

MCCC NEWS



The Official Publication of the *Massachusetts Community College Council* / Volume 5, Issue 7 / April 2004

Higher Ed. Leadership Meeting

On Mar. 12 the MTA sponsored a meeting for leaders of all the higher education locals to discuss the issues facing us in the upcoming year. Representatives from all the units attended but MCCC had by far the largest delegation.

Priscilla Lyons, MTA's Director of Higher Education, started the session with an overview of the current status of higher ed. in Massachusetts. The Umass faculty (MSP/FSU) and staff (USA) along with the state college professional staff (APA) all had their outstanding contracts funded in Nov. She pointed out to the assembled union members that the MCCC contract remains unfunded and that funding it is a prime MTA objective.

Jo Blum, Director of MTA Governmental, gave a lengthy presentation on the political year ahead. She began by pointing out that Gov. Romney has a 60% approval rating, and that there is no clear voice in opposition to him.

Blum detailed the state's structural budget deficit of \$1.2 billion projected to extend for each of the next three years. Gov. Romney explains this as a problem of too much spending, but Blum pointed that Massachusetts has cut taxes in the last few years more aggressively than any other state (\$3.7 billion).

Furthermore state spending much lower than other states. As a percentage of personal income we are 45th in the nation in overall state spending. We continue to be 49th in support for higher education (and in K-12). No state has cut education more than Massachusetts from 1970 to 2000.

Blum finished by discussing this year's elections. The Mar. 2 election to replace Sen. Cheryl Jacques provided some important lessons for the fall. MTA endorsed Angus McQuilken against Republican Scott Brown. While Jacques is very liberal, the district has twice the state average of Republican registration and half the Democratic registration. The Republican Party put \$140,000 into the race, and MTA contributed significant support to McQuilken. Given the edge in Republican registration, it was a good sign that the vote difference was only 1%.

The lesson is clear, Blum said, that with Gov. Romney targeting senate seats, and with his ability to raise large amounts of money to support them, MTA and its members will have to work very long and hard to preserve the supportive majority in the senate. Without this majority, there will be no chance of getting increased funding for the colleges and members' contracts. She stressed the importance of supporting targeted senators: Harriette Chandler, Brian Joyce, Thomas McGee, Therese Murray and Robert O'Leary.

The final presenter was Ira Fader from MTA Legal. He discussed the proposals to change the retirement plan. State pension law says that the pension is a contractual obligation, and as such it is protected by the U.S. Constitution's protection of contracts. However, taking the state to court is a slow and arduous process. He urged members to fight proposals to change the pension law in the legislature. ■



MCCC members Ken Czuchra, Springfield; Peter Flynn, Northern Essex; Ned McGuire, Mass Bay; Liz Recko-Morrison, Berkshire; Abe Sherf, North Shore.



MCCC members Brooks Smith, Cape Cod; Sandy Cutler and Roberta Albano, Springfield; Joe LeBlanc, MCCC VP and Michael Bathory, Greenfield.

Consultants and the "03" Line: What's in a Name?

By Diana "Donnie" McGee, Bristol

Currently, MCCC employees, many who have who have fulltime positions in the state of Massachusetts, are seeking at least some reparation for their previous, non-benefited "03" employment experience: they want the option to buy into the state retirement system to obtain credit for their years spent as "03 consultants."

Consultants - the term itself conjures up a vision of professionals providing expertise for a negotiated fee and a clearly delineated period of time, with a signed contract identifying the specific terms of such work. The hiring of consultants in the workplace has been a common practice in business and in state agencies and institutions nationwide.

In fact, in this state, the hiring policy for such consultants is clearly and simi-

larly defined, though perhaps not judiciously regulated, by the *General Laws of Massachusetts, Chapter 29, Section 29A: Consultants: employment and compensation*. As stated therein, such work should indeed be temporary; the given time period, salary, and duties should be clearly documented in a written contract; and such consultant employment "shall not be used as substitutes for state positions."

Unfortunately, in Massachusetts during the 1980's and early 1990's, the unchecked practice of hiring consultants for state positions often violated these legal parameters and resulted in serious discrimination against a sizeable group of employees. The reality is that far too

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MCCC 2004 Delegate Assembly

This year's MCCC Delegate Assembly, convened annually in the spring, will be held Saturday, May 8, 2004 beginning at 8:30 A.M. at the Ramada Inn Worcester, in, Auburn. The Ramada Inn Worcester is conveniently located at the intersections of Interstate Highways 290 and 90 (Mass Pike) and Route 12 in Auburn, Massachusetts. (See directions at end of this piece).

The meeting will feature brief presentations from the officers and coordinators. The proposed budget will be presented to delegates for adoption.

Each chapter is requested to send at least their "Goal" number of candidates. The MCCC Communications Coordinator will be soliciting chapter presidents for their attendee numbers. A quorum requires about 80 delegates.

Dinner choices (beef or vegetable lasagna) must be pre-ordered by one week before the meeting. That's May 1st.

Delegates will also receive a Delegate Packet, with reports and the proposed budget at least one week before the meeting.

Directions

Auburn - Ramada Inn Worcester
624 Southbridge St.
Auburn, MA 01501
Phone: 508-832-3221 Fax: 508-832-8366.

Off Mass Pike (I-90), take Exit 10 (Auburn), and follow signs for Route 12 North.

Off Route I-290 take Exit 8. Go left at the end of the exit, then right at the lights.

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Full- and part-time: working together we can make a difference



Joe LeBlanc,
MCCC Vice President

In an effort to reach out and better serve our 3,500 adjuncts, the Strategic Action Committee will be mailing a political action survey to our DCE faculty later this month. The results will help us to assess our DCE legislative agenda as well

as create a database of part-time faculty to better organize our grassroots lobbying.

For many years, we have focused on lobbying for part-timer health insurance and pension bills. While Senate bill 1539 and House bill 255 are important, they are

unlikely to be enacted into law when the Commonwealth is running \$1 billion deficits and the state continues to lose thousands of jobs every month. More than 9,500 jobs were lost in February, and Mitt's Economic Recovery seems months away at best.

What better time to organize our members for lobbying. What better time to examine the following issues as we prepare to file new bills for 2005:

- Some states have pushed to limit the percentage of courses which can be taught by adjunct faculty. In recent years hundreds of full-time faculty have retired only to be replaced by thousands of adjuncts. Our survey will assess member interest in this legislation.

- California provides incentives to give adjuncts one paid office hour per week. With your support we will file a bill to provide compensation to allow adjuncts to

hold office hours, serve on committees, and advise students and student clubs.

- As budgets improve, some states have attempted to create a permanent budget category to mandate hiring more full-time faculty. We have much work to do in lobbying for decent budgets. Over the last ten years states have increased support to public higher education by an average of 46 percent. Only West Virginia (minus 1.2 percent) and Massachusetts (minus 5.3 percent) have cut their college budgets. Neighboring states have increased their higher ed. budgets significantly: Connecticut by 50.8 percent; New Hampshire, 39.9; Maine, 38.7; Rhode Island, 53.3; Vermont, 45.2; and New York, 21.6.

As we lobby the legislature to increase its support for our colleges, we must lobby to earmark the new funds for hiring full-time faculty and direct student support from our counselors, librarians and other professional staff.

Our adjuncts are diverse and talented professionals who are too often overused and sometimes abused by the employer. By itself, this survey will not prorate adjunct salaries. It will not give adjuncts a certain number of courses to teach each semester. It will not compensate them for advising students or serving on a committee.

But it is a start. With a database of committed adjunct activists, we can push harder for a revised set of legislative priorities. Cape Cod adjunct activist and ESL instructor Betsy Smith sums up the promise of our working together like this: "I believe that the union is my voice and the voice of all my colleagues, and that our collective voice can effect change that is good for all of us."

Start the process today by completing the questionnaire. We'll stay in touch as we draft new bills and work together for the good of all our members. ■



MCCC student intern April Middleton works on a database project for Sen. Guy Glodis, D-Auburn, in the State house earlier this semester.

MCCC Legislative Internship Program

This semester MCCC has instituted a legislative internship program for community college students. Four interns have been placed in various legislator's offices.

The MCCC provides a small stipend for the interns to defray the costs of transportation and parking. But the experience is the greatest reward for the student.

These interns provide valuable assistance to legislators who receive little budget for office staff. And they are a direct example of the contribution community colleges make to the Commonwealth.

One intern, April Middleton, has been placed in the office of Sen. Guy Glodis, D-Auburn. The Mass. Bay Community College student and Framingham High School graduate also works in Mass Bay's Financial Aid Office and as a mentor for the Metrowest Boys and Girls Club.

She says, "The internship has helped me to further my knowledge of state government and politics."

Other MCCC legislative interns are Charlie Knight from Springfield, Jason Brillhante from Bristol, Rachel McManus from Mass Bay, Mark Johnston from Northern Essex and Ian Rose from Bunker Hill. ■

Know Your Day Contract

April 2004

- April 1** Ballots must be received for 2004 MCCC elections
- April 6** Dean's leave of absence recommendations due (p.19)
- April 15** Dean's tenure recommendations due (p.30)
- April 15** Title changes announced (p.49)
- April 30** Fall assignments to faculty, fulltime schedules to chapter (p.32)

May 2004

- May 1** President's tenure recommendations and sabbatical notification due (pp.30 & 18)
- May 8** MCCC Delegate Assembly 2004
- May 15** Faculty submit college service and student advisement form (p.41)
- May 21** Tenure decisions due (p.30)
- May 21-22** MTA Annual Meeting, Boston
- May 30** Professional staff College service and student advisement forms (p.42)
- May 31** Memorial Day observed

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. ■

Consultants...

Continued from Page 1

often such employment was not temporary, but was actually replacement for full-time state positions and the specifics for such services were not often clearly contracted or documented, if such documentation existed at all.

Despite the ethical and legal issues related to such state consultant work, the Massachusetts Community College system took full advantage of the economics of hiring such employees. These professionals were paid using an accounting code known as "03". The inside jargon for a worker hired under this line is "non-employee."

Given such status, these employees were often hired at considerably lower pay than the full-time workers they replaced and many received no benefits: no sick time, no holiday or personal days, no pension credit, and no social security support. Some worked 30 or more hours per week for years at a time with no change in such "status."

The Strategic Action Steering Committee of the Massachusetts Community College Council is currently working to support those members in pursuit of a retirement buyback option for their years spent as 03 state employees.

In an effort to poll membership about their 03 employment experience, SAC Chair and MCCC Vice-President Joe LeBlanc distributed 03 questionnaires in December 2003 to current union members. One hundred and seventy-two survey forms were returned. A database to compile and sort survey responses is now being developed by MCCC Research Coordinator Hilaire Jean-Gilles with input from the SAC Steering Committee.

SAC Representatives Roberta Albano and I are chairing an 03 Buyback Subcommittee that will analyze this data further, respond to all survey respondents, and research the history of similar legislation.

Additionally, this sub-committee will build upon the previous political work of other 03 employees and state legislators. A bill supporting a retirement buyback option for former 03 employees has been circulating in the legislature for more than a decade, with particular support given from Senator Joan Menard, D-Somerset.

At a hearing before the Joint Committee on Public Service in September 2003, Dot Sweeney and I, professors from Bristol Community College with a combined eight plus years of 03 experience, testified in support of this bill to the Joint on Committee Public Service;

however, we emphasized one major modification. The current bill, known as Senate Bill #1521, excludes from buyback the first two years of service performed as an 03 consultant. The SAC steering committee and membership do not support this two-year exclusion. One of our goals is to work with legislators, including Senator Menard, to rewrite the bill to include all years of "consultant" service as a buyback option for former 03 employees. We will need the help of former 03 workers and would like the support of all MCCC members as we move forward on such an initiative.

Before such support is requested, however, the 03 Buyback Subcommittee will compare this initiative to comparable state bills, policies and/or legislation that sanctions creditable retirement service in the Commonwealth. In particular, we are seeking information relating to the "Nun's Bill," the "Peace Corp Bill," the "Vocational Educators' Bill," and the "MTA K-12 Maternity Leave Bill." We would appreciate hearing from anyone having information, written documents, or exact wording relating to any of these initiatives. SAC leadership shall also pursue other sources for such details.

The SAC goals related to this legislative buyback initiative are both short-term and long term. In addition to the research and database work being done this semester, a letter will be sent to all survey respondents accompanied by copies of two related documents: *General Law 29: 29A* and the state Retirement Board's *New Part-Time Creditable Service Policy*. Unfortunately, this policy does not apply to 03 experience, but may be relevant to some of the respondents' work history. A copy of Senate Bill #1521 may also be included.

In the Fall of 2004, the push for the rewording of the 03 retirement buyback bill and its eventual support in the legislation will begin. Such timing will ensure, first, that the bill is kept alive, and second, that the bill's language be revised to include all years of 03 service, especially the first two.

Phone calls and letters to all legislators as well as a Lobby Day at the State House are strategies that will also be pursued when the time is appropriate: **when our contract points have been paid and election fever has subsided.** Certainly then, MCCC/SAC will be seeking the support of all membership to address the inequitable retirement gap that is the bane of full-time MCCC workers who were unethically, if not illegally, used in their 03 state positions as "consultants." ■

Is Your Workplace Hazardous to Your Health?

By Linda Stern, Mass Bay Community College

A full 20% of the U.S. population gets up every morning and spends the day in a school building, whether as faculty, staff, or students. This includes all of us in the community college system. We may take for granted that our workplace is a healthy place to be. But is it?

Aging school buildings, or even new ones, can have any one or more environmental problems:

- Water leaks from the roof (or internally from plumbing)
- Ventilation systems that are old or not well maintained
- Air polluted by emissions from copiers, furnaces and other machines related to instruction or maintenance of the building
- Science labs or art studios with materials not properly stored or used
- Construction or renovation going on while the building is occupied
- Various types of molds or high bacteria counts
- Use of pesticides or toxic cleaning supplies
- Lack of fresh air or natural lighting

A large number of activities may be going on simultaneously in the same building at our colleges. Biology, chemistry, and bio-tech labs are the focus of student work; improper use, storage, and disposal of chemicals may pose a hazard. What about paints and other substances that are used in art and ceramic studios as well as in photography darkrooms? What about work areas used by automotive programs? Do all of these sites have adequate provisions for dealing with contamination or other emergencies? What about asbestos removal? The list goes on and on.

What you can do:

- Be aware of any problems in your workplace and document them
- Report them to your college's administration and your union
- Join a Health and Safety committee on your campus or set one up
- Attend the MTA Summer Conference 2004 at Williamstown and learn more
- Attend an MTA training on how to inspect a building

Get in touch with Linda Stern at MassBay Community College (lsterne@massbay.edu) who is currently representing higher ed on the MTA Environmental Safety and Health Committee. The MCCC would like to hear about environmental issues at your college!

The following was taken from the MTA Environmental Health and Safety website. Check out this website at <http://www.massteacher.org/ehs> for extensive information on medical conditions and symptoms; construction, renovation and design; house-keeping and sanitation; laws and regulations; collective bargaining issues and more.

Indoor Air Quality: How to know if there is a problem in your school

There are two approaches to dealing with indoor air quality problems in schools. The first is when people feel the symptoms that appear as a result of poor air quality which leads to a crisis within the school or community. The other approach is to be proactive and investigate the building regularly for the signs of potential problems.

Questions about the students, teachers, and staff that you may want to ask:

- Are a number of people in the school feeling sick, particularly at the end of the day or when using certain rooms?
- Do people get better when they are away from the building for the week-end, overnight, or vacations

Symptoms associated with poor indoor air quality are:

- Tiredness or malaise
- Headaches, or other flu-like symptoms
- Rashes, itchy eyes, allergy-like symptoms
- Respiratory problems
- Any other problems that get worse while in the building

Questions to ask about the building whether or not people are feeling sick:

- Are there some rooms that are too hot or too cold?
- Are there lasting odors from labs, shops, or bathrooms?
- Are there rooms that have no ventilation ducts or sources of fresh air?
- Are there visible signs of mold, filth or moisture on ceilings, walls or floors?
- Are there possible outside sources of pollution such as a busy street, highways, idling vehicles or even a nearby factory?
- Are there pesticides or cleaning chemicals being used indoors or outdoors on school property? Are they being used properly?
- Are there safer pesticides, cleaning chemicals, or other school supplies (in art classes, science labs, shops, etc.) that could be used in the school?
- Is cleaning or maintenance of the building generally poor?
- Are there water leaks in the roof, walls, or plumbing?
- Is there a preventative maintenance plan for the heating and ventilation system?
- Are there renovations planned for the building?
- Have rooms been divided up differently? Are there too many people in each?
- Are rooms used for different purposes than they were designed?

[Adapted from *The Labor Page*, March-April 1997, *Massachusetts Healthy Schools Network*.] ■

MCCC Members Get Politically Active

The MCCC encourages all members to get involved in political campaigns in whatever ways they choose. It is important to establish contacts with elected officials to ensure that the Union's issues get voiced to the people making decisions about community colleges and state employees.

Relationships built on helping candidates with their needs at election time will benefit later when the Union has issues that need help in the legislature. Our assistance with campaigns will help to ensure that the Union's message gets through all the competing messages that bombard legislators.

This is sure to be a hot political year. From the U.S. Presidency down to local house seats, there will be many significant elections. MCCC members have been getting involved early both through the MCCC Political Action Committee and individually.

With financial support from the MCCC's Political Action Committee, Union members are expecting to be politically active over the next few months as the MCCC supports its legislative friends in the 2004 election.

The accompanying pictures show members from Cape Cod and Northern Essex stepping into action. ■



Several members from Cape Cod Community College attended a gathering for Sen. Robert O'Leary recently: (from left) Chapter President Nancy Dempsey, former MCCC Director John French, O'Leary, SAC activist W. Brooks Smith and current MCCC Director Gail Guarino.



Senate President Robert Travaligni (left) and Northern Essex Chapter President Peter Flynn meet at a reception for Senator Steven Baddour.

Legislative Timeline For FY05 Budget

As the timeline below illustrates, there will be a very short period of time for the legislature to finalize the state budget. In an election year the legislature goes out of session during the summer and does not reconvene until January, except under special circumstances. With the Democratic Convention being held in Boston, there will be additional pressure on the legislature.

MCCC members should be aware that May and June will be important months to lobby for or against provisions in the budget. Action in July could be crucial to override vetoes the Governor might exercise.

January 28, 2004: Governor Mitt Romney releases House I

January, February and March: House and Senate Ways and Means Committees holds hearings on various issues, including education around the state

February 11: Constitutional Convention met to consider anti-gay marriage constitution amendment

March 2: Special election to replace Senator Cheryl Jacques. Republican Rep. Scott Brown defeats Democratic candidate Angus McQuilken

Late March–beginning of April: House Ways and Means Committee puts together its version of FY05 budget

Week of April 12: Release of House Ways and Means budget. Amendments due April 16

April 27: Filing deadline for candidates for legislative seats.

Week of April 26: House consideration of FY05 budget

Mid-May: Senate Ways and Means releases its version of the budget

Late May/early June: Senate consideration of FY05 budget

Mid-June: House/Senate conference committee meets to resolve differences in FY05 budget

Late June: Final consideration of FY05 budget

Late June/Early July: Governor issues vetoes of the FY05 budget

Mid-July: House and Senate consider vetoes

Mid-July: Legislature completes work on FY05 budget

July 26-29: Democratic Convention in Boston

July 31: Legislative formal sessions end. Only non-controversial items considered after then ■

MOVING?



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Call the office at 1-877-442-MCCC toll free or go online at <http://www.mccc-union.org/ChangeMyAddress/>



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:

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or email
Communications@mccc-union.org



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Holyoke Chapter Revitalization

The Holyoke community College chapter took advantage of the MCCC revitalization grant process to hold an event on Feb. 27, 2004.

Seamus O'Reilly's Pub, close by the college, was the location for this afternoon reception. It was an opportunity for union members to gather in a relaxed atmosphere to refresh old friendships and to establish new ones.

Several other chapters have also applied and received matching funds (up to \$500.) to conduct activities that build chapter unity and involvement. The revitalization grants are an ongoing MCCC initiative. Chapters can propose a variety of activities that they feel could strengthen their local chapter and increase member involvement. The MCCC will pay for half of the activity's cost.

Chapters can contact Michelle Gallagher, MTA Consultant, for information about the grants. ■



Holyoke members Beverly Wodicka (left), Rich Defoe and Walter Mozgala have a chance to discuss issues at the chapter revitalization reception. Photo by Jay Ducharme



MCCC Secretary Phyllis Barrett (left) and MCCC Director Kathleen McDonough speak with George Ashley and Pat Sandoval. Photo by Jay Ducharme

Directors' Notes

At the February 27 meeting of the MCCC Board of Directors the following actions were taken:

- The Board passed a motion to modify MCCC policies under "Chapters, Dues Remittal" that will require chapters to have a copy of their most recent chapter approved bylaws on file at the MCCC office in order to receive their chapter dues remittal.

- A motion was tabled to modify MCCC policies under "Chapter Financial Report" that would require chapters to be incorporated. The Board wanted to get more information from MTA Legal about the benefits of chapter incorporation. (Note: the MCCC is incorporated.)

- The Board passed a motion to modify MCCC policies under "Board of Directors" that included a job description for directors. The description spells out the duties and responsibilities of the position. The document will begin to newly elected directors in the future.

- The Board also passed a resolution to encourage delegates to last year's MTA Annual Meeting not to support going forward with a demonstration in Boston. The delegates voted a large sum of money at the 2003 Annual Meeting for a demonstration mainly to support the unfunded contracts. With the funding of those contracts, there appears to be no issue that would generate state-wide support for such an action. ■



Abe Sherf, MCCC Representative to the MTA Board of Directors

Report Your Dental Insurance Concerns

Anyone having concerns about the Met Life dental plan should report them to:

Abe Sherf
402 Paradise Road
Swampscott, MA 01907
Fax or Phone 781-592-1330

Mass Bay Resolution

A positive resolution has been achieved for the situation at Mass Bay Community College reported in the September issue.

The situation was that, citing budget constraints, President Lindsay Norman imposed an 11-month work year on all professional staff, with the argument that he could reduce the work-year of professional staff without harming student services.

Professional Staff were required to schedule one month's worth of time without pay during specified periods of this fiscal year. The first staffing reduction was supposed to take place between Dec. 22 and Jan. 16. Grievances were filed as members tried to figure out how to handle the situation and minimize the financial loss. Among the affected members were several Union officers including Chapter President Ned McGuire.

On Dec. 15 President Norman announced that the college's budget situation was not as dire as initially projected and in some areas had improved significantly. He rescinded his decision to reduce the 12-month positions to 11-month and assured that affected staff members would be held harmless.

Two other retrenchment cases from Mass Bay and Northern Essex are continuing to the arbitration level. A new retrenchment grievance was recently filed at Berkshire as well.

N.B. Recently, Mass Bay President Lindsay Norman announced that he will be retiring. He will leave his position when a new President is selected. ■

"If You Want To Be Heard, It Helps To Have A PAC"

So says political consultant Joel Blackwell in his book, *Personal Political Power*.

More than two years ago, the MCCC created its own Political Action Committee in an effort to further strengthen its clout on Beacon Hill. So far:

- Our PAC quickly raised funds to use in elections
- Our PAC attended many fundraisers.

In these challenging times on Beacon Hill, we need your contributions to our PAC TODAY!

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