

MCCC News



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MTA Summer Conference Rallies Membership

The MCCC was again well represented at this year's MTA Summer Conference at Williamstown, Mass. Thirty-eight members from 14 of the 15 campuses attended and participated in a variety of activities at the conference.

Among the programs MCCC members participated in were the New and Experienced Presidents Academies, Collective Bargaining Training, and the Emerging Leaders Program. These multi-day programs provided union leaders and potential leaders with the skills needed to maintain an effective union.

There were a few events solely intended for higher education members. A key one was the open meeting of the Higher Education Leadership Council (HELCC). Normally this group consists of the presidents of all the MTA higher ed. locals including several within the UMass

system, two in the state universities, and the MCCC covering all the community college faculty and staff. Currently, MCCC President Joe LeBlanc chairs the group.

The meeting at Williamstown was not an official HELCC meeting, but instead it was an opportunity for higher ed. members from all the units to meet and

discuss the common issues facing faculty and staff. It was also a chance for everyone to meet the very recently appointed new MTA Director of Higher Ed., Joey Hansen.

Hansen introduced himself to the members. He's Canadian and his previous position was as president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees', which



One of the specific higher ed. events at the MTA Summer Conference is an open meeting of the Higher Education Leadership Council (HELCC). A broad spectrum of issues affecting higher ed. were discussed. MTA President Paul Toner (center) provided his insight as MCCC members Myriam Quinones and Aaron Levin look on.

(Photo by Don Williams)

Mark Your Calendar
MCCC
Fall
Conference
Wed. Oct. 24
Evening

he likened as a more encompassing version of our AFSCME. He had also worked in organizing the union of students that Canada has. He plans on going on a listening tour of the various MTA higher ed. locals to hear their concerns.

LeBlanc then led the meeting into a discussion of the most pressing issue for the immediate future: the upcoming election. MCCC Vice President Donnie
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Adjunct Faculty Set Their Agenda

The Adjunct Committee met on Aug. 21 to start its agenda for the upcoming academic year. The agenda included a report by attendees of the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor (COCAL) conference in Mexico City, a review of the MCCC's campaign to increase the number of full union members in the DCE Unit, discussion of the upcoming contract negotiations, and electing officers for the year.

The MCCC funded two members to attend the COCAL Conference. This event is held every other year and it gathers part-time and non-tenured (contingent) faculty from all three North American countries: Canada, Mexico and the United States. Although the governmental and social structures of these countries have significant differences, the plight of higher education faculties are remarkably similar. The trend towards more part-time and fewer full-time tenured faculty is international.

Carol Gray of Greenfield Community College and Jerry Levinsky of Holyoke Community College gave an inspiring report on their experiences at the conference. Through tri-lingual pre-

sentations and informal discussions, participants shared their experiences and strategies for reversing the trend towards less secure academic employment.

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The Adjunct Faculty Committee met on Aug. 21. Pictured here are attendees (from left) top row Davis Sweet, MiCC; Patrick Lochelt, NECC/MiCC; Carol Gray, GCC; Dora Capite-Tkal, QCC; Harry Bowen, NSCC; Betsy Smith, CCCC; Mark Bashour, QCC. Front row Sandra Howland, NSCC; Cleo Mavrelion, STCC; MCCC President Joe LeBlanc; Randi Zanca, QCC. Not pictured Jerry Levinsky, HCC. (Photo by Don Williams)

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A Corporate Mugging



Don Williams, MCCC Communications Coordinator

Lest anyone think that the changes promulgated by The Boston Foundation (TBF), proposed by Gov. Patrick in his state of the state address, and ultimately incorporated in legislation—all within an astounding six-month period—were benign, need only watch the appointments to community college boards of trustees to see the effects.

Within weeks of the bill's passage the governor has already made significant trustee changes. And a clear message has been sent that community colleges will toe the line and get on board with the shift towards workforce development. Purportedly, this is for the benefit of the Commonwealth, but it really serves the business community and not the students.

The points of view shared by MCCC members Mohamed Zefzaf and Wick Sloane in the Ed Talks article in this issue demonstrate what should be the mission of community colleges. Human liberation and the exercise of democratic rights are what our students and society need.

For anyone who watches the State House, the rapidity with which this legislation came to pass is breathtaking. TBF conducted a study in relative secrecy with virtually no input from the colleges. They rolled out their proposal on Nov. 19, 2011 after leaking information to the press the week before—all without anyone in the community colleges getting an advanced

view of the report. By Jan. 24, 2012 Gov. Patrick advocated the ideas of the TBF plan in his state of the state address.

The Boston Foundation employed Rasky/Baerlein, a high-powered strategic communications firm, and they quickly assembled an astro-turf advocacy group called The Coalition for Community Colleges. When PHENOM conducted a higher lobbying day on Mar. 8 almost no members of the house were in the building. On Mar. 11 business executives descended on the State House to support the plan.

Gov. Patrick had proposed the changes as outside language in the state budget, which ensured that it would be addressed by the end of the fiscal year. By Apr. 11, TBF was praising the House for including its proposals in the budget. After being lobbied by community college student and alumni activists, as well as MCCC leaders and members, the Senate made positive modifications to the proposals, but some of the concerns remained. By July 8 Gov Patrick had signed the legislation with great fanfare.

I listened to the July 10 interview on WBUR with Paul Grogan of The Boston Foundation and President William Messner of Holyoke Community College representing the college presidents. (You can hear it at <http://radioboston.wbur.org/2012/07/10/community-college-budget>). Grogan made the statement that “now community colleges have a partner.” I liken this to someone sneaking up on you and stabbing you in the back and then offering you a bandage and expecting thanks.

What The Boston Foundation pushed was a classic case of Neo-liberalism. Not the liberalism that is so vilified by Fox News, but a revival of the classical liberalism of John Locke. This philosophy extols the rule of the market, it favors deregulation and privatization, and it advocates cutting public support for social services (like education). In this atmosphere the business community doesn't want to support higher education unless it gets direct benefit from that support.

In his article “The Politics of Ignorance: Casino Capitalism and Higher Edu-

cation,” Henry Giroux, who has written extensively on neoliberalism, said:

In the United States, universities and businesses are forming stronger ties; the humanities are being underfunded, student tuition is rising at astronomical rates; knowledge is being commodified.... The university has increasingly been stripped of its function as a place to teach students how to think, ask questions, hold power accountable, and produce critically engaged students. Delivering improved employability has reshaped the connection between knowledge and power, while rendering faculty and students as professional entrepreneurs and budding customers.

We need to heed the words of our colleagues Mohamed Zefzaf and Wick Sloane. We need to see that our students have greater potential and needs than just preparation for a job. We need to prepare them to be part of a world family. And we need to petition our government for redress of grievances inflicted by an overly materialistic society. ■

MTA Summer Conference . . .

Continued from front page

McGee urged everyone to get involved in campaigns. Noting that politics is not a spectator sport, she paraphrased a quote from the Athenian statesman Pericles “You may want to ignore politics, but politics won't ignore you.”

MTA has recommended that members vote to reelect President Obama, and it has also endorsed Elizabeth Warren for U.S. Senate. Surveys have shown that 75 percent on MTA members support Obama and that 60 percent support Warren over 25 percent for Scott Brown. The numbers demonstrate that there is an undecided gap for the senate seat that should be addressed. McGee said, “People who will vote for Obama need to understand that he needs Warren in the U.S. Senate if he is going to be successful.”

Len Paolillo of Mass College of Liberal Arts, who served on the NEA's legislative committee, recalled an incident where he went with MTA President Paul Toner, and MCCC's Cathy Boudreau (also on NEA's Board of Directors) to meet with Sen. Brown. They met to request his support for an educator jobs bill that would have preserved thousands of jobs. Brown would not vote to break a filibuster. Ultimately NEA convinced Maine Senators Olympia Snow and Susan Collins to support the bill. Paolillo said, “Sen. Brown only votes in a bipartisan manner when his vote doesn't matter.”

LeBlanc prodded members to do whatever they can to support the candidates, to join activities and to cajole other members to do the same. He noted, “If Scott Brown is reelected, we will have him in the senate for a very long time.” Toner called atten-

tion to the website rethinkbrown.com that provides a detailed breakdown of Brown's voting record.

On the state political level, MTA Consultant Donna Sirutis gave a presentation on the legislative races and the results of this legislative session. She circulated a list of recommended candidates for senate and house races for both the Sept. 6 primary races and the Nov. 6 general election. Information on candidate voting records is available on the MTA website, but Johnson noted that the records are not very revealing because there were very few roll call votes during this session.

There were some significant legislative successes. Johnson pointed to changes in the Optional Retirement System (ORP) that the MCCC had initiated. The ORP is a 401k-type defined contribution plan as opposed to the traditional SERS defined contribution type. McGee added that although the ability to convert between the ORP and the State Retirement System (SERS) is currently awaiting IRS regulation approvals, but the benefit of an increased decision period (from 90 to 180 days) for new hires is now in effect.

Currently about 3000 people are in the ORP (almost all faculty because of the establishing legislation restrictions). The extension of the decision period is on the Board of Higher Education website but some HR departments are unaware of the change. McGee urged campus leaders to make sure newly hired members are aware of this and to counsel them to take their time in making the best decision for themselves.

Unfortunately legislation to provide health insurance, state pension support for adjuncts, and to increase the percentage of full-time faculty did not survive this ses-

sion. Johnson said that these will be on the MTA's agenda for the 2013-2015 legislative session.

A notable legislative win was the funding for all of the higher ed. contracts. These went through much more smoothly than has happened in the past.

Max Page, who is a faculty member at UMass Amherst and is the higher ed. member of the MTA Executive Committee, raised the issue of MTA advocacy for higher ed. “We don't set the agenda for higher education in Massachusetts—it's The Boston Foundation. We should be setting the agenda.” He went on to say the we should oppose Commissioner Freeland's Vision Project and reject “pay for performance” at campuses and an over emphasis on “workforce development.”

MTA Executive Director Ann Clark responded that MTA has done a study on Massachusetts higher ed. and it will be released to leaders later this year to help craft a plan for going forward.

The conference was not all serious business. There were a wide variety of social events that helped develop the kinds of personal relationships that make for strong unions. People dined together in the dorms or took advantage of the great restaurants and cultural events in the Berkshires. Interest groups within MTA such as Education Support Professional (ESPs), retirees, and higher education sponsored social events on different evenings. And the conference ended with “The Bash” on Thursday night that went into the wee hours with a live band.

The conference is a great event for reflecting upon the previous academic year and energizing union members for the challenges lying ahead. ■

The MCCC News welcomes contributions.

Letters to the Editor

Only submissions by MCCC 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.

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Lemon Gelato, Grassroots Politics And Making A Difference



Joe LeBlanc,
MCCC President

Elizabeth Warren likes lemon gelato. She is developing into a better retail politician than Sen. Scott Brown. She is also a gifted teacher, an essential quality in any great leader.

I observed all of this first-hand at Methuen's Dolce Freddo

Gelato, the makers of the best Italian ice cream in the Merrimack Valley. After savoring a small chocolate gelato – their most popular flavor and my favorite – and regretting that I didn't order an extra large cup, I waited, thinking the candidate would be late and her visit routine.

Warren entered on time to applause

and an electric atmosphere. Handshakes, hugs, chats and photos followed. Working her way to the counter, she ordered a lemon gelato. Two bites later, reporters demanded attention and the candidate stressed familiar campaign themes.

She also pounded the senator on a variety of women's issues, saying that his recent talking points cannot be squared with his record and demanding that he be held accountable. A reporter asserted that their records on women's issues were similar. Warren pushed back, citing Sen. Brown's votes on equal pay for equal work, the Blunt amendment to limit women's access to birth control and his support for Mitt Romney and Rep. Paul Ryan.

She finished her lemon gelato. Her visit was winding down when the owner dragged a couple of teenage gelato makers from the back room. He insisted they meet the candidate. The boys were embar-

assed. Warren took them aside and asked them questions about themselves. Within a couple of minutes it looked like a couple of kids chatting with their teacher.

Our union has endorsed Elizabeth Warren. In accepting this endorsement, she stresses her support for our schools and colleges: "Education is at the core of investing in our future and building a strong middle class. For years, I have worked to level the playing field for middle class families, and I will continue to fight to ensure both students and teachers have the tools they need to succeed here in Massachusetts."

We're asking you to strengthen our endorsement by giving at least an hour in support of our endorsed candidates. In an hour, you can hold a sign, speak with a dozen neighbors, work a phone bank or write a letter to the editor. I know everyone is busy, but an hour per member will translate into thousands of hours statewide.

My volunteering for the Warren campaign began in early May at an organizing meeting (my first hour) at the Haverhill Public Library. Eight of us – neighbors and strangers living in the same city – agreed to do something. We began with phone calls to potential friends of the campaign. Our pool of volunteers grew. We now organize events every other Saturday, holding signs for an hour in different sections of the city and canvassing in an adjacent precinct.

Last weekend, 22 volunteers did visibility at Rivers Edge Plaza and knocked on 376 doors in the Riverside neighborhood. Our 50 volunteers give what they can when they can. I'm asking you to give a few hours in coming weeks for our candidates: President Obama, Elizabeth Warren, your local congressman, and our endorsed candidates for state senator and representative. Your work will make a difference. You may even make some new friends and have a gelato along the way. ■

MCCC Talks Education

A new event at this year's MTA Summer Conference was "Ed Talks." A take off on the internet hit "Ted Talks," this event gave about 20 presenters the opportunity to give their perspectives on education in brief, timed, 5-7 minute presentations.

The MCCC was well represented with two talks that really highlighted the role of community colleges. The MCCC presenters were Wick Sloane from Bunker Hill Community College and Mohamed Zefzaf from Mass Bay Community College. The two went back-to-back at the end of the event and they paired well in how their individual messages dovetailed.

Zefzaf, who teaches English as a Second Language, went first. He recounted his educational trajectory. Growing up in Morocco, his primary education was in learning to read the Koran and learning to write by copying over the passages, all in Arabic. It was essentially rote education with a decidedly religious focus, leaving little room for critical thinking.

His family moved to Belgium when he was ten. He had to adapt to a system where everything was in French. Typical of the European educational system, he took a test at 13 that set his future career path to vocational school. He chose to become an electrician. "I was a very bad electrician," he said.

At 21 Zefzaf moved to the U.S. where he found an enthusiasm and optimism that was contagious. He enrolled at UMass Boston, and he felt he was home because of the liberating nature of education. He excelled and found his true calling in teaching. The community college mission

is one that continues his own experience. They are places where all people regardless of their backgrounds can reach their full potential.

He remembered a statue of Mahatma Ghandi in Brussels that oddly had an inscription in English. It said, "The world is my family." That summed up his perspective.

Sloane's presentation took a very different tack. He is a Program Coordinator and an adjunct professor of expository writing at BHCC. He writes "The Devil's Workshop" column for the online publication *Inside Higher Ed*. He has also written the pamphlet "Democracy Works."

He started his presentation by saying we should be teaching the Constitution, in

fact an exercise he gives his writing students is to write their own passages for it.

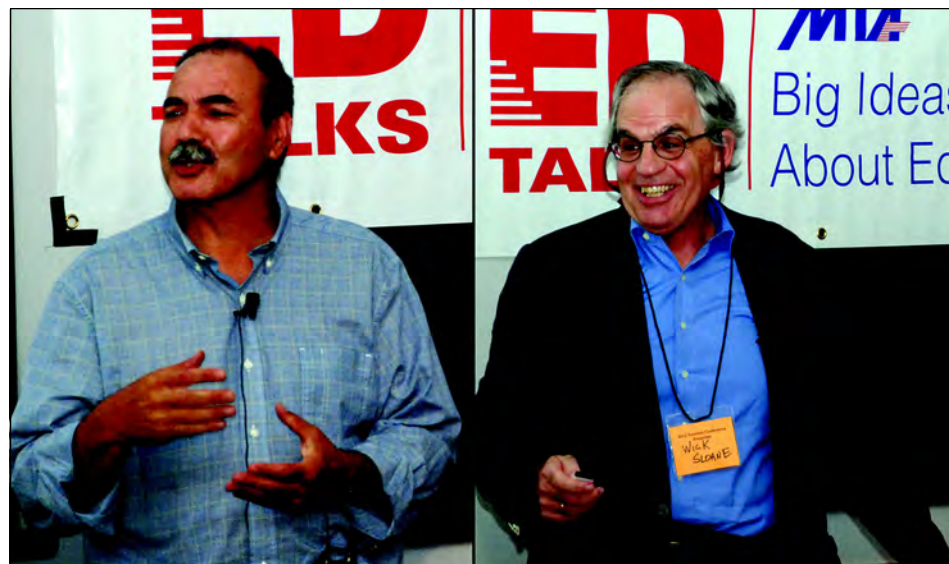
He then went on to say that a synonym for public education should be genocide, but not by gun but rather by poverty. Through the current educational finance structure the government is trying to exclude lower income people from education. This is killing their futures. As faculty, he said, "We need to stop tolerating these conditions for our students."

He returned to the Constitution and the First Amendment and its provision to petition the government for the redress of grievances. We need to insist that the government provide equal need-based financial aid for all students.

He pointed out that despite its enormous endowment, Williams College,

where this conference was being held and from which he himself graduated, receives support of between \$15,000 and \$30,000 per student each year from the government. "How can this be?" he asked. "They have better lobbyists."

Sloane said, "It was wonderful to share my views with this group." He added that community colleges are people's best chance to succeed. ■



Mohamed Zefzaf from Mass Bay Community College and Wick Sloane from Bunker Hill each gave a brief presentation during the Ed Talks event at MTA's Summer Conference at Williams College. (Photo by Don Williams)

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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.

Adjunct Faculty Set Their Agenda . . .

Continued from front page

Organizing was a key topic. With insecure positions, contingent faculty are reluctant to engage in unionizing or speaking out in favor of more rights and fairer treatment. Gray mentioned the experience of Curtis Keyes, an organizer who has been terminated from a number of colleges in reprisal for his efforts, yet he finds new teaching positions and continues his fight.

From his previous experience as an adjunct at UMass Amherst Levinsky said, "There is a class division between tenure-track and adjunct faculty." He pointed out that the increasing use of part-time and non-tenured instructors is bad for everyone. "We need to work together to improve the situation."

Betsy Smith of Cape Cod Community College, who attended the last COCAL Conference held in California, reminded everyone that in the off-years when there is no conference, COCAL sponsors Campus Equity Week in the fall semester. This is intended to bring the campaign to local campuses and expand the base of support. She urged the committee to plan activities for the 2013 Campus Equity Week.

The union membership campaign was a significant topic at the meeting. Presi-

dent Joe LeBlanc introduced MTA Consultant for DCE Bob Whalen, Sarah Nathan from MTA Communications and MCCC Communications Coordinator Don Williams who have been developing the campaign.

LeBlanc noted that while over 98 percent of full-time faculty and staff are full union members, only about two-thirds of part-time faculty are union members. There are a number of issues that affect the membership of this group. First, many may not understand the difference between non-member agency fee status and full union membership. Adjunct faculty are often hired on short-notice, and there is little chance for the college HR departments or the union to explain the differences. Everyone teaching credit courses in a Massachusetts community college works under the MCCC Collective Bar-

gaining Agreement and is required to pay something to the union for negotiating and maintaining that contract.

Secondly, LeBlanc noted that because adjunct faculty are on year-by-year appointments, they have to fill out membership forms either by paper or on-line every year. With almost 5,000 adjunct faculty in the system, the MCCC Office staff, particularly Angela Perno who handles DCE membership, has a tremendous task ensuring that everyone has met their membership or non-member agency fee obligation.

The membership forms can be confusing, and with all the things an instructor has to do at a semester's start, it may not get their full attention. If a faculty member does not indicate which membership level they want, then the office is legally obliged to select non-member agency fee as a default. ■

Communications Coordinator Williams passed out a draft of the membership campaign brochure he has been working on. The intention of the brochure is to explain the benefits of being a full union member. It will be mailed out in late September to all non-member agency fee paying unit members along with a letter from LeBlanc explaining the differences between agency-fee and full union membership.

This will be on top of the efforts MCCC Treasurer Phil Mahler and Angela Perno make to explain the membership differences when they invoice faculty for their dues. Part-time members can select payroll deduction, which is what most full-time members do.

MTA Consultant Whalen pointed out that MTA will be providing support for Kiley Associates to poll members as to why they opt for agency fee or union membership so that the MCCC can see how to improve its message. Whalen and Williams asked the committee for input for survey questions and brochure topics.

The DCE Collective Bargaining Agreement has technically expired as of June 1, 2012. But its provisions remain in force, and by agreement there are raises of 3.5 percent for all DCE unit members beginning in Jan. 1, 2013 for this "outside year." The committee discussed some of the things that should be done, and Whalen explained how the process should work including a member survey.

The union is soliciting members for the team to bargain the next contract. Some members expressed interest in serving on the team, which will be appointed in October, and a few discussed their experiences with contract negotiation training at the MTA Summer Conference at Williamstown.

At the meeting's end the committee selected its leaders for the upcoming year. Carol Gray of Greenfield Community College and Mark Bashour of Quinsigamond Community College agreed to serve as co-chairs, and were elected unanimously. Randi Zanca of Quinsigamond Community College will serve as the committee secretary.

The committee structure calls for members from each of the 15 of Massachusetts community colleges. Not every campus has a representative, so if you're an adjunct faculty and are interested in supporting your colleagues and having voice in the union's agenda, you should contact your college's chapter president. ■



MTA's Summer Conference offered many opportunities for members to socialize. The MCCC sponsored a members-only get together at a local Williamstown establishment. (Photo by Don Williams)

MCCC Members who attended the MTA Summer Conference at Williamstown

Sherri Acevedo • Catherine Adamowicz • Gabriela Adler • Mary Agoglia
Anil Anand • Mark Bashour • Catherine Boudreau • James Clark
Jeanne Cosmos • Pamela Donahue • Theresa Eccles • Ellen Ford
Dennis Goodwin • Carol Gray • Linda Grochowalski • Annette Guertin
Susan Hutchinson • Dale Johnston • Paul Kasili • Wayne Klug • Aaron Levin
Deborah Matthews • George McDermott • Diana McGee • Andrew Morse
Chandrakant Pansé • Myriam Quinones • Candace Shivers • Lamont Slater
Brooks Smith • Kenneth Takvorkian • Trudy Tynan • Jossie Valentin
Paul Weeden • Ronald Weisberger • Donald Williams • Diana Yohe
Randi Zanca • Mohamed Zefzaf



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

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

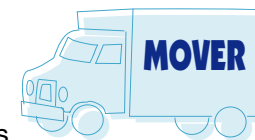
- A \$1 million NEA Professional Liability Insurance policy.
- MTA Legal Assistance, if needed, for employment related incidents.
- Discounts on insurance, financial services, travel, and wellness through MTA.
- Discounts at museums, theater, sports events, and lodging throughout Massachusetts and New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

And there is value in just belonging

We are your professional association. Almost 100 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.

MOVING?

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