

# MCCC News

208

The Official Publication of the Massachusetts Community College Council / Volume 11, Issue 4 / January 2010

## MTA's First Higher Ed Conference a Hit

On Dec. 4 and 5 MTA held its first conference devoted entirely to higher education issues, and by the accounts of both planners and participants it was an overwhelming success. Over 100 members attended from all of the MTA Higher Ed. affiliates. The MCCC was well represented with over 40 members attending.

The two-day conference at the Sheraton in Framingham began with a reception and then dinner followed by a discussion on state issues affecting public higher education with MTA President Anne Wass and Jim Rice, President of NEA's National Council for Higher Education (NCHE).

Rice, who is a professor of English at Quinsigamond Community College, gave an overview of NCHE and its national agenda. He pointed out that the majority of NCHE members are from seven states: Massachusetts, Maine, New York, Michigan, Washington, Illinois, and California. When looking at higher education nationally, only 6 percent of the potential market is unionized.

Wass looked at the political issues facing educators in this state. A major concern is the education reform bill that made its way through the state senate with some MTA sponsored modifications, but the house version being taken up in January is expected to retain some very disturbing language curtailing union members' rights.



Some of the many MCCC members attending the MTA Higher Education Conference pictured here with NEA President Dennis Van Roekle and MTA President Anne Wass (front left). (Photo by Sarah Nathan)

Although this does not directly affect higher ed. members, the anti-union attitude embedded in the bill should raise concerns for everyone.

She pointed to pension reform as an area that affects all public employees in the state. There are proposals being floated that would change the formula for new employees by basing one's pension on the highest five years salary rather than the current three years. Change is not imminent, but it may become a significant issue as the year moves into a gubernatorial campaign. Republican candidate Charles Baker has already put out a draconian pension reform proposal that would move to a career average calculation that could affect already vested members.

Many members took advantage of discounted rooms and local association stipends to stay at the hotel, allowing them to network in the evening and to be fresh for the Saturday program.

The second day of the conference featured a forum with NEA President Dennis Van Roekle. Van Roekle is known as a



NEA President Dennis VanRoekle spoke on the conditions and trends facing educators nationally at the MTA Higher Education Conference. (Photo by Don Williams)

dynamic speaker and he lived up to that reputation.

He said that financing is the biggest issue facing higher ed. nationally. One cause of that is the general public's misunderstanding of the modern economy. The public seems to think we are in a world where 30 percent of the workforce is in agriculture. They don't understand that we are in a knowledge-based economy where the success of the economy rests on an educated workforce.

We are seeing a decline in college attendance with the current generation of American students. And worldwide there are more children out of school than ever before.

Van Roekle noted an "incredible rage in America today." He cited personalities like Fox Network's Glenn Beck, who uses "wedge issues, anger, and hate to separate us on issues that people don't even care about." And he finds the increasing attacks on teachers and unions deplorable.

He believes that the Employee Free Choice Act will be the next big battle in congress after Health Reform. This bill would allow workers to form a union on the basis of a majority of employees signing union cards instead of the card signing causing a vote conducted at the workplace under the eye of management. This would make it much easier to unionize. "You can't have a middle class in the U.S. without unions," he said.

President Obama supported this bill when he was a senator. Van Roekle said, "We have a congress and president who support labor; if we can't get this through, we're in big trouble." If health reform goes down, who will be setting the agenda for the future? There is a lot at stake in these bills for our members.

He said, "We get to choose how we respond. We can't just play 'ain't it awful.'" He's tired of playing defense and being in the situation where victory means, "I don't get anything." We need to figure out an offense, and if we don't change we can't make things better. We need collective action, and electing pro-education can-

### Proposed Bylaw Changes

March 1 is the deadline for submitting proposed changes to the MCCC Bylaws and Standing Rules not Feb. 2 as was previously published.

Proposals should be in printed format, double spaced (not hand written). They should include the following information:

- Rationale for the proposed change;
- Name of the maker of the proposal;
- Campus (or MCCC committee/group) of the member making the proposal.

Proposed changes should be sent to

Bob Gillies  
6 Wheelock Street  
Oxford, MA 01540-2110  
Email: bobg@qcc.mass.edu ■

didates isn't enough. We need to consistently press our issue on elected officials.

After the forum, members broke out for a variety of workshops. George Luse from MTA and Tiffany Magnolia of the MCCC lead a workshop on "Organizing the Wellstone Way." The MTA has teamed up with the Wellstone Action group to train union leaders on how to organize their locals to build political power.

MTA staff attorney Will Evans discussed workplace Internet use issues in a presentation titled "Social Media: Job-Related Legal Concerns." Topics included employee's privacy rights, public records issues, Internet use on campus and how employees can get into trouble over Internet use. He also discussed the collective bargaining implications of these issues.

Mike Driblatt, author of *How to Stop Bullying and Social Aggression*, gave a presentation on workplace bullying. His workshop taught participants how to identify, stop, and prevent workplace bullying. Harassment of employees by managers and coworkers has become a more frequent complaint among members.

Attorney Sarah Gibson gave a presentation on job site health and safety hazards such as chemicals, physical hazards, noise, and indoor air quality. She identified hazards and what laws apply. She also discussed Executive Order 511 that established the Massachusetts Health and Safety Committee and its impact on MTA higher ed. members.

John Lee, President of JBL Associates gave a workshop titled "Staffing and Financial Trends in Public Higher Education." JBL Associates has done many research projects for the NEA and AFT and their local affiliates including the MCCC. His fact filled presentation presented longitudinal studies of national funding and salary trends some going back to the early 1980's. Massachusetts' *Continued on page 2*

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Permit No. 82  
Worcester, MA

MCCC Newsletter  
27 Mechanic Street, Suite 104  
Worcester, MA 01608-2402



# Looking Back - Moving Forward: Defining the Year Ahead



Donnie McGee,  
SAC Chair &  
MCCC Vice President

The twelve months of 2009 are finally behind us. December 31st marked the end of a year and a decade that were not very kind to public higher education. Given the economic and political challenges our colleges and colleagues have faced, most educators are glad to move ahead without looking back. As the New Year and the new decade unfold, however, reflecting on the lessons learned in years gone by could help us

forge a better future. Over the years, key narratives have shaped my professional life. The related themes will guide my leadership as 2010 takes hold.

I once believed that getting to where I am was just an accident. I was totally in fear of public speaking and had no idea what I wanted to be when I grew up. I hadn't considered teaching and never was political. Upon closer reflection, though, I realized that luck and timing alone did not determine my destiny. My refusal to accept injustice or mediocrity and my willingness to take risks paved the way to my current professional position as an educator and union activist.

Though I had no specific career goals, I did have to

figure out what to do in the meantime. I opened unfamiliar doors and tried new things despite the initial discomfort and lack of certainty there. I began tutoring and advising community college students and loved my work. Eventually, I was hired full-time as a writing lab specialist – a career path that led to a faculty position. I had learned to accept the angst and challenges that accompany growth and discovery.

My first educational position was as a non-benefited, minimum-wage instructional assistant for 30 plus hours a week – a position that offered neither security, nor a professional path forward. I soon saw the inequities in this "03" contract employee position. Other educators working along side of me had the same responsibilities, but had better pay as well as job security and full benefits. I joined my peers in speaking out against the injustice and eventually sought redress through legislation and the support of key legislators. I became political.

The "03" legislative campaign was a long struggle, though. Full-time educators and others sought retirement buyback possibilities for their years of "03" service to the state. For more than a dozen years, however, every related buyback bill was "sent to study" by the Public Service Committee – a fate akin to legislative death. Legislators would listen politely, but few would publicly support our bills. Seasoned lobbyists doubted that success was even possible.

Still, a handful of MCCC union leaders refused to abandon this quest. The MCCC was told to give it up or go it alone. We continued the fight. That persistence and the support of a few well-positioned and caring legislators brought positive results. An "03" buyback law was finally enacted. Mead's belief "that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world" – at least our own small portion of it – indeed rang true.

Today, the year before us needs serious attention. The MCCC will do the right thing and fight for college funding, fair contracts, and legislation that eradicates existing inequities for our members. But leaders and members must work together and get political if we hope to move forward with our legislative agenda. This year's activism will focus on enacting a retirement buyback law for ORP enrollees, reversing faculty hiring trends, repealing Social Security offsets, and providing better benefits for part-time faculty and professional staff. We will build upon the successes of our past.

As 2010 moves in for keeps, let us be the ones to define the months ahead and forge a year that is more kind and just. The lessons of the past have demonstrated that what each of us does, matters. We must persist in the face of discomfort and doubt. Let us move forward with renewed hope, a willingness to engage in political action, and the insistent belief that we can make a difference. ■

## MTA's First Higher Ed Conference . . .

Continued from page 1

numbers were broken out for comparison, and while the national trends were not encouraging, the Massachusetts numbers were even worse.

In his summation, Lee pointed out "The Double Whammy: Enrollment growth and Funding Cuts." Under existing tax and spending policies the demand for mandatory spending on K-12 schools, Medicaid, and prisons will grow faster than tax revenues. Short-term recession cuts are not being done strategically and longer-term structural problems need to be addressed including tax rates and commitment to education.

Mark Smith, NEA Senior Policy Analyst for Higher Education, gave a presentation on "What's Happening in

Congress." He discussed federal legislation affecting higher ed. professionals that offer promise, but that also raise concerns. Topics included federal grants, institutional capacity, accountability concerns, and unintended consequences of federal legislation. He explored NEA's strategies for dealing with these changes.

Arthur Pippo, MTA Director of Higher Ed., closed the event after lunch with a summary discussion of the issues facing MTA higher ed. members. He was very pleased with the turnout noting that there were a lot of attendees who had not previously been involved in MTA events. The success of the conference was gratifying, and MTA hopes to make this an annual event. ■



Tiffany Magnolia, NSCC chapter president, conducted a workshop with MTA organizer George Luse on Political Organizing the Wellstone Way at the MTA Higher Ed. Conference. (Photo by Don Williams)



As an annual event the MCCC Executive Committee has a holiday luncheon for the MCCC Office staff. This year it was at the Sole Proprietor Restaurant in Worcester. Pictured from left are Rosemarie Freeland, GCC; Meg Kennedy, MCCC Office; President Joe LeBlanc; Claudine Barnes, CCC; Secretary Gail Guarino; Edyth Stoddard, MCCC Office; Treasurer Phil Mahler; Vice President Donnie McGee; Margaret Wong, QCC; Angela Perno, MCCC Office; and Arthur Pippo, MTA Director of Higher Ed. (Photo by Don Williams)



John Lee of JBL Associates gave a detailed presentation at the MTA Conference titled "Long-Term Financial Trends in Higher Education Finance" that compared Massachusetts to national trends. (Photo by Don Williams)



# State Is Asking Too Much of Our Members



Joe LeBlanc,  
MCCC President

In these tough times, our faculty and professional staff are sacrificing for the good of our students and the Commonwealth, but the request to re-open our recently ratified and submitted contracts is asking too much.

In these tough times, our members are already taking a zero year. We're still waiting for our salaries to reach the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile—a promise the state has not yet honored. Our present Agreement with its 8.5 percent salary increases over four years is reasonable and responsible. Adding another zero year is asking too much.

In these tough times, it is regrettable that managers have been forced to take furloughs. For our members, working even a day without pay is unacceptable. Canceling even one day of classes is unacceptable. Our faculty and professional staff are serving record student enrollments with no additional full-time members. Forcing them to take furloughs is asking too much.

In these tough times, our members will soon be paying higher health insurance co-pays and deductibles. While the Group Insurance Commission has the right to enact these increases midway through a fiscal year, it doesn't mean it's the right thing to do. Some of our members will put off medical care because they can't afford the higher co-pays and deductibles. The GIC should have sent a supplemental budget request to the legislature, as is normal practice. The midyear increases are unacceptable.

In these tough times, increasing taxes may be off the table. Data shows that the Commonwealth ranks 38<sup>th</sup> in the nation for taxes as a percent of state personal income. Facts notwithstanding, we'll be told that we must cut spending in this election year. State employees will be asked to sacrifice more for the good of the Commonwealth.

The Mass Budget and Policy Center reports that "Massachusetts's level of taxation (10.45 percent) was well below the national average (11.27 percent) in 2007. Had Massachusetts taxed its residents at the national average, an additional \$2.5 billion would have been raised in 2007."

States have increased taxes and fees at record levels in FY '10. According to CNN, states have enacted \$23.9 billion in tax hikes this year with more on the way in FY '11. In an effort to balance their budgets, income taxes have been increased by \$10.7 billion, including raising the top bracket for wealthier residents to 6.5 percent in Con-

necticut and 7.75 percent in Wisconsin. Cigarette taxes were increased in Florida, Delaware and Kentucky.

Revenue challenges haven't ended. The Rockefeller Institute reports that tax revenues declined by 10.7 percent in the third quarter of 2009. Personal income, sales and corporate tax revenues declined by 11.4, 8.2 and 19.4 percent respectively. In Massachusetts, tax revenues declined by 10 percent overall. Even with a new federal jobs bill and additional aid to state and local governments, budget shortfalls will continue in the next fiscal year.

In these tough times, we are already sacrificing with no FY '10 salary increases, increases in our health insurance contribution rates and mid-year hikes in co-pays and deductibles. Reopening our contract at this time will provide next to nothing to the state's bottom line. It's simply asking too much. ■

## Adjunct Health Insurance - Is This the End Game?



Don Williams, MCCC  
Communications  
Coordinator

The decision to file a lawsuit against the state to provide health insurance as reported in the last issue of the MCCC News may represent a last gasp attempt to

secure coverage for adjunct faculty.

A court case, as any attorney will tell you, is a gamble, no matter how good a case you think you have. So this action was seen as a last resort. But given the political realities it may be the last best chance to provide health security to the increasing numbers of adjunct faculty.

I have been on the last two DCE Negotiating teams, and I know that we tried very hard to negotiate health benefits for adjuncts. In the recent contract talks we offered a number of proposals that would offer our members some limited benefits, and the employer would not agree to any.

The union has tried other gambits like promoting new legislation to provide coverage for part-time faculty and staff, but these have not moved. And the state's own universal health insurance law manages to exempt the state of some of the same requirements it puts on private employers.

It is another case where societal ideals conflict with our collective pocketbook. We might call it legislative dissonance. There is a law on the state's books (the main basis for the Union's lawsuit) that requires health insurance be provided to employees who work half-time or more. The public and the legislature want to feel noble and considerate of people without insurance, but when it comes to paying for it they're not so noble. Many of our adjunct faculty say

the state should provide insurance because "It's the right thing to do." Philosophically every union member probably believes this. I would hazard the guess that at least some of our college presidents would agree with that philosophy, too. But if the college presidents did volunteer to pay a portion of adjunct health insurance, no one expects that their budgets would be increased by the legislature. Philosophy clashes with reality.

Given the public's anti-tax mania, it is hard to see any support for increased revenues to fund adjunct faculty health insurance. They don't even support a modest gas tax increase to fund repairs of our dangerously decrepit roads and bridges.

So we have put our faith in the courts. This is the one place where costs are not the primary concern and there is a chance for "the right thing" to prevail. As has been the case for gay marriage in a number of states, including Massachusetts, the courts are removed from irrational public opposition, and positive change has resulted.

Clearly national health reform will offer no solution. For the time being the state lawsuit is the best chance to get adjuncts covered. It will take as much as two years to see this through. Whatever side wins in the lower courts, we can expect appeals, and possibly up to the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. MTA is committed to take this all the way.

For now the judicial system will move at its slow, deliberate pace, and all we can do is wait. How the state will defend itself will be interesting to see. Politics in the executive branch may come into play.

There are other avenues to pursue if the Union does not prevail in court. There could still be a legislative solution, but that will require a massive lobbying effort. Let's keep our fingers crossed for a judicial checkmate. ■

## Call for Nominations

### Raymond C. Lemieux Memorial Award

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the award is to recognize an individual whose service, leadership, and dedication have contributed significantly to the Massachusetts Community College Council.

#### **Nominee Eligibility**

To be eligible for this award, an individual must meet the following criteria:

- service to higher education and the labor movement in the quest for improved working conditions and high standards of professional excellence.
- demonstration of leadership in MCCC and higher education.
- exemplification of the concerned and caring approach of Raymond C. Lemieux, much of whose life was dedicated to the betterment of faculty and professional staff.

#### **Who May Nominate**

Any MCCC Board of Director or Chapter President may nominate by completing a nomination form which can be obtained from the MCCC.

### Jon G. Butler Memorial Award

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the award is to recognize the Chapter President(s) whose leadership, acts, or support have made a significant impact on MCCC unit members.

#### **Nominee Qualifications**

Individual nominees must be current MCCC Chapter Presidents.

#### **Who May Nominate**

Any chapter president may be nominated by petition of five or more of that chapter's members; a nomination form can be obtained from the MCCC.

#### **Nomination Process**

Nominations for both awards are due by Feb. 15. Nomination forms can be found on the MCCC web site <http://mccc-union.org> in the Documents link. ■

## Know Your Day Contract

### **January 2010**

- Jan. 15** Sabbatical recommendations from committee to president. (p. 25)  
**Jan. 18** Martin Luther King Day holiday. (p. 22)

### **February 2010**

- Feb. 15** First year professional staff evaluation conference p.42  
**Feb. 20** Course materials returned p.40  
**Feb. 28** New full and part-time hire list due MCCC

**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. Page numbers refer to the last printed contract (2006-2009). ■

# 2010 MCCC Elections

Nominations are open for MCCC officers, AtLarge Directors, Delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting, and Delegates to the NEA-RA. Members can nominate themselves by mailing in the form found on page 4 of this or the December issue of the MCCC News or by submitting the electronic form through the website <http://mccc-union.org>.

Nominations will close at 4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 4, 2010. Ballots will be mailed to all MCCC members on Feb 26. The deadline for returning ballots is 4 p.m. on Thursday, Mar. 25. Election results will be announced by Monday, Mar. 29.

## MCCC President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary

Candidates for these offices must submit signatures of 50 union members to submit with their nomination forms. They may be full- or part-time members, but they cannot be agency fee payers. The signature form is available on the MCCC website. Officer candidates will have the opportunity to submit a 250-word statement with an accompanying photo for the March issue of the MCCC News.

## At-Large Part-time/Adjunct Directors

These two new positions will be elected annually by the part-time/adjunct union members. Candidates will need to solicit signatures of 10 union members to submit with their nomination forms. They may be full- or part-time members, but they cannot be agency fee payers. The signature form is available on the MCCC website. Director candidates will have the opportunity to submit a 250-word statement with an accompanying photo for the March issue of the MCCC News.

## Delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting

- **Stipend:** The MCCC provides a stipend of \$50 dollars per day to delegates who attend the meeting.
- **Hotel Room:** Delegates who are on the ballot and who live more than 25 miles

from the meeting are entitled to a double occupancy hotel room at the convention hotel, arranged by the MCCC, for Friday night. Write-in candidates will be accommodated on a space-available basis.

## Election Waiver for Candidates for MCCC Delegate to the MTA Annual Meeting

If the number of certified candidates for MTA delegate is less than or equal to the number permitted, then those candidates are deemed elected. A ballot process will be conducted to permit write-in candidates for non-filled slots and to be named as successor delegates.

## MTA Annual Meeting Friday, May 7 and Saturday, May 8, 2010 Boston, MA

## Delegates to the NEA Rep. Assembly

The MTA provides a stipend of \$400. The MCCC provides additional reimbursement support of \$800 to the top 15 candidates. MCCC reimbursement requires receipts and proof of conference attendance as provided by the MTA.

## NEA-RA and Annual Meeting July 1 - July 6, 2010 New Orleans, LA ■

# DIRECTORS NOTES

At the November 20, 2009 meeting of the MCCC Board of Directors the following actions were taken:

- The Board voted to appoint Claudine Barnes (CCCC), Mary Folan (BHCC), Tiffany Magnolia (NSCC), Ellen Pratt (MWCC), and Andria Schwartz (QCC) to serve on the joint MCCC/BHE Workload Committee. [This is the first of three committees that were agreed upon in the Day Agreement. This committee was scheduled to begin meeting in December with regular meetings to follow in the spring.]
- The Board voted to appoint Vincent Grassetto (STCC) to the CAS Joint Union-Management Committee.
- The Board accepted the Personnel Committee evaluations for Coordinators Fitzgerald, Jean-Gilles, Rizzo, and Williams.
- The Board accepted a motion on MCCC Policy changes. The proposed changes were distributed. A vote will be taken at the January meeting.
- The Board discussed a motion to endorse House Bill 1110 that would set the full-time/part-time faculty ratio at 75/25. The vote was postponed to get clarification on the term "state-supported courses."
- The Board voted to provide one section of reassigned time to or the equivalent stipend per fiscal year for Executive Committee at-large members, to commence in the spring 2010 semester.
- The Board voted to provide one section of reassigned time to or the equivalent stipend per fiscal year for MCCC members who serve on the MTA Board, to commence in the spring 2010 semester.
- The Board voted to provide one section of reassigned time to Tiffany Magnolia to support a grassroots organizing initiative to be launched in the spring of 2010.
- The Board accepted a motion on a policy for the John A. Palmer III Award proposed by the Executive Committee. The discussion and vote will be taken at the January meeting. ■

## Massachusetts Community College Council Nomination Form - 2010

A candidate must file this form (or a copy) with the MCCC Elections Committee to arrive by Thursday, February 4, 2010, 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 7 - 8, 2010  
 NEA Representative Assembly Delegate \*\*  
New Orleans, LA, July 1 - July 6, 2010

### MCCC AT-LARGE DIRECTOR\*\*\*

- Part-time/Adjunct Director

\*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:  Black  Asian Pacific Islander  Caucasian  
 Hispanic-Chicano  Native American

**On Web** <http://mccc-union.org>  
to fill out on-line nomination or  
to download signature form.

**OR By Mail** Elections Chairperson  
MCCC  
27 Mechanic Street, Suite 104  
Worcester MA 01608-2402

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature may be typed)

**Deadline: MUST BE RECEIVED by Thursday, February 4, 2010, 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 than 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:  
Donald R. Williams, Jr.

President:  
Joseph LeBlanc

Vice President:  
Donnie McGee

Secretary:  
Gail Guarino

Treasurer:  
Phil Mahler

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](mailto:Communications@mccc-union.org)