

MCCC NEWS

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MCCC Lobby Day: State House Success

When over 40 MCCC members gathered at the State House on May 23, they had no idea of the success the day would bring.

As planned, the intent of the day was to have members meet with their legislators to lobby for three specific MCCC legislative initiatives. These were bill to give retirement credit to members who had worked in part-time (03) positions; a bill to provide health insurance for part-time faculty; and a bill to amend the collective bargaining law (Chapter 150E).

The day was also part of the long term MCCC project of gaining greater visibility at the State House. Making Lobby Day an annual event is part of that initiative.

Organization of the day, as planned by MCCC President Joe LeBlanc, involved reserving Room 222 (for fans of old TV shows, a propitious educational number) as a base of operations. Members gathered there for the distribution of materials and schedule of events. While LeBlanc and Vice President Donnie McGee led groups of members to various legislative offices, SAC Coordinator Caroline Schwarzwalder remained in Room 222 as an anchor.

News came out, as members were visiting offices, that the House had passed the bill for 03 creditable service. This positive news buoyed the group, and, although not a result of this day's lobbying, did give more impetus to the MCCC members as they discussed the issue with members of the House.

News also came out that the bill for adjunct health insurance had been reported favorably by the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing and was on its way to Ways and Means. This bill was considered more difficult to pass than the "03" bill, but there was some hope that it would progress.



MCCC President Joe LeBlanc and VP Donnie McGee address the gathered MCCC members at the State House for the May 23 Lobby Day.

The group reconvened for lunch to share the results of their meetings. They were joined by some special guests. Representative Jay Kaufman (D-Lexington), who worked hard to advance the 03 creditable service bill, came and spoke briefly to the group.

MTA lobbyists Jack Flannagan and Arline Isaacson also addressed the group to explain the status of the various bills and what the next steps towards enactment would be. They also made a point of praising the MCCC SAC team, especially Joe LeBlanc, Donnie McGee and Roberta Albano, for the extraordinary efforts made not only for these specific bills, but also for raising the visibility of the MCCC.

Other lobbying activities were also be-

ing conducted at the State House that day over a bill related to nurse staffing levels. The nurses, in uniform, made a noisy presentation that got some press coverage, while hospital officials in suits quietly visited offices. This prompted MCCC members into discussing an ongoing issue of how to make a bigger splash for MCCC lobbying efforts.

At the end of the day the MCCC members felt a great sense of satisfaction. The legislative process can be long and arduous, especially for bills that relate to small groups and have a low public profile. That, after many years, the 03 bill had made substantial progress while members lobbied for it, demonstrated that effort does get results. ■

BREAKING NEWS

On July 19, the governor signed SB2462, the 03 creditable service bill. This is a huge success for the MCCC SAC Team and for the many members who worked part-time prior to full-time employment.

Basically the bill allows employees who previously worked as "03" consultants and were subsequently hired as full-time "01" employees to do the same or similar job to buy back up to four years of service towards retirement.

Both the House and Senate had passed the legislation in late June. Initially, Gov. Romney sent the bill back to the legislature with several amendments that would have reduced its scope. But in the end he did the right thing and signed it. ■

SAVE THIS DATE

Annual MCCC
Leadership Meeting
Monday Evening
September 25, 2006
Worcester Crowne Plaza

Day Negotiations Continue

Board ok's Work to Rule if no contract is reached by September 1

On June 23, the MCCC Board of Directors endorsed going on Work to Rule on Sept. 1 if a contract has not been agreed to by that date. (See Directors' Notes elsewhere in this issue for exact wording of motion.) The current contract expired on June 30.

At a bargaining meeting on June 21, the BHE made a financial offer. Essentially the offer was for 3 percent for each of three years (total 9 percent), with the money being split between points and across-the-board raises.

Management said that they want improvements (from their perspective) in Workload language, but did not specify as of presstime. They intend to present the actual proposal at a future meeting. MCCC team members would not speculate on the nature of management's proposal.

Discussion proceeded with a general sentiment that the MCCC gave a huge workload concession in agreeing to the fifth course in 1999—a productivity increase that in recent years has not been fairly compensated in pay.

Research, following the procedures of the Classification Study, done by MCCC Research Coordinator Hilaire Jean-Gilles, has shown that MCCC salaries have fallen approximately \$7,000 below the 75th percentile of the 10 similar states that was the Classification target. In fact, of the 10 states, Massachusetts trails all but three.

In making the motion Director David Kalivas, Middlesex CC, said that 3 percent per year may not even equal the inflation rate for these years, let alone making up for the losses over the past six

years. The motion was passed unanimously by the Board, demonstrating a consensus that the MCCC will no longer be patient after a contract has expired.

As a comparison, other faculty unions in the state were granted 3 to 3.5 percent raises in contracts ending next year. AFSCME units in higher ed. have also been at the table and have been offered raises below the 3 percent mark. NAGE, the largest state employees union, recently settled a 1-year contract extension for 3 percent.

The motion asks for all campuses to conduct a vote on Work-to-Rule early in the fall semester. A few campuses had already authorized the action, but they would be asked to conduct a vote to reaffirm their intention based on the status of negotiations at that point. ■

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The Tale of SB 2462: A Civics Lesson Revisited



Donnie McGee,
SAC Co-chair &
MCCC Vice President

As a professor, I am mindful of the connections made between the classroom and the community. I want my students prepared to navigate the world beyond their classroom walls. My political experience on Beacon Hill certainly underscores the importance of this objective. In my high school civics class, I had little difficulty memorizing the steps that charted how a bill would become law. Still, my understanding of the process was quite limited. I was not prepared for the challenges and not-so-linear steps involved with the enactment of real world legislation. I learned these lessons from years of lobbying for a series of bills that have become SB 2462.

SB 2462 is a retirement bill allowing certain state employees to buy back up to four years of credit for related service as "03 consultants." It is currently awaiting final enactment by the Legislature. For all who have contributed to this seeming success story, it is a moment of great hope and

excitement. It has been a long and challenging journey, but I have learned much in the process. My civics textbook could not capture the intricacies of lawmaking that I have come to know so well. Perhaps, my SB 2462 tale can bring to life some of these important details. No narrative can give credit to the numerous people and events that shaped this bill's success to date, but the tale that follows does highlight a few key players and illuminates essential themes.

My story begins in January of 1983 when I was hired at Bristol Community College. In seeming violation of Massachusetts General Laws, my employer labeled me an "03 consultant" – though I filled a position that was previously held by full-time, benefited employees, and my position was not temporary. But I did not know state policy on consultants, nor of my status as one. Nor did I know, in absence of a pension, I would receive no Social Security support for my years of "03" employment.

Many at Bristol were affected by this flawed hiring practice. More than a dozen taught in my department alone. Known as "non-employees," most of us were employed for 6 or more years alongside benefited colleagues doing the same work. Positions like ours were commonplace at the college and across the state in the 1980's. Such hiring practice was economical; few

challenged it. Consultants had no union and no advocates.

But consultant dissatisfaction did take root at Bristol. In the late 1980's local protests, newspaper coverage, and a concern over publicity had an impact. This hiring practice diminished. I was among the fortunate few to transition to a full-time, benefited position. But former consultants, including myself, sought redress from the retirement inequity we faced. In the early 1990's, one legislator in particular, then Representative Joan Menard, listened and responded. She proposed corrective legislation and re-filed related bills each session for the next dozen years.

For more than a decade, appeals were made to Senators, Representatives, and Legislative Committees. The MCCC enlisted support from lobbyists, created an ad-hoc "03" sub-committee, and contacted other unions. Union members lobbied legislators by phone, through e-mails, and on Beacon Hill. Despite these efforts, retirement buyback bills for higher education employees were set aside for further study, and there they remained.

This past year was different. Representative Jay Kaufman, House Chair of the Public Service Committee, pushed our creditable service proposal forward and vowed to support a compromise bill all the way to enactment. Senator Joan Menard, Majority Whip,

championed our cause as an issue of fairness and enlisted support from Senate leadership. MCCC and MTA lobbyists persisted with their advocacy in the State House. Strategic Action Committee leaders organized "03" lobby days and made repeated State House visits. Union members continued to contact legislators.

At long last, the MCCC and its allies are hoping to claim victory. In the weeks ahead, SB 2462 may actually become law. Though this journey included the steps I learned in civics class, it was real world experience that provided me with the human dimension to this legislative process. My textbook had left out the details and the drama, the people and the possibilities, and the distance between the powerless and the powerful. Perhaps, no classroom experience can truly prepare students for life in the community unless we share our real world stories.

The tale of SB 2462 reveals important lessons, not least among them the importance of cultivating partnerships with legislators. Enacting legislation like this also requires caring and commitment: caring to act when injustice is apparent and commitment to the long journey that proposed legislation involves. This narrative would have no happy ending without such heroics.

In solidarity,
Donnie McGee

APPLICANTS WANTED

MCCC STRATEGIC ACTION STEERING COMMITTEE

Qualifications:

- Interest in the MCCC's political action agenda
- Political campaign and/or grassroots lobbying experience
- **Strong interpersonal and** organizational skills
- **Knowledge of (or willingness to learn)** the legislative process
- **Time/energy/talent to activate** legislators and membership

Candidates appointed to these positions are eligible for one course section of reassigned time for the academic year as well as reimbursement for mileage, parking, tolls, and meals. Monthly meetings in Boston and/or Worcester are required to plan and support effective MCCC strategic action on campuses and at the State House. Expected time commitment per year is 180 hours.

E-mail your letter of application by Aug. 23 to:
Donnie McGee: Vice_President@mccc-union.org



Bristol Community College members met with some of their representatives at the State House. Back row, left to right, Rep David Sullivan (D-Fall River), Rep. Steve Canessa (D-New Bedford), Catherine Adamowicz, Anne Ibara, Rep. John Quinn (D-Fall River). Front row, left to right, MCCC VP Donnie McGee and Peg Curro.

MCCC Meetings Calendar 2006-2007				
YEAR	MONTH	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	OTHER	BOARD OF DIRECTORS
2006	JULY	7*	NEA 1-5	15*
2006	AUGUST	4	Will'town 6-10	25
2006	SEPTEMBER	8		15
2006	OCTOBER	6		20
2006	NOVEMBER	3		17
2006	DECEMBER	1		15*
2007	JANUARY	5		19
2007	FEBRUARY	2		16
2007	MARCH	2		23
2007	APRIL	6		20
2007	APRIL		Del. Assy. 28	
2007	MAY		MTA 11-12	
2007	MAY	4		18*
2007	JUNE	1		15

* meeting will be held if necessary
Fall Leadership night Monday, September 25



MCCC legislative intern, Thomas Mills, a student from North Shore Community College, working in the office of Representative Elizabeth Poirier (R-North Attleborough). Mills is planning a career in government/politics and he is taking on a second legislative internship on his own before continuing his studies at UMass Boston in the fall.

President's Message

Public Higher Education A Potential Crown Jewel For The Commonwealth, Region



Joe LeBlanc,
MCCC President

Community college faculty and staff know about the pain caused by recent budget cuts. Salaries have been frozen. Capital improvements have been delayed. Our adjunct colleagues now teach a majority of community college courses while our students work more hours outside of school than ever before as they struggle to pay for their college education.

We may be entering the end of this "stormy day and stormy period," according to Higher Education Committee Co-Chair Senator Robert O'Leary. His remarks at a MassInc roundtable discussion titled "Pay-

ing for College" focused on the legislative reform package (still waiting action in the House at presstime) that promises to invest about \$400 million in increased support for public higher education above and beyond collective bargaining increases.

Other panelists spoke eloquently about the benefits of public higher education. Blenda Wilson of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, said higher education benefits all and called for more investment in the intellectual capital of our country. She worried that immigrants are largely being left out of the picture, as college is not viewed as an option due to prohibitive costs.

Chancellor Judy Gill played up the notion of "affordable excellence" and stressed the importance of graduation rates. She challenged our public colleges to provide greater access and said the state should reward colleges that create programs to better their graduation and retention rates.

Evan Dobbelle of the New England Board of Higher Education said America has never

made a serious commitment to education, adding that the United States has not yet managed to fund universal pre-school and has never properly funded its system of higher education.

Higher education is a major force in the New England economy and a great investment returning at least \$2 for each dollar of support, Dobbelle said. With 270 institutions, 270,000 employees and hundreds of thousands of students, the region supports the densest concentration of higher education in the world.

Michael Widmer of the Mass. Taxpayers Foundation said the Commonwealth's public higher education system is essential to the state's future. It must become a priority. It must be viewed as more important than other interests competing for scarce state resources. College and university capital and infrastructure needs are also critical, he said, and the system must attract more high school graduates to public higher education.

Paying for college is more difficult than ever. With student financial aid levels set at less than half the national average, middle class students are leaving our public colleges with big debts. Add high real estate costs to the equation and you have a recipe for an exodus of the region's best and brightest to competing states in the South and West.

But all hope is not lost. By passing the Higher Education Reform Act and promised funding increases, the legislature will begin to strengthen our system. By forging stronger ties with the region's economic and higher education policy-makers, stakeholders will begin to change the public's view that our public colleges are choices of last resort.

Senator O'Leary said higher education investments will help to deal with the perceived "shabbiness" of our system. It will then be time to celebrate our system as one of the Crown Jewels of the Commonwealth.

In solidarity,
Joe LeBlanc

Guest Editorial

Educating Community College Students About Military Recruiters

by Ruth Kiefson, Roxbury Community College

(Note: the views expressed in this editorial are the author's and do not necessarily represent the views of the MCCC, its leaders or the membership.)

The RCC chapter will be hosting a discussion about what we can do to educate community-college students regarding the goals of the US military and the half-truths promulgated by military recruiters.

Many factors make this necessary. First and foremost, even as the Bush Administration admits to being caught in the quagmire of Iraq, it seems determined to invade Iran. A period of continuing war appears to be on the horizon, with the horrors that that implies.

Second, US troops are being seriously overtaxed. More than a million US soldiers have fought in the wars since 9-11; 65% of the troops have been to war at least once, and over 1/3 have been deployed more than once. Dissatisfaction is high among the troops; a Harper's article from February 2005 said that 5,500 troops have gone AWOL since the invasion of Iraq. Not surprisingly, the Army, as well as the other branches of the service, is failing to meet its recruitment goals. Responding to these realities, the Army is now working to add 30,000 soldiers by 2009 and has hired thousands of new recruiters schooled with new aggressive techniques for ensnaring the most vulnerable youth.

This is where our students come into the picture. A study, entitled Recruiting Youth in the College Market, produced for the Army by the RAND Corporation (2003), identifies the high schools as the "traditional market" for military recruiters, but notes that the demographics have changed the last thirty years. There are now fewer young people, and 75% rather than 50% (the figure in the late 70's) go onto some form of post-secondary education. The recent decline in financial aid

and increase in tuition have increased the vulnerability of youth from the lower rungs of the economic ladder. Thus, the report concludes, "The greatest enlistment potential [for the military] exists among two-year students and two-year dropouts". To realize this potential, the recruiters' Handbook tells them: "Focus on the freshman class because they will have the highest dropout rate. They often lack both the direction and funds to fully pursue their education." The working class youth, who became accustomed to the hard sell of military recruiters in their high schools, are now finding that the recruiters have followed them to college.

Many of us had family and friends who were victims of the War in Vietnam. Many of us also marched, organized and contributed to the growth of a great movement for social justice in the 1960s and 70s. Now, the opportunity lies with faculty and staff in the Massachusetts community-college system to fill a role that can likewise enlighten and empower our students.

For more information:

<http://www.thenation.com/doc/20050912/houppert>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A40469-2005Feb20.html>

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/org/news/2005/050412-gone-to-war.htm>

Forum Details:

Roxbury Community College
Faculty Lounge, Room 424 (Academic Building)

Saturday, September 30

1:30 PM

Refreshments will be served ■

Best Wishes for a Happy, Healthy, and Restful



your MCCC leadership team



Rep. Jay Kaufman (D-Lexington), center, meets with MCCC members at the State House. Here he discusses the 03 Creditable Service bill with Joe LeBlanc and Donnie McGee.



Members from Cape Cod Community College met with Rep. Cleon Turner (D-East Dennis) at his State House office. From left, CCCC Director Claudine Barnes, Gail Knell, Dee Burlin, Rep. Turner and Gail Guarino. Rep. Turner is a graduate of Cumberland County Community College (CCCC), in Maine.

Mediation Leads to Positive Resolutions

Mediation is part of our contractual Grievance Process that can often yield successful resolutions as a recent case demonstrates.

This case, resolved in May, concerned Harold Stevens a professional staff member hired by Quinsigamond on Aug. 28, 2005, to coordinate the culinary program at the Worcester Senior Center. Mr. Stevens voiced many complaints about cleanliness conditions in the kitchens and lack of support for the program. He was non-reappointed by the college in December with one month's notice.

The union argued that Mr. Stevens as a probationary employee hired prior to the execution of the present day contract should have been given a year's notice for non-reappointment and not just one month's notice. The present contract executed after Mr. Steven's hire date defines a six-month probationary period for professional staff members where the employer during the first three months of employment can non-reappoint with one month's notice.

There was no decision as to which contract applies in this case, but the parties through the mediation process agreed to a non-precedent setting resolution that provided Mr. Stevens with additional financial compensation.

Mr. Stevens said that he had a "bad experience" at Quinsigamond and really wasn't expecting that there was much he could do about it. Because he was very new and didn't know anyone, he was surprised when a chapter representative contacted him and encouraged him to pursue a grievance.

The initial grievance was denied, and MCC Day Grievance Coordinator Dennis Fitzgerald came in for the Step Two appeal. Stevens said, "Dennis was competent, good humored, and realistic. I was amazed by his professionalism."

When a unit member feels that their

rights have been violated, the first step is to file a Step One Complaint. This initial grievance must be filed within 30 calendar days of when the event or situation occurred or when the member should have become aware of the event or situation. This sets the process in motion.

The Step One process occurs at the individual campus where the specific situation arose. A hearing is held and the college president's representative issues a Step One Decision. If this decision is not satisfactory to the unit member, then the member can file a Step One Appeal to Mediation. This must be done within 10 calendar days after receipt of the of the president's Step One Decision.

Mediation hearings are held at one of three community colleges: Bunker Hill, Massasoit (Canton campus), or Quinsigamond. And there is an approved list of mediators who hear the cases. Typically, three cases are heard on the same day.

At the hearings, two rooms are provided—one for the Union and one for Management—and the mediator shuttles between them to hear each side of the case, to follow up with questions and a review of the contract language.

The mediator does not have the authority to impose a settlement or decide the case. Instead, the mediator facilitates the two parties in reaching a mutually satisfactory resolution of their dispute. Also mediation does not set precedent for future disputes. This can be a distinct advantage for the individual unit member because it allows the unique circumstances of the case to be accounted for. It also allows management from the particular college to accept a resolution that does not impact other colleges in the system.

If mediation does not conclude with a satisfactory resolution, there is the option of going to step three and requesting arbitration. Arbitration is a more formal process, and the results have great significance because they can set precedent. Because of this significance, the right to proceed to arbitration resides with the MCCC and all arbitration requests are reviewed for certification by the MCCC Grievance Committee.

The unit member is represented by the appropriate MCCC Grievance Coordinator and MTA Consultant. For Day contract issues these are respectively Dennis Fitzgerald and Katie D'Urso, and for the DCE contract Joe Rizzo and Michelle Gallagher. Management brings college officials as well as a representative of the Office of Community College Counsel.

Mr. Stevens now has a new job that he finds much more satisfying. In reflecting on the grievance, he said that the process was long and slow, but that's just the way it is. When asked if he had any advice to members who run into difficulties he said, "Write everything down—day, time, who you were speaking to and what was said. But don't be afraid to pursue your rights." ■



In a rare occurrence, all four of the MCCC Coordinators attended a Board meeting at the same time. From left, Hilaire Jean-Gilles, Research; Dennis Fitzgerald, Day Grievance; Joe Rizzo, DCE Grievance; Don Williams, Communications.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED For MCCC Standing Committees

The union needs the participation of its most talented members if it is to meet the challenges it faces. Please give special thought to volunteering your services to the MCCC.

The following are three key MCCC committees. All MCCC committee appointments are for two years and start September 1. Committee members must be approved by the Board of Directors.

Personnel Committee: Five members

- Develop and periodically review job descriptions and annual performance evaluations for MCCC Coordinators and other employees and present its recommendations to the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors.

- Review periodically rates of compensation for MCCC Officers, Coordinators, and other employees and present its recommendations to the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors.

- Develop, maintain, and recommend revisions of the personnel policies of the organization.

Finance Committee: Treasurer and Five additional members

- Prepare a balanced budget which reflects the program objectives and goals of the organization and identifies all revenue and expenses.

- Recommend the amount of annual dues.

- Administer, maintain, and rec-

ommend revisions of the financial policies of the organization.

- Monitor the fiscal affairs of the organization to maintain awareness of trends or patterns in financial matters and to advise the Board of Directors on courses of action.

- Review capital expenditures and either approve them or recommend their approval to the Board of Directors, as consistent with organizational policies and practices.

Bylaws and Rules: Five members

- Make a report at the March meeting of the Board of Directors and subsequently make recommendations to the Delegate Assembly for action by the delegates.

- Receive proposed amendments to the Bylaws and Rules of the Council.

New Committee Forming

Members are also needed for a new committee to create policies for MCCC Code of Ethics and Conduct, Whistleblowers, and Conflict of Interest.

(This is a new committee that has been suggested by the auditors to ensure that the Union is protected against possible future lawsuits.)

Contact Joe LeBlanc, MCCC to apply or if you have any questions 978-376-6741; email: President@mccc-union.org; mail: Committee MCCC 27 Mechanic Street, Worcester, MA 01608. ■

Directors' Notes

At the June meeting of the MCCC Board of Directors the following actions were taken.

- The Board approved the MCCC calendar for 2006-2007.

- The Board elected the At-Large Executive Committee members for 2006-2007 They are Geri Curley, BHCC; Lois Martin, MaCC; and Abe Sherf NSCC..

- The Board passed a motion to support amending the Finance Control Board's legislation to give Springfield Teachers binding arbitration of their contract dispute.

- The Board voted to allocate the three reassigned times remaining in the budget: two for SAC and one to the Bristol chapter.

- The Board voted the following motion unanimously: The Board of Directors recommends that chapters go on Work to Rule if there is no agreed upon contract by Sept. 1, and that each chapter vote on this recommendation by the end of the first week of classes.

- The Board voted to express its gratitude to Michael Bathory for his years of service to the MCCC, representing the Greenfield on the Board of Directors and serving as a strong and persistent voice for professional staff. The Board wished him well in his retirement. ■

New Tax-Saving Retirement Policy

Effective immediately, the BHE has established a new policy that allows retiring MCCC unit members to defer their 20% accumulated sick leave pay and their vacation leave pay into a Tax Sheltered Annuity Plan (a 403(B) plan).

This can only be done upon retirement. The payment/deferral must be made within 2.5 months of separation of service. Employees who take advantage of early retirement are not eligible for this deferral because of the delay in payment of the sick and vacation leave accrual. Per IRS regulations, there are limits on the amount of money that can be deferred by each employee.

Thanks goes to Paulette Howarth of Bristol CC for making the MCCC aware of this federal tax policy and for pressing to have BHE adopt the policy.

If you have made plans to retire or are thinking about retiring, please see your human resource office for more information about this tax savings policy. ■



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. 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

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