joined together to point out that liberal arts and other transfer programs are not, as the Boston Foundation would have

it, in competition with workforce development but rather a fundamental part of the mission to educate a skilled workforce. As a result of the legislative process, trustees retained the authority to choose presidents but lost the ability to choose our board chairs.

In April 2012, with legislation still pending, the Board at North Shore unanimously elected me to a third term as chair, and the MCCTA elected me to be the only community college trustee on the Board of Higher Education. As board chair, I had led initiatives to make governance at our college more accountable—one of Governor Patrick's main goals—and, with other trustees, I was already working toward his goal of more cohesive workforce development. I hoped I would be able to continue as board chair.

On August 8, 2012 I learned that I would not be re-appointed to our board at all, despite the fact that my appointment was strongly endorsed by the administration at North Shore and recommended by the state's Public Education Nominating Council. Our board had four trustees, including me, nominated for re-appointment and one trustee seat long vacant through a resignation, yet I was replaced over a month before any other appointments were made. In a letter I sent to Governor Patrick on August 30, I made

the obvious inference: that "the decision to replace me was a pointed, calculated response to my vocal and prominent opposition" to his centralization proposal. In the last paragraph I added: "The decision to replace me demonstrates a disregard for the judgment of both the Board at North Shore that elected me chair and the trustees statewide who elected me to represent them on the BHE. This decision sends a troubling signal to other trustees throughout public higher education in the Commonwealth: that trustees who disagree publicly with gubernatorial proposals may soon find them dismissed, no matter how reasoned, well-intentioned, or respectful that disagreement might be. In a letter from your office that thanked me for my service, I was encouraged to remain 'civically engaged.' This is hardly the way to promote volunteer civic engagement."

The Governor appoints community college trustees, but trustees don't serve the Governor. Their duty is to serve the students, citizens, and communities of their regions. If subservience to a governor—any governor—becomes the primary qualification for those volunteers willing to become or remain trustees of our colleges, it will be hard to have much faith in the governance of public higher education in Massachusetts. ■



MTA Attorney Matt Jones explained legal opinions about mid-term bargaining to the MCCC Executive Committee at its September meeting. He previously reported on the status of the appeal of the lawsuit on adjunct faculty health insurance.

(Photo by Don Williams)

Do You Belong?

Adjunct faculty and part-time staff will be renewing their MCCC memberships as the new academic year begins. You have two membership options: Non-member 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 consider the option of full MCCC union membership. Belonging has value.

There are pragmatic advantages to union membership

- A \$1 million NEA Professional Liability Insurance policy.
- MTA Legal Assistance, if needed, for employment related incidents.
- Discounts on insurance, financial services, travel, and wellness through MTA.
- Discounts at museums, theater, sports events, and lodging throughout Massachusetts and New England using your MTA membership card.

And there is value in just belonging

We are your professional association. Well over 90 percent 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.



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



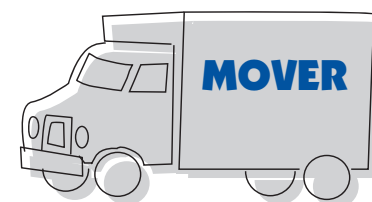
Many campus union leaders held meetings with adjunct faculty just before classes started to explain the value of union membership. Pictured here North Shore DCE Representative Harry Bowen gives his presentation to the gathered faculty. (Photo by Don Williams)

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MOVING?

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