

MCCC News



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Higher Ed. Reform Bill Stalled in the Legislature



Sen. Robert O'Leary (D-Barnstable) speaks to the MCCC Board of Directors about the proposed higher education reform bill.

Significant legislation to reform public higher education in Massachusetts has been before the legislature for all of 2006. The Senate passed its version back in February, but action in the House has been stalled throughout the session.

The legislature ends formal sessions in

August of an election year. While special sessions can be called, it is highly unlikely that any action will be taken on the higher ed. bill this year. Because a new legislature comes in the first week of January, all legislation not enacted during the previous session will have to be re-filed.

The Senate and House versions share

many key provisions, but because the Senate has passed its version, it is best to present the specifics of that one and then discuss where the House has disagreement.

The key provision of Senate Bill 2380 is to provide \$400 million in new funding for state college and university campuses over seven years. This is the agreed upon gap between the current funding and where it actually should be by segment.

Funding

Formula funding will eventually eliminate the budget gap. The number of years it takes to do this differs between the Senate and House versions.

The campuses would be given the autonomy to raise tuition and fees on their own, but the increases would be capped at the 3-year average of the Consumer Price Index (usually 3 percent). If a campus wanted to raise tuition/fees above the CPI, and if the state was meeting its required funding conditions, then the campus would have to get approval for the increase from the BHE. This is the so called "circuit breaker" language that has been a point of contention.

The state would still provide some general funding, especially in the area of payroll and employee benefits. And the state would compensate the campuses for tuition waivers offered to various students (such as Adams scholarships).

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Proposed Bylaw Changes

The deadline for submitting proposed changes to the MCCC Bylaws and Standing Rules is no later than Feb. 1, 2007. Proposals should be in printed format, double spaced (not hand written). They should include the following information:

- rationale for the proposed change;
- name of the maker of the proposal;
- campus (or MCCC committee/group) of the member making the proposal.

Proposed changes should be sent to

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

New Chapter Presidents

The MCCC has been experiencing an influx of new members and some turnover in leadership. This year six chapters, more than one third of the total, have new presidents.

At Berkshire Ellen Shanahan has moved into the presidency after serving for a year as vice president. She replaces Roberta Passenant who had been active for many years as MCCC director and as a member of several MCCC committees. Ellen has taught music at the college since 1982, but only recently got active as a chapter officer.

Ellen ran for president because "The time was right. Roberta will be retiring soon, so it was time." Ellen's primary objective is to get the chapter more active. The chapter had seen some rough times with little member action except for an occasional no-confidence vote.

She feels that she has a good leadership team with her now. The college currently has an interim president, Dr. Paul Raverta, who has extended his term for another year while a presidential search goes on that includes unit members on the team.

John French won a contested election for chapter president at Cape Cod. French, who has been teaching English there for 18 years, had previously served as the chapter's MCCC director for six years.

"The idea of getting more people involved is my biggest challenge," says French, "especially when there are no major issues on the table." He wants to encourage more members who previously had not been active in the union to throw their hats into the ring.

Greenfield was another small chapter that was facing a crisis. With chapter president Kit Carpenter stepping down, and director Michael Bathory looking at retirement, the entire executive committee threatened to resign if someone new didn't come forward to be president.

Into the breach stepped Rosemarie Freeland. Herself a former adult student and graduate of GCC, Rosemary has only been in her professional staff position at the college since 1999. She comes from a background in, and personal commitment to social activism, and so, when someone

nominated her. Rosemary says, "I accepted and the rest is a blur."

She sees a lot of issues to address at GCC. Her major objective is to rebuild the union leadership base. And while individual members are cared for and nurtured at the college, she doesn't feel that "Our unique identity as a union is respected and honored." In an effort to improve this she hopes to get the union more active in long-term planning.

The Mass Bay chapter has seen a lot of changes in its leadership over the past few years. The college has had a history of tension between the union and management. Joe O'Neill, a disabilities counselor since 1993 has become president. O'Neill had never held a union position before.

Mass Bay has two campuses: the original Wellesley site, and a Framingham satellite campus that has grown with most of the medical programs. O'Neill is located in Framingham, and his becoming president represents the increasing influence of this campus.

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Words, Just Words: Politics, Partnerships, and Promises To Keep



Donnie McGee,
SAC Co-chair &
MCCC Vice President

All of us manipulate words to fit audience and circumstance. As George Orwell emphasized, *language is an instrument which we shape for our own purposes.* Few know this concept better than those who seek election to

public office. Using language effectively is an important craft for would-be politicians and elected officials. The catchy phrase, the artfully crafted statement, and the passionate promises are what campaigns are all about. We have recently been privy to months of such political rhetoric. Politicians won votes not just by what they said, but how well they said it. We should be wary of such cultivated rhetoric, though. The ability to manipulate language to achieve certain ends can have powerful consequences. We must ascertain the substance behind

such talk and hold elected officials accountable for their promises.

Whether or not the ends are ethical or the message sincere, language can be very effective in its ability to persuade. The danger lies in rhetorical sound and fury that equate to nothing more than hollow words and empty promises. When political discourse deceives, distorts, or negates, the entire community is diminished. In this recent campaign, we were uplifted by words that communicated hope, that were delivered with compassion, and that rejected negativity as a means to an end. Such was the rhetoric used by Deval Patrick. His words were not only eloquent; they rang true. His leadership style reflected the thoughtful inclusiveness of his words.

On his recent campaign trail, however, Patrick was criticized for using “just words” to sway the voters. He responded by sharing the words of Thomas Jefferson, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. In so doing, Patrick emphasized how words can be powerful statements to communicate what we fear, what we value, and what we seek. Such words give clarity to our lives and provide us with a vision to make those lives better. When words have poignancy and poetics,

people are inspired to both believe in and act on them – and transform dreams into reality.

This past fall, Patrick’s words turned would-be voters into believers who checked back into democracy to cast their ballots. Patrick insisted on connecting with those whom he would serve. He spoke with fisherman and police officers, environmentalists and educators, business leaders and elected officials, students and seniors. His grass roots politicking, his thoughtful responses, and his positive discourse persuaded us to believe in him and to value his words. We listened, we voted, and we elected a governor whose words of hope and promise we shall now pay even more attention to.

Patrick’s campaign slogan this past fall was: *Together we can.* He could have borrowed this phrase from our own association. Unions understand the importance of these words. Our strength depends on such solidarity. We invoke the use of the pronoun, *we*, because we believe in the power and the possibility that exists when all of us collaborate and act together. Patrick understands this concept well. His campaign journey reflected such an emphasis. His slogan communicated that his leadership

would be shaped by listening to those he hoped to govern. We, the people, were not to be left out of the decision-making process. For this we applaud Governor-Elect Patrick, but we now must hold him to such gubernatorial leadership. Likewise, we must assume some responsibility for a more collaborative government.

The MCCC has much to address in the months ahead, not least among them the need for greatly increased funding at our colleges and the honoring of a contract that gives some credence to our professional lives. We must secure more full-time positions and support our adjuncts. And we need a contract funding process that does not make a mockery of good faith bargaining. These are the issues that we promise to keep fighting for. And we expect our elected officials to uphold their promises as well. We shall seek a partnership with this new administration and collaborate with legislators and college presidents so that our community colleges might continue to enrich our communities effectively.

To succeed in implementing this most crucial agenda, we must act in solidarity. We must do it together. We need your help.

Diana (Donnie) McGee
MCCC SAC Chair



Holyoke members, clockwise from left, Elizabeth Trobaugh, Ian Camera, James Morgan and Aaron Levin gather at MCCC Secretary Phyllis Barrett’s home to write letters to legislators in support of community colleges. Photo by Phyllis Barrett.



MCCC members Lorraine Sommella (QCC), Pat Hunt and Lisa Gibson (MiCC), Joe LeBlanc, Ray Coleman (MWCC), Gail Guarino (CCCC) and Lisa Cook (QCC) attended a rally for Deval Patrick on Oct. 25 featuring Bill Clinton.

Senator O’Leary Speaks to the MCCC

Sen. Robert O’Leary who represents the Cape and Islands district, came to the November MCCC Board of directors meeting to specifically discuss the Higher Education Reform Act, but also to generally talk about the situation of public higher education in the Commonwealth.

O’Leary is the Senate chair of the newly formed Joint Higher Education Committee. He holds a Ph.D. from Tufts University and an MPA from Harvard and lists his profession as History Professor. He is an adjunct faculty member at Mass Maritime and Cape Cod Community College.

He said that higher education should be the state’s highest priority with an economy so dependent on a skilled workforce. Some of the private colleges like BU, BC and Northeastern that traditionally were commuter schools largely serving Massachusetts residents have, over the last 30 years, become prohibitively expensive. Public colleges are increasingly the places where residents go for an education.

He urged the MCCC to support the Senate version of the Higher Education Bill and to lobby the House of Representatives to pass its version of the bill (detailed elsewhere in this issue). Recognizing that the unions and the college presidents have various objections to the different versions of the bill, he pointed out that they could be ironed out in a conference committee.

Despite the importance of the legisla-

tion to the higher education community, he commented that there wasn’t a lot of noise made by constituents. “There was a deafening silence,” he said. Joe LeBlanc noted the Senate passed the bill late in the session. The MCCC and other unions were told the bill would move, but it stalled in the House over the circuit breaker issue.

Gov. Elect Patrick needs to be involved to resolve the impasse, O’Leary said. But Patrick has put early childhood education as his first priority. “If you’re not in the top three [priorities], you’re out of the running.” He believes that the legislature will have input to the governor’s budget for the first time in 16 years. “It’s going to be a different world,” he said.

O’Leary went on to discuss the significant improvement in the legislature’s attitude towards higher education. The very establishment of the higher education committee is evidence of that. Prior to its formation, higher ed. issues were brought up in the Education Committees where they would compete for attention with the many K-12 issues that come up.

Now higher education has a dedicated advocacy group in the legislature. Sen. O’Leary’s personal and professional experience gives him a firm grasp of the issues facing higher education currently and in the future. Regardless of where the reform legislation ends up he assured the MCCC Board that conditions will be improving. But the sooner the bill is passed, the faster improvements will come. ■

Know Your Day Contract

December 2006

Dec. 22 Last day fall semester can end (p. 34)

Dec. 25 Christmas (p. 16)

January 2007

Jan. 15 Sabbatical recommendations from committee to president. (p. 18)

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. ■

Forging Better Connections With Our 4,000 Adjuncts



Joe LeBlanc,
MCCC President

Last semester the stars were aligned in my busy life to allow me to connect with more than 200 adjuncts. On the local level, I talked with several adjuncts during my office hour. I was reminded that they are wonder-

fully qualified and sometimes teach a full-time course load. These adjuncts hold office hours for no extra pay and are as connected with the college as their hectic schedules allow. Some would like a full-time position that would provide them with some measure of financial security and fringe benefits.

In lobbying for bills to provide some of our adjuncts with health insurance, I "met" other adjuncts in cyberspace and at a State

House hearing. Together we pushed for health insurance and pension benefits. These adjuncts often teach a full-time course load for community and state colleges. A decade ago they would have earned a full-time position somewhere, but today they earn a salary comparable to the workers at your local Walmart but without the benefits.

Their students usually don't know the difference. They like their (adjunct) profs and only have a problem when Professor Jones and Smith are hard to find because they've left campus to teach another course at another college.

The MCCC has represented our adjuncts since the early 1990's. We do make a difference in their lives, but acknowledge there is still much to do. Joe Rizzo, our DCE Grievance Coordinator, recently received an email from a DCE member who railed against everything that is wrong with the DCE contract while ignoring everything that has improved.

Salaries have increased by more than 300 percent. While adjuncts used to have no rights and served at the will of the

employer, they now are entitled to one course that is assigned based on seniority. Our DCE members now have academic freedom, appointment, disciplinary action and dismissal rights. They have an evaluation process that cannot be arbitrary, capricious or unreasonable. They have a grievance process and representation from Rizzo and MTA consultant Michelle Gallagher that assists our members every week.

Dues payers receive \$1 million in liability insurance and legal assistance from the MTA. Agency fee payers, who save a little money in the short run, do not receive these services. Recently, the MTA was set to assign a lawyer to handle an adjunct's legal case when it was discovered the person was an agency fee payer. Legal assistance was then rescinded.

Our DCE unit faces many challenges. Adjuncts that wish to should have more courses assigned to them on a more consistent basis. Adjuncts teaching a number of courses over a number of years should have

tenure. Adjuncts should have health insurance. Adjuncts should have a meaningful retirement plan.

For more than a decade, we have seen full-time faculty numbers fall in an era of declining state support for public higher education. As a result, more than half our courses are now taught by adjuncts. Last year, 100 adjuncts taught ten or more courses in our system while another 246 taught from seven to nine courses.

In early 2007, the MCCC will be reaching out to our adjuncts in person. Late afternoon regional meetings will be held at Bristol, Holyoke, Northern Essex, Quinsigamond, and Roxbury. MCCC leaders will be listening to your concerns and working with you to set goals for our DCE unit and seek ways to achieve them.

This will be the first of many initiatives to reach out and to better serve you. We have also applied for a DCE membership drive grant from the NEA and will be starting a DCE member orientation program next year. We surely have much to do, but together we can make a difference. ■

2007 MCCC Elections

Nominations are open for MCCC Delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting and the NEA-RA. Members can nominate themselves by mailing in the form found in this and the December issues of the MCCC News or by submitting the electronic form through the website mccc-union.org.

Nominations will close at 4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 1, 2007. Ballots will be mailed to all MCCC members on Friday, Mar. 2. The deadline for returning ballots is 4 p.m. on Thursday, Mar. 22. Election results will be announced by Friday, Mar. 30.

Delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting

• **Stipend:** The MCCC provides a stipend of \$50 dollars per day to delegates who attend the meeting.

• **Hotel Room:** Delegates who are on the ballot and who live more than 25 miles from the meeting are entitled to a double occupancy hotel room at the convention hotel, arranged by the MCCC, for Friday night. Write-in candidates will be accommodated on a space-available basis.

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

If the number of certified candidates for MTA delegate is less than or equal to the number permitted, then those candidates are deemed elected. A ballot process will be conducted to permit write-in candidates for none-filled slots and to be named as successor delegates.

MTA Annual Meeting

Friday, May 11 - Saturday, May 12, 2007. Boston, MA

Delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly

The MTA provides a stipend of \$300. The MCCC provides additional reimbursement support of \$800 to the top 15 candidates. MCCC reimbursement requires receipts and proof of conference attendance as provided by the MTA.

NEA Annual Meeting

June 30 - July 5, 2007
Philadelphia, PA

Massachusetts Community College Council

Nomination Form - 2007

A candidate must file this form (or a copy) with the MCCC Elections Committee by **Thursday, February 1, 2007, 4 p.m.** **Nomination papers that arrive late will not be accepted.**

Check all that apply:

MCCC DELEGATE

MTA Annual Meeting Delegate
(Boston May 11 and May 12, 2007)

NEA Representative Assembly Delegate*
(Philadelphia, PA June 30 - July 5, 2007)

Name _____

Full Home Address _____

Tel # _____

College _____

Tel # _____

Unit membership: Full Time MCCC Part Time Day DCE

For ALL Candidates: Black Asian Pacific Islander Caucasian
Hispanic-Chicano Native American

Visit the MCCC Web Site
<http://mccc-union.org>

OR

Mail a completed document to
Roberta Passenant (Elections Chairperson)
MCCC
27 Mechanic Street, Suite 104
Worcester, MA 01608-2402

Nominations Open October 15

Signature _____ Date _____

(Signature may be typed)

Deadline: MUST BE RECEIVED by Thursday, February 1, 2007, 4 p.m.

*Bio or Statement for **NEA Rep. Assembly 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.

New Presidents...

Continued from Page 1

Chapter director Ned McGuire said that the chapter president's role at MBCC is hard because of the need to fill multiple roles because of low member involvement. He expects O'Neill will be, "Holding the college responsible for its sometimes harmful decisions."

Margaret Wong's name should be familiar to most MCCC members, as she ran for the MCCC presidency against Joe LeBlanc in the 2006 state wide election. She has been the chapter director for Quinsigamond for three years, and when long-time president Marilyn Martin stepped down, Margaret came forward.

Margaret is committed to continue the process of rebuilding the chapter strength that had been started by working with MTA's Richard Sanders. At QCC, 63 percent of the members have been hired since 2000. So a major thrust of Wong's agenda is to provide these members with the information they need. She feels that things are going well thanks to having 14 members in the leadership team to spread the work around.

In another contested election, Rob Rodgers became president of the Springfield Tech chapter. A faculty member since 1976 is an attorney who chairs the Business Administration Department and teaches business related law courses as well as labor relations.

Rob has a long record of service to the MCCC. Besides many activities on the chapter level, he has been on the MCCC Finance Committee and was on the joint labor/management committee on certifications and licensure. He ran for the chapter presidency because he didn't like the direction they were going in and felt they needed a change.

All of these new presidents commented on the need to get members more involved. It is an issue faced by every chapter and a major item on the MCCC agenda for the coming year. ■

Your Union at Work For You

MLRC Decision: Retaliation

At Mass Bay Community College tenured engineering Professor Timothy Cichocki had requested his preferred schedule to be three courses in the Engineering Dept. In response Prof. Cichocki was assigned a schedule with three engineering courses and one business math course. He notified the dean that this assignment exceeded the contractual workload and would have detrimental educational effects, and he requested appropriate changes.

This request was denied, and Prof. Cichocki filed a grievance. On the same day that the grievance was filed he was offered three options for his course assignments, each progressively further from his initial request: 1) the original three engineering and one math; 2) one engineering and four algebra; and 3) five math classes.

Prof. Cichocki responded that he would accept the first (original) option but he would continue to pursue redress through the grievance process. In response, Associate Dean Sabbagh assigned the least desirable schedule of five math courses.

The Massachusetts Labor Relations Commission (MLRC) concluded that the assignment containing all math courses constituted an adverse action because the employer knew that it was undesirable. The commission was persuaded that rescinding the previously offered schedule was intended to punish Prof. Cichocki for filing a grievance. Accordingly, the commission found that the employer had violated Section 10(a)(3) and 10(a)(1) of the Law.

The College was ordered to cease and desist from retaliating against Prof. Cichocki and interfering with, restraining and coercing its employees in the exercise of their rights guaranteed under the Law. Further, the College was ordered to post notice of these violations of the Law.

Members should be encouraged to stand up for their contractual rights and feel confident that any attempt at retaliation by management will not stand up to MLRC scrutiny. ■



Michael Dubson, a long time adjunct faculty member and activist for adjunct rights has secured a well deserved full-time faculty position at Bunker Hill.

A Ghost Materializes

Michael Dubson editor of the book *Ghosts in the Classroom* which presented stories from the trenches by adjunct faculty, and himself a long serving adjunct in our system, has been appointed to a full-time faculty position at Bunker Hill Community College.

He had taught courses at several colleges and had encountered many adjunct faculty who aspired to full-time positions. The stories told by adjunct faculty he met inspired the book, and many of them contributed to it. One reviewer described the book as "tales of the American part-timer [that] reveal pain, sadness and rage."

Having taught at BHCC for 15 years, Dubson had long been an activist for the rights of part-time faculty and served as a member of the most recent DCE negotiating team that settled the 2005-2008 Agreement.

Like many adjunct faculty he despaired of every securing a full-time teaching position. With approximately 4,000 adjunct faculty in the community college system, and typically less than 10 new faculty per campus hired each year, the odds are not favorable.

"I am thrilled to get this job," Dubson said, "It is a dream come true." He is a graduate of Parkland College, a community college in Champaign, Illinois. He says that going there inspired him to go into community college teaching. And like many community college students he took a non-traditional path to his degrees.

Being full-time at Bunker Hill has changed Dubson's perspective. As an adjunct he often taught more courses than full-time instructors, but he said, "It's different. I didn't see all the extra work that's involved in full-time teaching."

He finds that teaching full time is a richer experience for him and his students. "What happens in my classroom is the same, but because I am available for students all week, it's better for them." "Also, I don't have to worry about where I am going to go, or what I have to bring, which frees up energy for classroom work and lesson planning."

Despite his new situation and his hope to stay in it permanently, Dubson's sympathies remain with the many part-time faculty who desire to join him. "I will never forget what it's like to work out of the trunk of my car." ■



Write Us

The MCCC News welcomes your letters and opinion pieces. 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

Higher Ed Bill...

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For the state and community colleges under the BHE the projected funding increase will be roughly \$30 million per year to total \$209,072,000 by the end of FY2013. This is without adjusting for inflation and does not include increases in enrollments or collective bargaining agreements. Hiring more full-time faculty and staff would be one possible result of the increased funding.

Boards of Trustees

Composition of boards of trustees and the processes for posting vacancies and making appointments saw significant revisions in the bill. In the past these appointments were made by the executive branch through a process that often seemed opaque. Frequently governors have shown little interest in filling the positions.

The bill would establish a Public Higher Education Nominating Council comprised of the members of the BHE and one appointee of the Senate President and one appointee of the Speaker of the House.

The Council will select one name to send to the governor. The governor will either appoint the nominee or ask the council to submit a different nominee. If the appointment process is not completed within 90 days, then the BHE would make an interim appointment for one year. These provisions will give legislative influence into the process of appointing trustees and will put pressure on the governor to act in a timely manner.

Workforce Development

Workforce development policies also see changes. The bill would establish a BHE workforce development task force with a coordinator to be hired to conduct and analyze labor market studies.

It would encourage the development of more community college certificate and degree programs to prepare individuals for employment in emerging industries. And it would rewrite the Community College Workforce Training Incentive to allow the inclusion of credit-bearing courses.

Controversy

The House has some objections to the Senate version of the bill. There is speculation about political infighting involved, but two key areas of difference have surfaced.

As the more fiscally oriented chamber, the House is concerned over the promised levels of funding projected out over seven years. Where the economy will be in the future is impossible to know.

The House also has less restrictive "circuit breaker" language. This is seen as better by both the institutions and the unions. The history of erratic higher ed. funding causes worries about severe budget cuts as those experienced in the past. Campus Trustees and Presidents are concerned about their ability to compensate for such cuts given the restrictions on increasing tuitions and fees. Sen. Robert O'Leary who chairs the Joint Higher Education Committee believes that there are ample safeguards in the Senate bill.

At this time the community college presidents have endorsed the Senate version despite reservations. The effects of the changes vary depending upon the specifics of the individual colleges: large campuses versus small ones for example. The state college presidents oppose the Senate version.

All of the affected parties agree that higher ed. reform is needed. With the election of Deval Patrick, there will finally be someone in the corner office who cares, and the desire for positive change may become a reality. Promoting passage of a reform bill will certainly be a major initiative of the MCCC for the coming year. ■



MCCC News

<http://mccc-union.org>

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President Wayne Burton of North Shore Community College has been named to Gov. Elect Patrick's Transition Committee. He will be consulting with both his 14 presidential colleagues as well as the nine state college presidents. He sees himself as a representative for all of higher ed. MCCC President Joe LeBlanc also will meet with Burton to share the Union's concerns.