

MCCC



News

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2008 Delegate Assembly Sets '09 Agenda

The annual MCCC Delegate Assembly was held on April 26. One hundred members attended the meeting at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in downtown Worcester.

The principal tasks of the Assembly are to approve the MCCC's budget and to ratify Bylaw changes. But it is also an opportunity to gather a large, representative number of members from all over the state to meet and discuss important issues facing the union, and to recognize the accomplishments of our members.

In his opening remarks and report President Joe LeBlanc began by denouncing the climate of fear the president of Mass Bay Community College has engendered at that campus and praised the work of the chapter leadership in coping with the conditions. He laid out the MCCC's agenda for the up coming year including a continued effort to restore salaries to the 75th percentile and to continue to building internal structures to make the union a more effective organization.

Vice President Donnie McGee reported on her political action activities during the year. She noted that once again the state was trying to balance its budget on the backs of public employees. In particular was the proposal to increase health insurance costs. She made a special point to recognize the work of Rep. Marty Walsh in defending the rights of unionized public employees. She also thanked the co-chairs of the MCCC-PAC, retirees members Thelma Halberstadt and Frank Leary for their work, stressing how vital the PAC is in extending the union's effectiveness. [At the meeting's end it was announced that the PAC had raised \$2133.]

The budget this year produces little debate in part because no increase in dues was proposed. Despite this, the careful management of finances allowed increased expenditures for raising the mileage reimbursement rate to IRS levels, providing raises to officers and coordinators *per* policy, and establishing a Chapter Early Contact Program. Treasurer Phil Mahler thanked the members of the Finance Committee for their work: Geri Curley, Ken Czuchra, Clark Grain, Gail Guarino, Lois Martin, and Phil Kennedy.

While MCCC dues did not increase its portion of dues this year, the MTA portion did increase by \$20/year, which was approved at the May 9-10 MTA Annual Meeting. This was required by new regulations regarding funding of the pension liability for MTA employees. The NEA portion of dues is also proposed to increase by a few dollars per year, but this will need to be finalized at the NEA Representative Assembly (NEA-RA) in July.

Members should be aware that the MCCC collects dues not only for its own operation, but also for the state and na-



Representative Marty Walsh (D-Dorchester) was presented MTA's Distinguished Legislative Leadership Award at the Annual Meeting. Walsh is pictured here with MCCC VP Donnie McGee, President Joe LeBlanc and BHCC chapter Vice President Michael D'Entremont.

(Photo by Laura Barrett)

2008-2009 Dues

Union Member	Agency Fee		
	FT	PT earning over \$6k	PT earning under \$6k
MCCC	253.00	76.00	76.00
MTA	427.00	129.00	64.50
NEA	158.00	84.00	47.25
Total	838.00	289.00	187.75

Union Member	2008-2009 Dues		
	FT	PT earning over \$6k	PT earning under \$6k
MCCC	225.91	69.47	69.47
MTA	313.76	93.31	47.50
NEA	81.86	43.50	23.88
Total	621.53	206.28	140.86

tional organizations that we are affiliated with.

Those who opt to pay the agency fee should consider the advantages of Union membership. All members of the community college faculty and professional staff are covered by the negotiated collective bargaining agreements, receive communications like this newsletter, and are given basic protection for grievances. But only union members are allowed to participate in union governance. And, most significantly, only union members are eligible for the extensive legal representation MTA can provide in crisis situations.

Several Bylaws changes were considered. A few were intended to clarify language as recommended last year by parliamentarian Patricia LeGault. But some had significant impact.

Two proposed changes related to the voting status of part-time members: one would have increased their votes from

one quarter to a full vote, the other was to assign chapter delegate entitlement to the Delegate Assembly based on the full number of members and not as full-time equivalents. These proposals were both defeated.

A change was enacted relative to the Executive Committee. The committee is made up of the four elected officers and three chapter directors elected at large by the Board of Directors. The previous bylaw prevented a director who was from the same chapter as an elected officer from serving on the Executive Committee. This meant that as many as four of the 15 directors were ineligible to serve. Now all members of the Board are eligible to be on the Executive Committee.

By far the most significant Bylaw change was one to add two more seats on the Board of Directors. The MCCC has wrestled for several years over the relative status of part-time versus full-time members within the Union. As a compromise to giving all part-time members a full vote, the Board of Directors came up with a compromise of giving part-time/adjunct members two full at-large seats on the Board. This passed overwhelmingly.

These new Directors would be elected for a one-year term during the annual MCCC elections. All of the rules for nominations and election would apply for these positions. For the up coming year, and in the case of a vacated position, the Board of Directors is empowered to fill the positions. (See page four of this issue for how to apply for this year's vacancies.)

Recognizing the work of members is

another important part of the Assembly. This year four members were recognized with three awards.

The Jonathan Butler Award for outstanding chapter presidents was presented to two recipients: Susan Dole of Bunker Hill and Joseph W. O'Neill of Mass Bay. Dole was presented the award by BHCC Director Geri Curley who noted Dole's long commitment to the chapter and to her efforts to organize other chapter presidents to support the Mass Bay chapter. MBCC Director Ned McGuire presented O'Neill with the award citing his dedication in organizing the chapter and his strength in standing up to attacks by the college president.

The Raymond C. Lemieux award was presented to MCCC Treasurer Phil Mahler by Executive Committee member Lois Martin of Massasoit. This award recognizes the work of a member who has

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The Income Tax Repeal: Myth and Reality



Donnie McGee,
SAC Chair &
MCCC Vice President

In Massachusetts this fall, an initiative to eliminate personal income taxes and remove nearly \$12 billion from the annual state budget is expected to qualify for inclusion on the November 2008 ballot.

Voters will then decide whether or not this proposal should become enacted into law.

A nearly 40 percent cut in the Fiscal Year 2009 state budget sounds crazy, but residents across the state are struggling as fuel and food prices soar. Property taxes are being pushed to the max to support education costs and fund municipal services. Putting more dollars in taxpayers' pockets must sound appealing given current economic woes. In reality, however, the income tax repeal would provide only the façade of economic relief. And the trade-off would be disastrous in terms of services unfunded and an aging infrastructure left to deteriorate further.

Life in this Commonwealth would drastically change were this repeal supported. Consider the purported gains and the probable consequences. According to Carla Howell and Michael Cloud, the sponsors of this ballot initiative, getting rid of personal income taxes would force the government to eliminate waste and provide \$3,600 in relief to over 3 million workers in Massachusetts. But not all bodes well for residents should this proposal become reality.

How could the state operate with a

40% cut in spending? Waste exists in every business and every organization, but over the past two decades, the state treasury has been seriously challenged by reduced support from the federal government, drastically increased costs to health care, and numerous tax breaks to big business. Without consideration of the revenue loss from this proposal, the Commonwealth faces a \$1.3 billion revenue shortfall and will struggle to serve residents effectively.

Given such a mandate, what would the state eliminate? Can cities and towns absorb a 40 percent cut in local aid? Property taxes would have to increase to keep schools afloat and communities safe. Businesses and residents have valid concerns about the state's transportation network as well. How much longer can repairs to roads and bridges be deferred? Should the Commonwealth also curtail its planned investments in the life sciences and green technologies?

What about the state's investment in public higher education? Massachusetts has been repeatedly stigmatized as the worst in the nation in terms of per capita state support to its colleges and universities. These institutions need more support, not less. Doors would simply have to close in the face of deteriorating structures, under-funded allied health programs, and inadequate labs and libraries. The state would have to increase student tuition and fees yet again, well beyond the 57 percent increases that students have faced over the past 6 plus years. Many residents would be shut out from post-secondary pursuits altogether.

The state's economy would be further challenged if Howell and McCloud had their way. How could the state attract business? The well-being and stability of Massachusetts communities would be

questionable. Who would want to settle or stay in a state that could not provide an educated workforce, a reliable infrastructure, or a safe and secure community?

Some believe the myth that Massachusetts is aptly termed "Taxachusetts." The thought of eliminating the income tax gives comfort to such believers. Yet research from the Brookings Institution/Urban Institute Tax Policy Center indicates that Massachusetts ranks 32nd out of 50 states in terms of the amount of personal income taxes paid statewide. The current State Budget is structurally under-funded and projected to draw in ex-

cess of \$400 million from the state's rainy day funds. Adequate taxation ensures that communities and states not only survive but thrive. This fall ballot initiative would ensure the opposite.

The proposal to eliminate personal income taxes – the fairest of all taxes, is surely lunacy. It would provide short-term comfort at the risk of long-term disaster. The well-being and future of our colleges and our communities are at stake this November. Please educate your family, friends, and students about the real life costs and consequences of such revenue inadequacy. ■



Award recipients Geri Curley (left) and Susan Dole share a moment at the Delegate Assembly. (Photo by Don Williams)



The Board of Directors presented outgoing Secretary Phyllis Barrett with flowers in appreciation of her many years of service to the union. Barrett is seated to the left of the laptop computer. (Photo by Don Williams)

Delegate Assembly . . .

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made a significant contribution state-wide basis. Martin pointed out that Mahler is the embodiment of this. He has served from chapter president to director to MCCC president and treasurer and on to MTA Board of Directors. His energy is limitless as she noted in his volunteering to be the MCCC webmaster on top of everything else he does. Martin said, "Phil lives and breathes the union."

The most moving part of the event was the presentation of a plaque to Geri Curley that will hang on the door of the MCCC Boardroom in Worcester that will henceforth be called the Geri Curley Boardroom.

In presenting the plaque, President Joe LeBlanc expressed his personal gratitude to Geri who he called a friend, a mentor, and a role model of the quintessential union activist. Many members also rose to praise her with anecdotes of the many personal kindnesses and professional assistance Geri had extended to them.

Curley thanked everyone and said that she was humbled by their kind words. She was heartened that her work for the union was so appreciated and that it had such profound impact on so many people.

The meeting concluded shortly after lunch at 2:10. It was generally recognized as a productive event with the union looking in good shape for the upcoming year. ■

Stories Alone Won't Seal The Deal For Respectable Levels of State Support



Joe LeBlanc,
MCCC President

Veteran faculty and staff tell stories about the “good old days”-days when most day courses were taught by full-time, tenure track faculty. Adjunct faculty primarily taught evening courses in the Division of Continuing Education. Day

full-time students could enroll in four, five or more courses for a flat rate of tuition and much lower fees than they pay today.

Today our system is plugging along as best it can after harsh budget cuts in the early 1990's and earlier in this decade. Data tells us that the funding situation has improved somewhat in the last few years. But data also tells us that adjunct faculty now teach more than half of our community college courses during the day, in the evening and in cyberspace.

Hiring more full-time faculty is cited as a top priority again and again, but full-time faculty numbers haven't increased much. Programs are held together with a minimum number of full-timers. Student advising and graduation and retention rates suffer because too few full-time faculty work in our system.

Our stories become more compelling when they are backed up by evidence. Our pleas for increased funding become more urgent when data drives our arguments to legislators and other decision makers.

In an article titled “States and Their Community Colleges,” David F. Shaffer of the Rockefeller Institute begins to dig into data to argue that our community colleges matter too much to allow the present inadequate levels of state support to continue.

Community college missions are similar across the nation, yet states vary greatly in their actual use of community colleges. To begin to better understand the differences in community college utilization, the Institute ranks the states in five areas. Massachusetts comes up short in all of them:

- We come up short in market share, “the share of all college enrollments, on a full-time equivalent basis, that’s represented by enrollment in community colleges.” Massachusetts enrolled 51,788 (FTE) students in fall 2005, a 14.5 percent share of all enrollments, compared to a national average of 27.7 percent.
- We come up short in the percentage of the population that attends a community college: 1.7 percent of the population 18 and over attends a community college either full- or part-time. In this category, the Commonwealth ranks 38th in the nation, trailing every other industrialized state except Pennsylvania. Cali-

fornia leads the pack with a 5.29 percent share. The U.S. average is 2.77 percent.

- Community college enrollments grew in nearly every state at an average increase of 11.5 percent from 2000-2005. Maine, Montana, Kentucky, Arkansas and West Virginia grew by more than 30 percent. Massachusetts ranked 38th with growth of 7.4 percent of its FTE.
- Community college enrollments are growing at a slightly slower rate (minus 1 percent) compared to four-year public colleges. Community college enrollments are growing faster than four-year public institutions in 35 states, however. West Virginia’s community college enrollment grew by 66.1 percent relative to its four-year colleges. Massachusetts ranked 35th with a 0.9 percent increase compared to our state colleges and UMass.

Shaffer argues that the differences in how the states manage their community colleges do matter. He writes, “... states with strong community college systems offer a cost effective way to help more of their citizens eventually earn four-year degrees; will enable more of their citizens to move up from low-wage jobs and find high-skill, well-paid careers; will bolster economic development by meeting employer needs for qualified workers; and will help high school graduates with weak skills catch up.”

The data is less than conclusive to address some questions, and more research is needed. For example, tuition levels may or may not affect enrollment and utilization rates. In 2006-2007, Massachusetts’ community colleges charged \$2,983 for tuition and fees; this is 39 percent of the tuition and fees at a 4-year public college. The national average is \$2,017/35 percent. California a big outlier at \$674/15 percent. Shaffer says research does little to identify successful financial aid systems, a big factor in any argument about community college tuition levels.

What makes a community college system successful? Shaffer argues for further analysis of outcomes measurements for transfer, employment and remedial success, tuition and financial aid policies, ease of transfer from two- to four-year colleges, and best practices for governance, finance and administrative systems.

Our instincts are telling us that our community colleges matter more than ever before. We have powerful stories to tell, and our anecdotes illustrate the fact that we may be critically important to the Commonwealth’s future. Until we mine and analyze the data, however, our stories will likely come up short. Without the supporting evidence, our case to the legislature and the public will pack an emotional punch, but the funding gap will continue. ■

Reminiscences of a Career in the Community College System

By Harry Bowen
Professor Emeritus North Shore
Community College

When I joined the NSCC faculty in 1967, I was full of enthusiasm and anxious to replicate what I had experienced as a graduate student and as a faculty member at a peace oriented college in the mid west.

Surprise! Although high ranking administrators at the college initially encouraged my enthusiastic writing, speaking, and organizing of a community issues forum, they soon were bristling at my outspoken advocacy of faculty participation in the governance process. This, combined with my committed opposition to the Viet Nam War, pushed our Academic Dean over the edge. “I hear on good authority,” he said, after summoning me to his office, “that you are either a communist or a communist sympathizer, and in either event, I’ll see you out of this college, if it’s the last thing I ever do.” From that moment on, my life became a living hell with almost daily summonings, intimidation, threats, and machinations orchestrated by our Academic Dean and President.

The organization with which I was affiliated, and in which I represented Massachusetts community college faculty, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), along with a decent and courageous Department Chair who refused to support my termination, were all that kept me from joining the ranks of other faculty at the college who were fired because of their “subversive” beliefs and/or activities.

I refused to relent in what I believed, then and now, is the responsibility of faculty to defend academic freedom and professional rights to the fullest extent possible. But as a result, I was repeatedly passed over for promotion, “merit” increases, and decent class schedules by administrators who believed in wielding rewards and punishments as a behavioral control mechanism.



I remember debates and discussions that eventually convinced me of the necessity of unionizing to preserve basic rights and economic security. The straw that broke the camel’s back and persuaded almost everyone that we had no choice but to unionize was the arbitrary and capricious termination, without due process or adequate notice, of dozens of faculty and staff throughout the community college system in the summer of 1974.

Prior to hearings before the Massachusetts Labor Relations Board to determine the “scope” of a collective bargaining unit, Tim Fitzgerald, representing the MTA, and I, representing the AAUP, met to decide what would be the position at the hearings. Tim graciously relented to my position of separate bargaining units at each community college. And although we presented a solid defense of that position, in hindsight I can now say that it was indeed fortunate that the MLRB ruled in favor of a single collective bargaining unit for all Massachusetts community college faculty and staff.

Voted into existence by an overwhelming majority of faculty and staff in 1976, our new state wide union, the MCCC, became the means by which significant economic improvement, academic freedom, and due process rights were accomplished over the next twenty-five plus years.

One significant omission, however, in all our early contracts was the lack of equity in salary. Although the union made many efforts to correct discrepancies caused by variations in market conditions and arbitrary salary awards by administrators, those efforts resulted in very little improvement in salary equity. Fortunately, because of the committed and tenacious effort of a number of our union leaders (among these, the names of Phil Mahler and Dennis Fitzgerald come to mind) an extensive, rational, and objective salary equity system was funded and implemented in 2001.

As a result of “classification”, we significantly improved equity in salaries within our system, and in relation to other community college systems. And despite the fact that we’ve fallen behind peer states in recent years, we at least have a system in place that provide faculty and staff with

compensation based on reasonable criteria.

Also, in my view, failure to achieve parity at the seventy-fifth percentile, and exemption from the “constraints” of classification for some new hires constitute grave threats to the hardest won and most important success our union has achieved to date. Overcoming these obstacles should be a first priority for the MCCC. Otherwise, such holes in the system could in time burst the dam that has more than any other feature in our collective bargaining contract provided Massachusetts community college faculty and staff members with self respect, solidarity, and a decent future.

[Bowen has retired from full-time employment, but continues to teach part-time and maintains his MCCC commitment by serving as NSCC DCE Grievance Coordinator and as a member of the Adjunct Ad Hoc Committee.]



Mass Bay chapter president Joseph W. O'Neill addresses the Delegate Assembly on receiving the Jon G. Butler Award. (Photo by Don Williams)

MCCC VACANCIES

Part-time/ Adjunct At-Large Directors

As established by a bylaws change at the Delegate Assembly, there are two new directors added to the Board of Directors to represent DCE adjunct faculty at-large. In the future these positions will be elected by the membership of the unit during the annual MCCC elections in March.

For this first year these two directors will be appointed by the Board of Directors at the August 22 meeting.

Responsibilities

Within provisions of the Bylaws, and policies established and actions ordered by the Delegate Assembly, the Board of Directors shall be responsible for the management of the Council.

The Board meets the third Friday of each month from August through June at the MCCC office in Worcester. The meetings normally begin at 10:30 am and conclude by 5 pm. Lunch is provided and travel expenses are reimbursed at IRS rates.

MCCC Committees

Finance Committee

Composition: MCCC Treasurer and 5 members: Sept. 1 of appointment year for a two-year term.

Responsibilities: Prepare a budget, recommend dues, administer and maintain financial policies, monitor fiscal affairs.

Personnel Committee

Composition: 5 members; Sept. 1 of appointment year for a two-year term.

Responsibilities: Prepare and revise job descriptions, evaluations, salaries, and administer and recommend personnel policies.

Bylaws and Rules Committee

Composition: 5 members: Sept. 1 of appointment year for a two-year term.

Responsibilities: Review proposed amendments to the Bylaws and Rules.

Editorial Review Board

Composition: 3 members; Communications Coordinator (chair), President or designee, and a campus newsletter editor.

Responsibilities: Recommend policies and guidelines for the Newsletter and all MCCC publications. Review content of each Newsletter. Assist the Communications Coordinator to develop new ideas, techniques, etc. for the Newsletter and other MCCC publications.

Statewide Implementation Committee on Distance Education

Composition: 3 unit members; Contractually mandated.

Responsibilities: Discuss and develop an evaluation instrument for distance education courses, and address the Higher Education Collaborative Distance Learning Honors Course Project and any other distance education programs now in progress.

Joint Study Committee

Composition: President and 3 full-time unit members; Contractually mandated.

Responsibilities: Meet with the employer and try to resolve labor/management issues.

Day Negotiating Team

Day unit members are invited to apply to serve on the next DCE Bargaining Team. The current Day contract expires June 30, 2009.

The team is composed of the MCCC President and Vice-President, as ex officio members, and a minimum of five members of the Day unit that are appointed by the Board of Directors. The team is responsible for negotiating with the employer on behalf of the Council and the Day unit on all matters relating to hours, wages, and working conditions. The team's term of office ends upon the expiration date of an agreement or the formation of a new team.

Commitment

Applicants should understand that membership on a team constitutes a large time and energy commitment, a commitment to training, a commitment to serving the team as required as chair, vice chair, secretary or member at large, and in any other related way as required to serve MCCC members.

To Apply

Day unit members interested in applying should submit a cover letter and résumé to the MCCC office. The following information should be addressed in these materials. Be sure to include contact information, including an email address.

1. Union experience at chapter level, statewide level, or in other systems
2. Academic background
3. Bargaining experience
4. Knowledge and understanding of labor relations
5. Reasons for wishing to serve.

If you are interested in any of these positions or have any questions, contact MCCC President Joe LeBlanc at President@mccc-union.org ■



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



Remembering The 1990 Bristol DCE Strike

Ron Lister (professor of art, BRCC/MCCC membership chair) created this painting of the DCE strike at Bristol in 1990. The marching faculty are, left to right, Howard Tinberg (English), Alan Powers (English), and the artist Ron Lister (Art). They recently got together to take a photo of the principals along with the painting as a way to capture and share a glimpse of MCCC history before "we all grow too old and grey."

