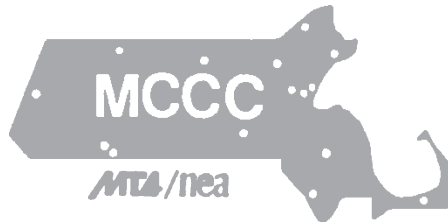


MCCC



News

208

The Official Publication of the *Massachusetts Community College Council* / Volume 6, Issue 25 / May 2007

2007 Delegate Assembly

The annual MCCC Delegate Assembly was successfully conducted on April 28. Over 100 members participated in this most significant event of the MCCC calendar.

The meeting began with reports from President Joe LeBlanc and Vice President Donnie McGee that highlighted the activities they engaged in for the past year. This was followed by greetings from MTA President Anne Wass and Vice President Paul Toner.

Strategic Directions was a theme for this year's meeting, and the next part of the agenda was an activity led by three members who participated in the MCCC retreat in January: Rosemarie Freeland of GCC, Claudine Barnes of CCC and Ned McGuire of MBCC.

Representing a new generation of union activists, Rosemarie, Claudine and Ned talked about their experiences at the retreat in January and the excitement they felt in being part of steering the union on a new course. They also encouraged other members to get involved in the process.

Then they presented a short list of core union values and got the assembled delegates to break into groups and discuss their perspectives on them. Time was limited, but the discussions were lively, and each group was able to jot down their thoughts on at least one value for discussion later in the day.

The presentation of awards was the next order of business. Kenn Anania of Massasoit was presented the Jon G. Butler Award as outstanding chapter president by the chapter director, Lois Martin. In her statement, Martin said that Kenn always tells the members "There is a U in union," but, she added, "Kenn there is no union without you."

Rick Doud was presented the Raymond

Lemieux Award for his significant service to the MCCC from chapter activist and officer to MCCC president and negotiations chair. In presenting the award, Middlesex chapter president and director David Kalivas noted the commitment, energy and good humor that Doud brings to his union work.

A special award was presented to Phil Mahler by President Joe LeBlanc in recognition of Mahler's extensive work on the MCCC website. LeBlanc praised Mahler for the thoroughness and timeliness of the website as well as for other efforts that Mahler does for the union that are above and beyond the already extensive duties of treasurer.

The business session followed a buffet lunch. Approving the budget is a major task of the Delegate Assembly. Treasurer Phil Mahler presented an overview of this year's budget calling for a small increase in dues, representing an annual increase of \$10 for full-time members and \$3 for the typical part-time member. Unlike some previous years, there was little discussion and the budget passed easily.

Controversy did follow when Bylaw proposals came up. For the third consecutive year there was a proposal, this year submitted by Betsey Smith, an adjunct faculty member at Cape Cod. The proposed change was to make the votes of part-time members in MCCC and in chapter elections equal to the votes of full-time members. The current language counts part-time members at one quarter of a full-time member.

Smith made a well-reasoned and impassioned rationale for the change. She said that adjunct faculty represent nearly two thirds of the MCCC unit. She went on to note that in the discussion of strategic directions equity and member involvement were important factors. The current situa-



Adjunct activist Betsy Smith, CCC, speaks at the Delegate Assembly in favor of proposal for equal voting rights.

tion of different voting rights was contradictory to those values. She called for the union to "walk the walk."

Debate became lively with proponents of the change dominating the speakers list. Both part-time and full-time members spoke in favor. Their arguments were based on the issues of equitable treatment and the significant contribution part-time faculty and staff make to the colleges and to the union.

Opponents of the change pointed out that the interests of adjunct faculty are very different from those of full-time members and that ideally faculty and staff at community colleges should be predominantly full-time. Having such a high level of members being part-time is not something that the union envisioned, but the present situation has come about by actions of management.

It was noted that adjuncts are well qualified and provide valuable service to students. But many have other, full-time employment. And, in general, they are less involved than full-time faculty in the profession, the colleges and the union. Speakers, both for and against the proposal, recognized the significant commitment some adjuncts, like those attending the Delegate Assembly, make to the entire community college community.

The day ended with an assessment of the Strategic Direction activity done earlier in the day. In looking at the written comments made by the groups, the leaders were pleased to see the focus was not on the mundane improvement of pay and working conditions but on the larger philosophical issues. They felt that this was a good sign that the union was ready to deal with essential values that underpin everything the union does. ■

PHENOM Makes a Splash

On April 25, 200 advocates for higher education gathered at the State House for a rally to make PHENOM a known entity not only within the State House but also to the public at large.

With 16,000 signed cards of support from all over the state, the group intended to demonstrate to the governor and legislators that there is widespread support for public higher education. This support only needs to have a focal point for organizing, and that is what PHENOM sees as its role.

PHENOM (Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts) is a coalition of students, alumni, faculty, staff and administrations from all 29 public college and university campuses. Essentially, the group's mission is to make ours "the finest, most affordable, and most accessible public higher education system in the country."

Gathering in Gardner Auditorium for an introduction with advice for conducting direct contact with legislators, participants were put into teams that would disburse through the State House to visit legislators in their offices.

Each team had a leader who was prepared with flyers and a list of legislators to see. MCCC Vice President Donnie McGee and a number of other members of the MCCC SAC team were involved either as participants or leaders.

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



From left, Rosemarie Freeland, GCC, Claudine Barnes, CCC, and Ned McGuire, MBCC, lead the Delegate Assembly in a Strategic Directions workshop.

Celebrating Student Success with “Pomp and Circumstance”



Donnie McGee,
SAC Chair &
MCCC Vice President

The imposing white tent will soon be filled with parents, children, and invited guests of the June 2007 graduates at Bristol Community College. Caps and gowns will be donned. Spirited students will decorate mortar

boards with personal messages, both silly and serious. Gowned faculty and administrators, counselors and librarians, all in festive alma mater colors and varied headgear, will line the sidewalk to applaud the students they have come to honor. The strains of Edward Elgar’s “Pomp and Circumstance” will announce that the ceremonial march is about to begin. This grand tradition gives poignancy and dignity to the student success that this graduation commemorates.

The ceremony itself I have rarely missed. It is a beautiful reminder of the hope and promise that this community college provides for every student who walks through its open doors. The students, some with flowers in hand, laugh and banter as they take their final Bristol steps midst cameras and the cheers of faculty and friends. I smile and congratulate my former students, knowing many will graduate with honors and receive scholarships to bring them closer to the personal, career, and professional goals that have motivated them.

The day’s pomp and circumstance evoke

both gladness and a cathartic sadness and sense of relief. It is a deserved tribute to the juggling acts that these students have performed to earn their certificates and degrees. Working 20 to 30 hours a week is the norm. Some are parents. Many have struggled to pay for the tuition, student fees, and books that this educational journey has required. Many are the first in their families to go to college and have had no mentors other than the ones their campus experiences provided. Some have persisted solely driven by their own dreams and by the confidence infused in them with each successful semester.

I am thankful to experience this final triumph with them. Each of these students has a unique tale to tell. Such narrations I have often been privy to in my 20 plus years of teaching – so many marvelous stories filled with the challenges and unpredictability that make good drama. This grand conclusion is fitting pageantry. I love it all, but I know there are other successes that this ceremony does not acknowledge.

Students take courses at our colleges for a variety of reasons, not always with the intent to graduate. Some have come to Bristol Community College to satisfy an employer requirement or study for a year before transferring to a four-year school. Others want associate degrees in allied health fields, but staying at BCC would require them to linger well beyond the completion of their general education coursework. It is in their best interest to transfer elsewhere. Some entering students already have degrees, but attend college classes to develop skills or pursue coursework in other areas to broaden their knowledge and market themselves better for the complex world that awaits them. All

are welcome. Their tales, too, reveal success. These students leave our classrooms better able to contribute to the workplace and their communities.

Recent statements by business leaders and the press have focused on graduation rates as the only benchmark for success at our community colleges. Such narrow focus has resulted in undeserved criticisms about our institutions and our students. The critics ignore the complex nature of our mission and its open door admission policy. They do not acknowledge the important demographics of our various communities that shape student success at our institutions. Surprisingly to some, our community college mission is not singularly focused on graduation. Nor does our admission policy state, as some imply it should, that all who enter should complete a degree within three years.

In response to such concerns, the MCCC recently held a Graduation Retention Rates Summit to gather ideas for a union position paper that would clarify our mission; our students’ various goals, challenges, and successes; and their varying degrees of college readiness upon admission. This paper will articulate a variety of ways our colleges can improve the retention and success of students and will include specific recommendations to support such improvement.

Key among such recommendations will be the need for greatly increased funding, as called for in proposed state legislation by the Joint Committee on Higher Education. Accordingly, \$400 million dollars is needed over the next seven years for our public colleges and universities to serve students and the Commonwealth effectively. Such funding could well promote student persis-

tence if, in turn, it greatly reduces student costs to attend college and is used to support proven retention strategies. Advising systems statewide need to be revamped, consistently staffed by trained faculty and counselors, and integrated with student and academic policies campus-wide.

Libraries, too, need consistent support. BCC has had recent years with no state money appropriated for library resources. To strengthen retention on every campus, more full-time positions need to be funded. More than 50% of our courses are taught by adjuncts, many who lack adequate pension and health insurance safety nets. Capital funding is necessary on all our college campuses as well if we are to ensure that classroom space and campus facilities are safe, updated, and adequate.

Beyond the resources needed to support success, college presidents should collaborate with faculty and professional staff on every campus to develop approaches to access and retention that are effective and sustainable, especially given the current under-funding crisis our colleges now face.

As the strains of “Pomp and Circumstance” close these graduation ceremonies once again, I will be reminded of an academic year so filled with triumph. But I will also be mindful that those who evaluate community college success and fund our campuses must move beyond this day alone to judge our colleges and our students. The public and our legislators must know the many other student success stories – as well as the tales of those who stopped out. It is not enough to focus only on those who march on graduation day. The public, the policy-makers, and those who hold the purse strings must also know who marched elsewhere and why. ■



Rep. Kevin Murphy, D-Lowell, co-chair of the Joint Committee on Higher Education explains his commitment to public colleges and the difficulties of funding.

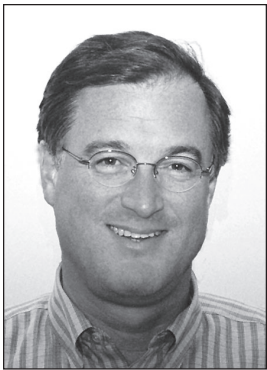


Sen. Stanley Rosenberg, D-Amherst, praised PHENOM for its organizing work.



Former MCCC president Tom Parsons, left, and adjunct member Chris Hoeth debate the Bylaws proposal at the Delegate Assembly.

In the End it's (mostly) About Money



Joe LeBlanc,
MCCC President

When it comes to fighting to restore support for public higher education and lobbying for issues important to our members, emotional appeals don't work.

In lobbying for additional funds for our community college system, for example, it's better to say something like "It makes good economic sense" and back it up with facts about the long-term returns for the state's investment in public higher education. An anecdote about a student working two or three jobs to pay for tuition, fees and textbooks just doesn't work.

We all know the state has not kept its promise to set our salaries at the 75th percentile of the 10 comparable states used in our historic classification salary study. Yes, it's true that faculty teach 15 credit hours per semester, the national norm for community colleges. It's also true that we have

lost ground – salary-wise – in the Romney years, and we now trail our peer institutions by more than 13 percent. Tapping member anger over this issue is easy, but it's more effective to look at the study itself that was approved by the BHE, A and F and the Governor in our 1999-2002 Agreement.

Overuse of adjunct faculty is a problem that isn't likely to go away anytime soon. More than 3,500 adjuncts now teach more than half the courses at our community colleges. They are paid on a salary schedule that maxes out at \$2,892 per course with no fringe benefits. About 950 community college adjuncts teach four or more courses per year and would qualify for benefits if HB2481 (pension) and SB1587 (health insurance) are enacted into law during this session.

Economics instructor Mark Friedman teaches eight or nine courses per year at Middlesex Community College. He earned his undergraduate degree from Dartmouth and graduate degree from Columbia. Adjunct John Cipora teaches in the Social Sciences department at Holyoke Community College. He did his undergraduate work at Brandeis University and has nearly completed his doctorate at UMass-Amherst. Both are excel-

lent teachers. They serve their students, colleges and the Commonwealth well.

Both have powerful stories to tell about health insurance. Mark's wife recently had a baby. Due to medical complications, the medical bills totaled \$80,000. His wife's basic student health insurance policy and an assortment of state programs have paid the bill except for a \$2,500 (about what he earns for teaching a one semester course) charge for an ambulance ride. They are paying off this bill in installments, but Mark wonders why his employer isn't providing his family with the same GIC health insurance plan that his full-time faculty colleagues receive. John has health insurance through COBRA. He is paying nearly \$500 per month for a plan that will run out in October.

An MCCC survey indicates that 108 adjuncts would enroll in a GIC health insurance plan if SB1587 were enacted into law. Research also indicates that the fiscal note for this bill is likely to run about \$8.966 million for adjuncts across the system. Mark, John and their colleagues have powerful stories to tell, but one factually-driven question remains: If the Commonwealth is asking its employers to provide their employees with

health insurance, why isn't it doing the same for its own employees?

Many adjuncts don't have much of a retirement plan. The state's OBRA plan is essentially a forced savings plan for these supposedly "part-time, seasonal or temporary" employees. Adjuncts are forced to contribute 7.5 percent of their salaries into an OBRA account. This is done in lieu of paying into Social Security.

About this policy, the State Treasurer's website writes, "Generally, temporary, seasonal and part-time employees are not members of their employer's retirement system and their employment may be excluded from mandatory Social Security coverage provided they participate in an appropriate alternative plan under OBRA."

That's just the problem, of course. Many of our adjuncts are anything but temporary and seasonal. Some longtime adjuncts have nothing but a retirement of poverty ahead of them.

Emotional appeals don't work in the end. Our colleges and their faculty and staff are told all the time that they are valued. Kind words are nice and appreciated, but they don't pay the mortgage and medical bills. In the end the only support that counts is financial. ■



Lois Martin presents Kenn Annania with the Jon G. Butler award for his work as Massasoit chapter president.



David Kalivas, left, looks on as Rick Doud is presented the Raymond Lemieux Award by Joe LeBlanc.



MCCC Pres. Joe LeBlanc, center, with PHENOM leaders Steve Gencarella, left, and Ferd Wulkan stand outside Gov. Patrick's office with the 16,000 cards of support for PHENOM.

PHENOM...

Continued from Page 1

But before the teams spread out, they all met outside Gov. Patrick's office to present all of the 16,000 cards. Filling several mail bins and weighing in at 166 pounds, the cards were warmly received by representatives of the governor. Coincidentally, Gov. Patrick himself was meeting with public college presidents elsewhere in the state.

Participants regrouped for lunch and presentations. Rep. Kevin Murphy, D-Lowell and Sen. Stanley Rosenberg, D-Amherst, along with Stephen Tocco, Chair of UMass Board of Trustees each spoke to the group.

Rep. Murphy is Co-chair of the Joint Committee on Higher Education, and he talked about his commitment to public colleges. He pointed out the increasing necessity of a college education and how, with the costs of college increasing and access to private colleges decreasing, more and more Massachusetts high school graduates see public colleges as their only option.

He noted that at one time Northeastern and Boston College were affordable, commuter schools that served the middle class. Now their costs approach the Ivy League. He pointed out that when he was a student at BC 60 percent of the students were com-

muters; now it's nine percent. He committed himself to making our system an affordable one that provides an education equal to those privates.

Murphy was pleased to report that the House had approved a \$26 million increase in higher ed. funding over Gov. Patrick's budget request. Recognizing that this amount falls short of the need, Murphy explained that this was a huge improvement when compared to other line items in the budget. He reminded the group that the state's finances are very tight, and that many important areas received no increase at all.

Sen. Rosenberg praised PHENOM and its mission. He stressed the need for an organized, unified effort such as this. Other business and interest groups make their voices heard clearly, but higher ed. has often been divided among segments and the message becomes mixed and, therefore, easy to ignore.

Participants left the building feeling that much was accomplished and some lessons were learned. There was a general sense that PHENOM made the point that it's here and that it is unlikely to go away.

For information or to get involved see the website: www.PHENOMonline.org. ■

HELP YOUR PAC HELP YOU

The MCCC Political Action Committee—MCCC PAC—has been very effective over the past few years in advancing the issues of community college faculty and staff on Beacon Hill.

The recent enactment of the 03 Creditable Service bill is a testament to the political stature that the MCCC has achieved in recent years.

But political stature does not come without cost. Your PAC has made many contributions in the current election cycle, and it is important for all members to give their financial support, so that the PAC can continue to support you.

Upcoming legislative issues of importance include:

- Securing increased funding for community colleges
 - Reforming Chapter 150E
- Passing part-time employee health insurance benefits
 - Passing part-time employee pension benefits

Individual members and MCCC chapters can contribute up to \$500 annually.

Signed,

PAC Co-chairs and retired faculty Thelma Halberstadt and Frank Leary and PAC Treasurer Phil Kennedy.

Send your checks payable to the “MCCC PAC” to

MCCC Political Action Committee,

27 Mechanic Street, Suite 104, Worcester, MA 01608

Free Life Insurance for 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 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/insurance/neamit.jsp. ■



MCCC News

<http://mccc-union.org>

Editor:

Donald R. Williams, Jr.

President:

Joseph LeBlanc

Vice President:

Donnie McGee

Secretary:

Phyllis Barrett

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. 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

Write Us

The MCCC News welcomes your letters and opinion pieces.

Guest Editorials

Guest editorials should be approximately 300 words in length. The Editorial Review Board should review the editorial and provide feedback to the writer(s). The editorial may be rejected by a majority vote of the ERB.

Letters to the Editor

Only submissions by MCCC members will be considered. These should be 50 to 150 words in length. The author must include name, date of submission, work or home mailing address, work or home phone number, campus affiliation. The name and campus will be included with all published submissions. Letters will be printed on a space available basis and may be edited for length.

Text may be edited for space and appropriateness. Not all submissions can be published.

Mail to:

Donald Williams

North Shore Community College

One Ferncroft Road

Danvers, MA 01923

or email

Communications@mccc-union.org ■

DCE News

Greetings Everyone!



*John Palmer,
DCE Team Chair*

This has been a very busy year with meetings and the agreements for under enrolled classes and technology issues. All faculty should soon have e-mail accounts which should facilitate communication for you with the colleges and the MCCC. Seniority lists will be due at the end of the summer. I encourage everyone to examine these as to your placement.

Joe LeBlanc and I are working on developing the part time ad hoc committee and hope to contact people soon with a date for a meeting in early June. This will be an excellent opportunity to discuss common issues and for us to be better in touch with what is going on at all the colleges regarding part time issues.

Anne Wass, president of the MTA and Paul Toner, Vice President were

present at the MCCC Delegate assembly, and certainly were made aware of some of the part time issues and concerns. Ed Sullivan, executive director of the MTA, Anne and Paul have been in meetings to interview and make a recommendation to the executive committee for the new MTA uniserve consultant for the MCCC part time members.

I am delighted to share with you that our own grievance coordinator, Joe Rizzo, is a finalist for that position. Joe has been working tirelessly for us with part time grievances and bargaining issues, as well as negotiating contracts for K-12 unions. The executive committee will meet during the beginning of June and the outcome will be announced soon afterward.

I will be visiting the clusters once again to introduce the new uniserve consultant to our part time and full time membership. I look forward to seeing you soon and continuing our discussions of the issues that concern you.

If you have interest in attending some of the MTA leadership workshops in Williamstown this summer, please contact your local president for information. I wish everyone a safe and restful summer! ■

Two Colleges—One Full-time Job:Connect

A groundbreaking agreement has been reached between the union and college presidents to allow two colleges to share one full-time employee. The agreement not only creates a new category of employee, it also sets a path for regional collaborations between the colleges.

Calling themselves the Connect Community Colleges, Bristol, Cape Cod, and Massasoit approached the union with the proposition of a full-time faculty position being shared between the colleges. Their particular need was for faculty in specialized areas.

The union has been interested in new ideas for increasing full-time employment but wanted to carefully examine all aspects of the employment conditions. As the first agreement of this type it will set benchmarks for the future.

The agreement covers up to three shared faculty positions. The anticipated positions are in music, international business, and Creole, Cape Verdean. Key provisions of the agreement include the following:

- The faculty member will be shared by only two colleges, labeled “home college” and “partner college.” The home

college will carry the payroll and other records.

- The faculty member will be scheduled to have classes at only one college on a given day.

- The faculty member will have office space at both the home and partner college.

- Seniority will accrue at both the home and partner college.

- Student evaluations will be sent to the home college.

- Classroom observations will be conducted alternately between the two colleges.

- Summary evaluations will be conducted by the home college.

- Tenure will be awarded according to the contractual process, and the unit member will be tenured at both colleges.

- If a shared position becomes full-time at one of the colleges, the faculty member has the option of converting her or his shared position to the full-time position at that college.

Depending on the success of this initial situation, this agreement may open the way for more creative employment arrangements. ■



Communications Coordinator Don Williams, left, with Vice President Donnie McGee and Treasurer Phil Mahler showing the new MCCC banner that was used at the PHENOM rally.