

MCCC



News

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Gov. Patrick Woos Higher Ed. Unions

As the election season begins, Gov. Deval Patrick has been increasingly visible and has been reaching out to his core constituencies. Higher education members were early supporters of Patrick in his first election, but some of his policies have caused displeasure to many of his supporters including higher ed. members.

Originally a meeting with higher ed representatives was arranged by MTA for Mar. 30, but a severe rain storm caused the governor to attend to the emergency. He did send Lt. Gov. Tim Murray and Secretary of Education Paul Reville who took questions and listened to concerns. Gov. Patrick did keep his commitment, and on Apr. 27 he met in person with state and chapter representatives from all the MTA and AFT higher ed. unions.

The governor's initial reception was subdued because of the status of the higher ed. contracts. Last summer, after months of negotiations, most of the unions had reached agreements with the employer for their 2008-2011 contracts that called for raises of 1.5 percent July 1, 2009; 3.5 percent July 1, 2010; and 3.5 percent July 1, 2011. The MCCC contract was on a one-year later cycle, but last summer was essentially given an ultimatum by the Office of Administration and Finance to accept the same raises for 2010, 2011, and 2012. [See related contract story.]

The negotiated contracts have been submitted to the legislature, but to date none of the higher ed. contracts have been funded. The state has been asking for take-backs from all the unions with settled contracts. Initially the higher ed. unions were asked to take furloughs, but unlike other state unions who agreed to furloughs, there was never a threat of layoffs.

When asked about furloughs for higher ed., Gov. Patrick said that his office had asked not for them, he was chagrined when MTA Director of Higher Ed. Arthur Pippo said that it was true, and that Peter Tsaffaras of the DHE had presented a plan on how furloughs would be done.

Responding to complaints about contracts, Gov. Patrick made the point that we are in the worst financial crisis since the great depression and that there was plenty of pain to spread around. He said, "I'm trying to do the best I can." But there is no support for raising revenues, and that unlike the federal government, the state has to have a balanced budget. He said his options are limited, "I'm not king, I'm just governor."

He noted the tough political choices he had made to eliminate corporate tax loopholes that "a whole lot of fat cats didn't like."

One member asked about rumors going around the state house that the

governor's office has been playing politics by quietly telling legislators not to pass the funding bills until unions agree to take-backs. His response was, "How is this good politics?" "You are my prime constituents. The legislature says they won't fund the contracts without concessions."

He also made the point that, "A lot of people in the private sector have seen nothing like the raises that higher ed. members have in these contracts, and they are deeply resentful."

The governor stressed the amount that his administration has accomplished in his first term. Among those was pension reform. Attendees agreed that some of the reforms that eliminated excesses were good for all participants in the state pension plan, but they criticized a larger reform plan he had proposed that would cap the highest pensions and would require averaging the highest five years instead of the current three years to determine a retiree's pension.

His response was that there are



Gov. Deval Patrick at a meeting with higher ed. union leaders. (Photo by Don Williams)

people in the public who don't have pensions, and they don't see why they should pay for public employees' pen-

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Higher Ed. Contracts in Limbo

Funding for all of the higher education contracts are stalled in the legislature and time is running out.

The contracts that were ratified last summer and fall covering all of the higher ed. locals have been sitting dormant in the House of Representatives awaiting passage. To date there has been no action because the state is asking for concessions to these ratified contracts.

Essentially all the state employee unions agreed to four-year contracts that call for raises of 0, 1.5, 3.5 and 3.5 percent (0, 1, 3 and 3 percent if a contract included step-raises). For most of the higher ed. unions the contracts cover 2008 to 2012, but the MCCC Day contract was on a 2009-2013 cycle.

Early this year the employer asked the higher ed. unions to make concessions that included furloughs, essentially working a number of days without pay. The number of days would vary depending on the employee's pay level. The unions adamantly rejected this proposal.

In May, the employer came back with a different proposal for concessions, which calls for the unions to postpone the raises for 364 days. This would mean that a raise due to be paid on July 1, 2009 would be paid on June 30,

2010 – the very last day of the same fiscal year.

The UMass and state college unions have been waiting a year for their first pay increase, and if they accept the postponement they would be receiving raises as of now. Originally, the first increase for MCCC members was supposed to come due now, but the concessions would delay MCCC raises to 2011.

When the other union contracts were settled last summer after months of negotiations over language, the MCCC was called into a meeting at the DHE and told to take the same financial offer as the other unions or get nothing.

The point had been made directly to Gov. Patrick in March that the MCCC felt disrespected over not even being given the opportunity to negotiate contract language. And given the unique history of the MCCC, the significant demands of the community college mission and student population along with long unresolved workload issues from the Classification Study needed to be addressed.

The governor said he was not aware of the way MCCC negotiations took place and that it was not the way he would want things to happen. He said he would look into it.

In accepting the contract last year the MCCC team secured a Memorandum of Agreement that a committee would be formed to look into workload issues. The process got off to a very slow start, and with little progress made, scheduled meetings have been cancelled by the DHE.

At this writing, at least one UMass union has reluctantly agreed to the concessions. With raises immediately in the balance, there is incentive for other locals to accept.

MCCC President Joe LeBlanc has called the concessions "beyond the pale and unacceptable." He fears that after waiting a year longer than the other unions, MCCC members will be even further behind, and there is very little likelihood of catching up. But LeBlanc has been polling the membership to gain a sense of their will.

Because this is an election year, the legislature goes out of formal session at the end of July. They may take up bills that have no opposition informally and pass them. They can also be called back into formal session for special circumstances. Bills that have not been enacted by the end of the year usually have to be refiled in the next session. ■

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Why I Think Belonging to A Union Is Important

By Anne Wiley,
Greenfield Community College

Over my professional life, I have often reflected on my grandfather, who participated in a union in the 1930s and after. He saw many changes through his working career as a printer/lithographer, which lasted well into the 1960s. I know his union fought long and hard for workers' rights to a living wage, safe working conditions and a work life that respected a specific and creative skill set.

My grandpa was quiet about his union work, as a member of the larger AFL-CIO, but I know he worked to make his work life more pleasant and safe. Given that many of his fellow workers, mostly male, had Top Secret clearance in World War II as printers of bombing maps, I also know their professional sense of themselves changed over time through their work and their union. You may know some of the printing his company (Stecher Traung) did, because it printed seed packet labels. You can still find the labels and reproductions online. Just after his death, his union won a labor relations charge in 1968 on unilateral changes in working conditions.

I too have been a member of a union for most of my professional career. I too have witnessed the professional efforts of local, state and national union leaders to make our working conditions better through collective action and leadership concerning workers' rights. Over 30 years, I have come to appreciate the collective sense of working together for change. At times, we have worked with our legislators, our governor, our colleagues and our students in our community colleges and across the public higher education systems.

For me, belonging to a union means more than the alphabet soup of the GCCPA/MCCC/MTA /NEA. It means belonging to a group of professional teachers across the country. Building on the efforts of our predecessors, we work to create an environment that promotes fair and equitable opportunities to all employees who work with and teach students. I know the Weingarten rights allow a union representative at meetings with administrators. I know I have a right to fair working conditions that follow our contract, professional evaluations, and a reasonable schedule of work as outlined in the contract.

I know that because the contract is not always followed, it provides a grievance procedure to enable any employee the right to a fair hearing for redress of potential breaches. I know Chapter 150 E of Massachusetts law provides protections for collective bargaining and governs rules about impact bargaining changes in working conditions. I know many grievances filed across the state in the late 1980s led to a classification study that attempted to rectify some salary inequities. I know the Berkshire 8 Women, who began their efforts to address wage disparities as a grievance, went on to win a legal sex discrimination suit, which in turn benefited many MCCC/GCCPA members.

But I take none of these collectively bargained rights or case laws for granted. I choose to be an active member of collective action and work both locally and statewide to remain informed, participate in making change, and promote a professional work environment for all of us.

I recently attended a statewide MTA Higher Education conference at which NEA President Dennis Van Roekel spoke



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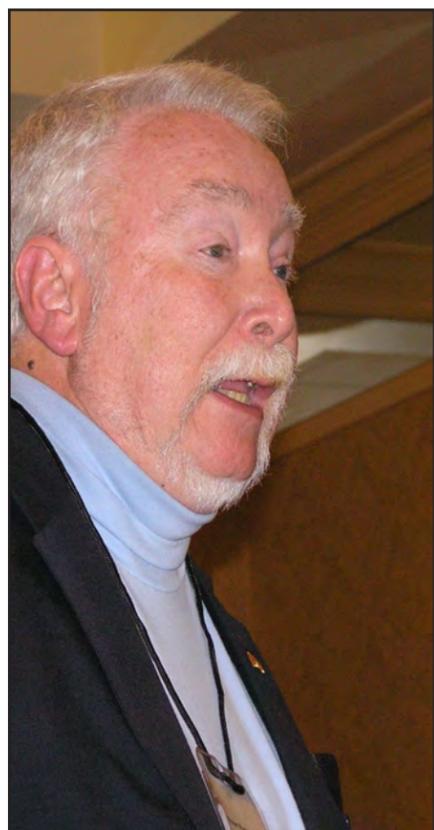
about national priorities regarding health care, working conditions for all workers, the right to choose a union under the Employee Free Choice Act, and a jobs bill that may provide funding for commu-

nity colleges. Our NEA is clearly working on the national agenda regarding access to public higher education. This is just further proof that a union empowers the whole collective. ■

Patrick Woos Higher Ed. Unions ...

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sions. He said his proposals were intended to protect the state pension plan. With the decrease in defined-benefit plans



Robert Rogers, Springfield Tech Chapter President, pointed out to Gov. Patrick at a meeting how community college salaries have not kept up with the private sector. (photo by Don Williams)

across the nation, these proposals were in keeping with what other systems are doing to maintain affordability and to protect the plans.

Donna Johnson of the University Staff Associates (USA) and chair of MTA's Higher Ed. Leadership Conference asked the governor, with all these issues, "How do we get our members to support you?"

Gov. Patrick responded, "The economy will not always be like this. It's coming back but not as fast as we'd like." He went on to say, "I'll know what to do when the revenues come back. What do you think Charlie Baker or Tim Cahill would do?"

The meeting ended on a cordial note. The governor said he would look into the furlough request and get back to the union leadership. ■



Donnie McGee and Max Page of MSP (UMass) both ran for the Higher Ed, seat on the MTA Executive Committee. Page won the election held at the MTA Annual Meeting in May. (Photo by Don Williams)

VISIT THE MCCC ONLINE!
<http://mccc-union.org>
Toll Free Phone: 877-442-MCCC

The MCCC website is the best and most up-to-date source for late breaking developments. Additional documents of interest and import to Day and DCE unit members have been added.

The MCCC Webpage is a valuable resource for MCCC updates, job opportunities and linkage to the NEA and MTA resources available to MCCC unit members.

Calendars of MCCC meetings, and committee assignments may be found there.

Additionally, MCCC events and news are available, as well as "old news" in the form of archived newsletters. Bookmark the site for frequent referral.

A 'Modest Proposal' for 'Public' Higher Education



Joe LeBlanc,
MCCC President

Great politicians articulate a vision and find ways to make it happen. Gov. Foster Furcolo provides this example of gutsy advocacy for our community college system. "Were we to sit back idly in anticipation of ultimate assistance from Washington, the lives of thousands, indeed hundreds of thousands of our most promising citizens would be permanently turned in the direction of mediocrity," he said at the opening convocation at Berkshire Community College on Sept. 12, 1960. "We would be wasting our most precious natural resource and we would be cheating these young people out of what they have a right to expect."

Such advocacy is missing today in Massachusetts. The Governor and legislature recently cut college budgets by 12 percent for FY11, the largest reduction in a decade filled with endless bad news for what we still call public higher education. The U.S. Senate's dithering over funding the Medical Assistance bill will likely mean about 3 percent in additional cuts.

We do not expect layoffs, but our colleges will manage continued record enrollments with few additional full-time faculty and professional staff. Colleges will hire more adjunct faculty and increase fees to balance the books. Job cuts are a certainty if 9C cuts are enacted in the fall, however.

Adjuncts help us to survive tough budgets. Instructor Jones makes about \$3,000 to teach her course. The college pays this adjunct and collects the rest with no obligation to provide benefits. As the official employer of thousands of adjunct faculty, the Commonwealth has denied benefits to adjuncts for decades.

We are suing to correct this injustice, but for now the Commonwealth contentedly eats away at the Academy. Everyone agrees that hiring new full-time faculty must be a priority when budgets improve, but many doubt that will happen.

The Grapevine, a higher education

think tank, reports that Massachusetts leads the nation in cutting state fiscal support (state tax appropriations, other state monies and federal stimulus and government service funds). From FY05 to FY10, the Commonwealth cut public higher education by 5.4 percent while Alabama increased its support by 29.1 percent, Arizona by 20.3 percent, Connecticut by 33.4 percent, Florida by 10.7 percent, Mississippi by 32.2 percent, and Louisiana by 24.3 percent.

PHENOM reports that our tuition and fees were "40 percent higher than the national average, and the state spends only half the national average on financial aid." The Grapevine ranks the Commonwealth 49th in state support for public higher education measured per \$1,000 in personal income. Massachusetts spent \$3.18 per thousand in FY09. Connecticut and New York, two similarly affluent Northeastern states, spent \$5.30 and \$5.13 per thousand respectively. Maine, the poorest state in New England spent \$5.85 while quirky New Hampshire with its mostly privatized system spent \$2.41, the worst record in the nation.

All of this leads me to make a modest proposal. In light of the Commonwealth's short- and long-term reckless behavior, let's just take the "public" out of higher education system. Until a corporate or other sponsors ante up some money for naming rights, let's call the University of Massachusetts simply "The University" at Amherst, Dartmouth, Boston or Lowell. Let's strip "state" from Bridgewater, Fitchburg, Framingham, Salem, Westfield and Worcester (State) Colleges and strike "Massachusetts" from the College of Art and Design, the College of Liberal Arts and the Maritime Academy.

And as for those lowly community colleges – you know, the ones that serve half the students in the system with a quarter of the state aid – Jonathan Swift provides inspiration. In *A Modest Proposal*, Swift suggested that Ireland breed its children for food as a way of "preventing the children of poor people in Ireland from being a burden to their parents or country, and for making them beneficial to the public."

Our colleges have become too much of a burden on the state and its limited means and vision, but we don't have to

resort to such barbarism. We can manage the neverending funding crisis by privatizing everything. After selling the naming rights to our community colleges to worthy corporate sponsors, our colleges should next sell off everything right down to the desks in our classrooms. By selling off the ownership of a computer, for instance, an investor could then charge a student for using this asset.

Everyone wins in this proposal except our students, of course, but at least we're not selling them for food. If this modest proposal goes as planned, the

Commonwealth will eventually manage to eliminate state support altogether.

But seriously, let's return to reality. Gov. Furcolo argued for immediate action: "Massachusetts' most important attraction to industry has been the plentiful supply of talents and skills we have to offer. Our nation's vitality and, indeed, survival, rest on its parts. We have, therefore, an obligation, a responsibility, to move ahead now."

Such vision is lacking in this most dismal season for "public" higher education. ■

Letters

Delegate Assembly Draws Comments

An Open Letter to My Fellow MCCC Members:

In my thirty plus years as a social worker, I have witnessed many situations in which one person made a difference. One of those occurred at the annual MCCC delegate assembly this year. An extremely contentious bylaw change proposal was being debated when someone challenged the number of delegates present. After two counts, it was determined that the assembly was one delegate short of a quorum, and the meeting was abruptly adjourned.

Many people had done an incredible amount of work to make this delegate assembly run efficiently and smoothly. The proposal that was aborted had been presented several times previously, and this year's debate saw the efforts of many trying to resolve the areas of concern. Then the challenge for the quorum was presented. That person who left early certainly made a difference.

The leadership of our union can only do so much. Each member has a responsibility to at least show up. The MCCC leadership does most of the work that keeps our union moving forward. But in the end, it takes all of us. The next time you think, "It really doesn't matter if I go to that meeting or not," remember that person who left the delegate assembly early. Next time, just show up. You could be the one who makes a difference.

In Solidarity,
Karen Fagan Riedl, Outgoing Chapter President,
Holyoke Community College

To the Editor:

When Republicans refuse to vote on President Obama's nominees to the courts or to other government agencies, we call them obstructionists even though their tactics are legal. When union members deliberately leave the Delegate Assembly so that there is no longer a quorum, preventing the assembled delegates, many of whom have spoken in favor of giving adjuncts a full vote, from voting on the measure, what would you call it?

Sincerely,
Betsy Smith, Ph.D.
Adjunct Professor of ESL
Cape Cod Community College

Fleecing American and Massachusetts Taxpayers

One small correction to Don Williams' excellent article "Higher Ed Inc...". The new American conservative economic ideal has little, if anything, to do with Adam Smith's notion of laissez-faire. In Smith's model, what laissez-faire meant was hands off, or in addition to no government hinderance of private business, also NO GOVERNMENT HELP OR ASSISTANCE TO PRIVATE BUSINESS.

What the new economic paradigm, which some have called state capitalism favors, and what our national and state governments have increasingly been doing, is to provide vast amounts of government assistance to private business. Such assistance, to name a few, includes everything from bail outs, loans, tax breaks, subsidies, military interventions, and overpriced government contracts, to double or triple the amount of student aid per capita that public college students receive.

What Bristol CC's new "public-private partnership" appears to be about is using the legitimacy, i.e. accreditation, of Bristol to provide significant profit to a private education company charging students higher tuition and/or fees, with likely higher student loan defaults to be picked up by Uncle Sam.

Harry Bowen, NSCC



Gov. Deval Patrick with MCCC leaders, from left Donnie McGee, Claudine Barnes and Joe LeBlanc. (photo by Don Williams)

In Memoriam



Earnest Therrien age 82 died on June 2, 2010. After teaching at St. Francis College (now University of New England) for 25 years, Earnest joined the faculty at Springfield Technical Community College in 1974 where was a Professor of Business and Management.

Earnest not only excelled as a teacher—He was the Outstanding Faculty Member of the Year at STCC for 1993-94 and was given the Excellence Award of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) for 1995. But he was also a dedicated union activist.

Earnest's union commitments for the MCCC were more in the MTA/NEA arena. He served on the Board of Directors of both organizations. He also served on the Higher Education Leadership Council (HELCC), the NEA Northeast Leadership Planning Committee, and the NEA Negotiations Team for a possible NEA-AFT merger. Earnest was a member of the Massachusetts and National Rehabilitation Associations, the Industrial Relations Research Association, and the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE)

He was the first recipient of the Raymond C. Lemieux Award recognizing his outstanding service, leadership, and dedication have contributed significantly to the Massachusetts Community College Council.

He is survived by his wife, Carolyn Tetrault, who has also received the Lemieux Award for her work at STCC and in the MCCC. ■

Write Us



The MCCC News welcomes contributions.

Letters to the Editor

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

Guest Columns

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

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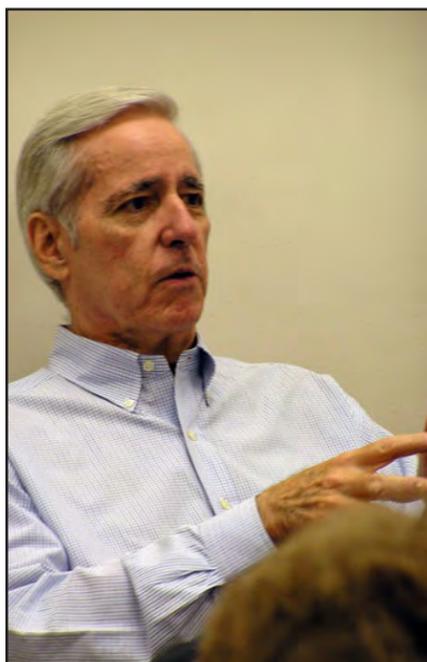
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The MCCC News is a publication of the Massachusetts Community College Council. The Newsletter is intended to be an information source for the members of the MCCC and for other interested parties. Members' letters up to 200 words and guest columns up 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



Sen. Harriet Chandler (D-Worcester) met with a group of AFSCME and MCCC members at Quinsigamond Community College. Behind Sen. Chandler from left are Virginia Asadoorian, Steve Zona, Philomena D'Allessandro, and MCCC Treasurer Phil Mahler. Attendees were impressed with Chandler's awareness of community college issues. She was sympathetic to the funding needs, but she told them the state's budget was so tight that there was no money. (courtesy photo)



MCCC lobbyist Charlie Flaherty gave his assessment of the political climate at the June meeting of the MCCC Board of Directors. (photo by Don Williams)

Know Your Day Contract

Professional staff work beyond the Academic Year. The dates below do not affect faculty.

June 2010

June 1 E8-Summary Evaluation by supervisor due (p.51).

June 1 Letter stating preferred work assignment submitted each year to supervisor (p.46).

June 1 Develop E-7 Form with supervisor. E-7 Form serves as basis of evaluation for the year. E-7 includes job description items (goals), objectives (if mutually agreed), and activities/methods (p.107).

July 2010

July 1 Notification of work assignment due from supervisor (p.51)

July 1 Off-Campus Days-3 days off campus for activities outside of those assigned (conferences, catching up on literature in the field, etc.). They may be taken in increments of a half-day or more. The 3 off campus days begin with fiscal year (p.46).