

MCCC News



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MCCC Fall Conference Taking it Higher

This year's MCCC Fall Conference on Oct. 19 was a resounding success with a program that had something for everyone. The central focus, however, was on member activism.

Deborah "Arnie" Arnesen has been a fixture on the New Hampshire political scene having been the Democratic nominee for governor a few years ago and now being a consultant and radio talk show host. She gave the keynote address after dinner, and then led a breakout session later in the evening.

Arnesen's address was titled "A Spine is a Terrible Thing to Waste," or "Why I Too am a Knee Jerk Liberal." She was inspired by an article author James Michener wrote for *Parade* magazine in 1991. She kept the article with her as she campaigned for office to re-

mind her of the values she holds. She read the following excerpt:

... **I am a knee-jerk liberal.**

"When I find that a widow has been left penniless and alone with three children, my knee jerks. When men of ill intent cut back on teacher's salaries and lunches for children, my knee jerks. When

the free flow of ideas is restricted, when universities double their fees, my knee jerks. And I hope never to grow so old or indifferent that I can listen to wrong and immoral choices being made without my knee flashing a warning."

Reflecting on the current political climate, she noted that people who espouse

Michener's values have been beaten down by criticism of government and progressive policies. And they have been too timid about standing up for those values.

Arnesen's breakout session was titled "Mind the Passion Gap: How to Reframe the Anger," and in this session she built on the theme of her keynote and moved into how to stand up for issues that we believe in. It requires activists to pay attention to the negative messages and misinformation coming out in the media, and to work to counteract these messages.

She used the example of an article in the Boston Globe in September about significant enrollment increases at community colleges. At its end the article pointed out that there are declining numbers of high school graduates.

Arnesen pointed out that the article diminished community colleges by suggesting that we only serve a shrinking pool of students. Situations like this provide an opening for a public dialog about the important role community colleges play for non-traditional, older students, for job re-trainers, and increasingly for veterans. Letters to the editor can redirect the discussion.

She talked about the influence talk radio, which she noted is predominantly conservative, and their often negative attitude towards public institutions like community colleges. It's a challenge, she admitted, but she has gotten on to some of these call-in shows and been able to point out the errors in their statements. That's not for the faint of heart. But there are radio talk hosts who do support public institutions and calling, or emailing, or tweeting them may get them to take an issue further.

Arnesen named Jim Braude on WTTK as an example. His radio show is slotted in between conservative shows, and many of those shows' fans keep their radios tuned to the same station and get exposed to the other side of issues when Braude comes on. Community colleges are where many of these listeners and their family members go to college, and if they start calling in to show support, this can really change the discussion. She urged people to look for every opportunity they can to put their issues forward.

There were several other break out sessions that addressed a wide variety of member interests. There were sessions on the basics of both the Day and



Political activist Arnie Arnesen gave the keynote address titled "A Spine is a Terrible Thing to Waste" at the Oct. 19 MCCC Fall Conference. (Photo by Don Williams)

2012 MCCC Election Nominations

Nominations are open for MCCC officers, At-Large Directors, Delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting, and Delegates to the NEA-RA. Members can nominate themselves by mailing in the form found in this or the December issue of the MCCC News. The easiest way is by submitting the electronic form through the website http://mccc-union.org/Nominations_2012.

Nominations will close at 4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 2, 2012. Ballots will be mailed to all MCCC members on Feb 26. The deadline for returning ballots is 4 p.m. on Thursday, Mar. 22. Election results will be announced by Monday, Mar. 26.

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 listed above. Officer candidates may submit a 250-word statement with an accompanying photo by the nomination deadline, for the March issue of the MCCC News.

At-Large Part-time/ Adjunct Directors

These two positions are 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-time members, but they cannot be agency fee payers. The signature form is available on the MCCC website listed above. At-large director candidates may submit a 250-word statement with an ac-

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Occupy This...



Don Williams, MCCC
Communications
Coordinator

For the past three years we've seen a downward spiral of bad news: recession, unemployment, stagnant wages, declining standards of living, attacks on worker rights. As we all struggled to hang on to what we have—pre-

serve our health insurance, and pensions—many of us have felt powerless to improve the situation. The public is in an ugly mood. State and federal budgets are down, and no one is willing to consider increasing revenues. It seemed like there was no light at the end of the tunnel.

The occupy Wall St. movement has been an incredibly heartening part of the news for the past couple of months. Finally, people are standing up *en masse* and saying, "I'm mad as hell, and I'm not going to take

it anymore!" In a mass media driven world, where money talks the loudest, those without money have trouble being heard. But mass action, and civil disobedience across the nation does get attention.

Over the past 30 years income inequality has increased to levels not seen since the 1930s. Corporations have profited by moving production overseas, benefitting the investors (or "job creators" in 21st century newspeak) who hold shares in those companies, but eliminating millions of family-supporting jobs.

In a mass media driven world where money talks, and where the Supreme Court says that corporations are people and there's no limit on how loud they can shout, the average person needs a collective voice. In a way the Tea Party was doing the same thing in 2009. They believed they weren't being heard, and Pres. Obama's push for universal health care was the straw that broke them into action. They got a lot of attention and tapped into the well of general discontent.

The Tea Party movement seemed to be mostly older people who feared that government would take things away from

them—taxes and mandated insurance were their specific focus, but keeping the government's hand off their Medicare was a point made by many. They picked up politicians and political operatives who steered the movement into an electoral wave in 2010. A wave that has left a lot of people beached.

The Occupy movement is predominantly young people who feel that corporations are to blame for the problems. With nearly zero growth, and with people who do have jobs hanging on to them dearly, there are no jobs for them. They're indentured to student loans that the financial industry has turned into the next looming debt crisis. They don't see any future for themselves with the current political/economic conditions as they are.

These young people have been criticized for not having a clear agenda, but it's taken 30 years of behind the scenes actions in Congress to get where we are, and a large movement can't be expected to have a clear solution for the mess we're in. The problems are myriad. But the symbolic focus on Wall St. is well placed. The influence of big money has corrupted the

political process. When 75 percent of the public, including a majority of Republicans, say they support increased taxes on the top 1 percent, yet a solid bloc of congress adamantly opposes any tax increase, then something is broken.

The Occupy movement's campout, and the swelling number of cities joining in has definitely gotten media attention. The support they've received from the public has demonstrated that they are representing a large percentage of the 99 percent.

It's hard to believe that even these dedicated activists could last through a New York or Boston winter. Mayors are getting tired of them, too. But if they continue, the scenes of an economic Valley Forge could be a media mega-story.

If the movement continues to be active when the election cycle begins, their image alone could be a powerful force.

If they can occupy the hearts of voters and politicians who support the movement, they may have a significant electoral influence. If they can occupy the minds of politicians who don't support the movement and motivate them to change, then the country could really move towards balance. ■

MCCC Fall Conference . . .

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DCE contracts. Diana Yohe, chair of the DCE team, covered that contract; Grievance Coordinator Dennis Fitzgerald covered the Day contract. Fitzgerald gave a later session on specifics of the full-time Classification System explaining how points are assigned initially and when status changes.

Newer members benefit from these sessions the most. Fitzgerald admits that the collective bargaining agreement is not the first thing new hires read, but these documents do set out the responsibilities of both union and management, and being familiar with them can save members a lot of trouble. Senior members also benefit from these sessions. And the question and answer periods can bring out very useful points.

Distance learning was another topic, with a presentation on dealing with changes in learning management systems. Conducted by DCE Grievance Coordinator Joe Rizzo, the MCCC's distance learning guru, and Rick

Lizotte, both from Northern Essex, this session recounted their experiences as their college changed from WebCT to Blackboard and the kinds of issues that need to be addressed in such changes.

Rizzo covered contractual ramifications of changing platforms related to the Distance Learning Agreement. He advised that chapters facing these changes should get their Distance Education Committees early in the process to address issues of workload, compensation for course redesign, and faculty being evaluated over problems they did not create.

Lizotte, who besides teaching provides support to online faculty, covered some of the more technical aspects of coping with changes. He reminded that links and permissions will probably all have to be reestablished. He advised instructors to logically organize their course materials into folders and to be sure to back up all files on flash drives.

Social media usage is becoming increasingly contro-

versial on campuses, and a session presented by Laurie Houle from MTA's legal department and Sara Nathan from the communications department was well attended. She discussed the ownership and privacy aspects of using college computers and networks. Members should not expect privacy when using college equipment or facilities. A suggestion was made that if you have a smart phone and want to use it for email privately on campus then set it to use the 3G/4G instead of the college wireless network.

Issues regarding the use of social networks were also discussed. Colleges all have Facebook presences and most students do as well. Some faculty have their own sites for connecting with their students, and some colleges encourage that, but members should be careful to separate their college and personal usage to segregated accounts. This is a rapidly changing area, and the rules are still evolving.

Professional staff had an opportunity to meet with Karen Carreras-Hubbard from Berkshire CC who chairs the Professional Staff Committee and former chair, now retired, Karen Riedl from Holyoke.

Riedl led a later discussion session on what makes a good chapter leader. She is preparing a handbook for new chapter presidents and shared her own insights on that role, but the discussion expanded to the broader leadership roles. How MTA's Full Capacity Locals program can be employed to build chapter organization was also discussed.

Retirement is always a popular session topic and this year there were sessions for both full- and part-time members. Ed McCourt from Mass Bay CC, who also works part-time for MTA, has been a frequent presenter on the State Retirement Plan at the conference. A separate session for the part-time OBRA retirement plan was conducted by Rob Young, a representative of the OBRA provider Great-West. This was a great opportunity for participants to get their questions answered about this mandatory plan.

The meeting wrapped up with a general discussion and a raffle for five- \$100 dollar prizes. ■



Winners of the five \$100 door prizes at the Fall Conference were, from left, Alison Hall of QCC, Skip Tenczar of STCC, Robert Rogers of STCC, Jerry LePage of BrCC, Rosemarie Freeland of GCC, joined by MCCC President Joe LeBlanc.
(Photo by Don Williams)

Finding Pathways to Prosperity for Our Students



Joe LeBlanc,
MCCC President

Governor Deval Patrick is a decent man who has served the Commonwealth in tough economic times. He speaks with conviction about the transformative power of education. His personal story illustrates how good schools make a difference.

Weeks before his first term, I listened with hope at UMass-Amherst when he promised to be a champion for public higher education. I volunteered to serve on his

Readiness Project. With so many people pulling together, better days were surely just around the corner. Public higher education would soon receive adequate funding. Much-needed faculty and staff would be hired. In the longer run, even free community college seemed possible. In the Patrick Administration's early days, nothing seemed impossible.

It's been mostly bad news ever since. State support to our community colleges has been cut with enrollment increases supported on the backs of adjuncts and other part-time employees. Students and their families pay more and get less in a system where privatization is seen as innovation.

In such a context, I attended the Governor's recent Education Summit with skepticism. About 200 stakeholders – including damned few frontline teachers and staff – listened to polite, listless opening remarks praising our Education Governor and our students' achievements on standardized tests. Even the Gover-

nor seemed a bit off his game. Was he losing his edge? Had I wasted my time taking the early morning train to listen to this?

"In Massachusetts today, we have a lot to be proud of," he said. I sighed. Sure, our test scores are great, but what about the thousands of technical jobs that go unfilled due to the lack of qualified candidates. He mentioned higher education and the Vision Project. Would this be a speech about standards and accountability? I hoped not.

And then things perked up. He challenged us to close the Achievement Gap, a big problem in Gateway Cities where curricula is often misaligned and test scores are persistently uneven. The governor spoke eloquently about the students we are leaving behind. He cited a 2009 study of graduating classes from 10 suburban and 10 urban districts: "On-time graduation rates were 97 percent in the suburbs, 59 percent in the cities. 97 percent of suburban kids went on to enroll in four-year colleges; 49 percent of city kids... fewer than 10 percent of young men of color in Boston are graduating from four-year colleges."

The problem is caused by poverty and the solution starts with these ideas, according to the Governor. First, his House 1 budget will propose funding for a pilot Kindergarten Literacy Program. "Three quarters of children who struggle with reading by third grade will continue to struggle academically," he said.

Second, he will establish Student Support Councils in low-income schools. The councils will use human and social service providers to confront problems at home and in the neighborhoods. "Mental health issues, family violence, housing instability and inadequate nutrition – all are real and present ob-

stacles to student attendance, attentiveness and success," he said.

Third, his House 1 budget will propose funding for Summer English Learning Camps for immigrant students. By providing this extra help for English Language Learners outside the traditional academic year, these students will be better able to succeed. "A one-size fits all, batch-processing model never was intended to work for all of our children, does not meet our goal of proficiency for all, and falls far short of what will be necessary to maintain our top economic advantage: a highly-educated workforce," he said.

More ideas erupted like mini-explosions in the governor's speech and in follow-up breakout sessions. Pilot Career Academies would provide "high school students with the opportunity for early career exploration, more applied and experiential learning, and similar educational experiences that motivate students who do not see themselves as college bound."

Another idea, anchored by Pathways to Prosperity, a Harvard's Graduate School of Education report, aims to correct the mismatch between where the jobs are and student skills with the following focus: fostering better working relationships between high schools and two-year colleges, better orienting students to college and career training opportunities, and better engaging everyone, including unions, in a conversation about how to better prepare our students for the workforce.

Our Governor once had an educational ticket to nowhere. Milton Academy transformed his life. Good schools do indeed make a difference. He is asking us to work together to eliminate the achievement gap, an endeavor that seems relevant and critically important to everything we do. ■



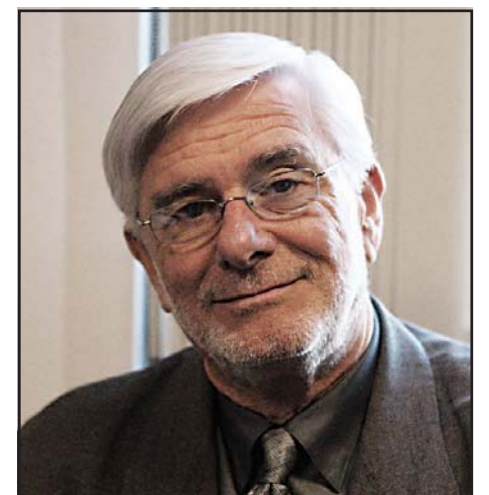
Karen Riedl (right) conducted a session on developing chapter leaders at the Fall Conference.
(Photo by Don Williams)

MTA Taps Former MCCC President Fitzgerald

Tim Fitzgerald has been appointed as MTA Interim Director of Higher Ed. Fitzgerald was the first president of the MCCC in the mid-1970s and is the brother of MCCC Grievance Coordinator Dennis Fitzgerald.

After leaving the MCCC, Fitzgerald had gone on to work for MTA and other NEA affiliates before retiring a few years ago. He has agreed to serve until June 2012 as MTA continues to search for a new full-time director.

The last Director of higher Ed., Arthur Pippo, left to become Executive Director of NEA-New Hampshire in the summer of 2010. Donna Sirutis has been acting as



director while still being the consultant to the Mass State College Association (MSCSA). ■

Know Your Day Contract

December 2011

- Dec. 1** Applications due for Sabbatical Leave beginning July 1 for professional staff or Fall semester for faculty. (p. 23)
 - Dec. 22** Last day fall semester can end (p. 45)
 - Dec. 25** Christmas (p. 21)
 - Dec. 30** Professional staff submit documentation of performance of duties and responsibilities including, but not limited to a log student advisement, if appropriate, and college service activities (p. 51)
- 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 are from the 2010–2013 Collective Bargaining Agreement. It is also available on line at mccc-union.org.

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.

Free Life Insurance for Union Members

Members of the MCCC are also members of the National Education Association, and as an NEA member you are automatically covered by the NEA Complimentary Life Insurance (formerly known as NEA DUES-TAB) term life insurance. It is a guaranteed benefit for Active and Life members. All you need to do is register your beneficiary.

The free program offers \$1,000 of term life insurance, up to \$5,000 (depending on years of membership) of accidental death and dismemberment coverage, and up to \$50,000 of AD&D insurance for any covered accident that occurs while on the job or serving as an association leader.

To register your beneficiary or to obtain more information call 1-800-637-4636, or go to www.neamb.com/xchg/neamb/xsl/hs.xsl/-/home/1199_881.htm ■



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

MCCC Election Nominations

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companying photo by the nomination deadline, 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 candi-

dates 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.

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. ■

Massachusetts Community College Council Nomination Form - 2012

A candidate must file this form (or a copy) with the MCCC Elections Committee to arrive by Thursday, February 2, 2012, 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 11 - 12, 2012
 NEA Representative Assembly Delegate **
 Washington, DC, June 30 - July 5, 2012

MCCC AT-LARGE DIRECTOR***

- Part-time/Adjunct Director (2 positions)

*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: Gender Female Male
 Black Caucasian Asian Pacific Islander
 Hispanic-Chicano Native American

On Web http://mccc-union.org/Nominations_2012 Download signature forms from link above	OR	By Mail Elections Chairperson MCCC 27 Mechanic Street, Suite 104 Worcester, MA 01608-2402
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Signature _____ Date _____
 (Signature may be typed)

Deadline: MUST BE RECEIVED by Thursday, February 2, 2012, 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.
