

MCCC NEWS



The Official Publication of the Massachusetts Community College Council / Volume 5, Issue 2 / October 2003

Leadership Meeting: Political Power



Joel Blackwell leading workshop with MCCC Vice President, Joe LeBlanc (l), Jean Tillman, (HCC), Arthur Barlas (NECC) and in foreground Sarah Hovsepian, (QCC)

Over 70 MCCC members gathered in Marlborough on Sept. 8th for the annual MCCC Fall Leadership Meeting. The purpose of this meeting is networking, professional and leadership development.

This year's meeting featured nationally known political consultant Joel Blackwell who gave the keynote address and led a workshop on effective political action for organizations. As a former journalist and political candidate Blackwell had a variety of perspectives to share.

In a lively presentation sprinkled with spicy humor and loaded with examples from his experience, Blackwell presented a behind-the-scenes view of the political process, particularly focused on legislators—the demands on them, their needs and what influences them.

He spoke about several stages to get an organization's message out to legislators and how to advance its agenda. Among these were helping out in campaigns, creating an image of the organization and being recognized by a politician and, finally, how to get the votes needed to pass legislation benefiting our members.

When candidates first run for legislative seats they need a tremendous amount of help. Money is an obvious need. Individual members can always contribute, and with the MCCC PAC the union can also help financially. But there are limits on contributions and money is not the only influential way to help.

By way of example, Blackwell pointed out that Certified Public Accountants often volunteer to be campaign treasurers. This position is a dire need of every candidate. Few people have the skills to do the job, and the people doing it work very closely with the candidates. When candidates get elected, they don't forget their treasurers.

He noted that community college fac-

ulty and staff have a diversity of skills to offer. In a workshop session, Blackwell broke the attendees into groups and asked them to think of ways they could provide support to campaigns. Frank Leary of Northern Essex pointed out that English faculty could write campaign literature. Other suggestions were that art instructors could design posters, or computer instructors could set up web sites. Anyone could volunteer to make phone calls, distribute flyers or hold signs.

As community college faculty and staff we have a positive public image and a relatively clear identity. But there are areas to work on. One suggestion he made was

that for every legislator the MCCC have one constituent member who is closely connected to that member's senator or representative. This way when issues about community colleges come up, the legislator has a face to connect with the issue. He noted that a possible goal for us is inviting every legislator to a classroom this year.

One situation he pointed out is that less than 1% of constituents ever contact their legislators. This means that a very few people making contact about a specific issue can have inordinate influence. When we have a specific piece of legislation we want action on, we need to use the most

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Joel Blackwell and MTA Higher Ed lobbyist, Arline Isaacson

DCE Negotiations To Begin

Negotiations for a successor Agreement for the Division of Continuing Education are set to begin soon. The current contract that governs the employment of part-time faculty working both days and evenings expires on December 31, 2003.

This contract is negotiated with the college presidents rather than with the Board of Higher Education and should be conducted in a different climate than the expired contract for the full-time faculty and staff.

Three members have been appointed to the MCCC Negotiating Team: Michael Dubson, author of *Ghosts in the Classroom*, from Middlesex CC; John Palmer, Quinsigamond CC; and Divya Taylor, Northern Essex CC. All of these people are adjunct faculty. The team also includes MCCC President, Rick Doud; MCCC/DCE Grievance Coordinator, Joe Rizzo; and MTA Consultant, Michelle Gallagher. Two more members are pending Board of Directors approval.

A questionnaire has been prepared to survey all DCE members to determine the Union's demand package. This will be mailed to members' homes in the next few weeks and should be returned immediately by mail for compilation.

The first negotiation session is planned to coincide with Campus Equity Week at the end of October. ■

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Strategic Action Committee Report

Our Future Begins With Your Actions

By Joe LeBlanc, MCCC Vice President



Joe LeBlanc, MCCC Vice President

In one version of our future the worst is yet to come. In this scenario Beacon Hill has become a quasi-democratic madhouse ruled by the "No New Taxes" mantra where representatives and senators say "We can't do this and we can't do that. The budget won't allow it."

The challenges facing us this year are great. Our community colleges have been cut again in FY '04...

In this world not funding labor contracts is ok because after all the world is run by corporate interests which insist on privatizing every essential service in sight. These corporate interests also insist on "labor flexibility" formerly known as union bust-



Members of the MCCC Board of Directors sign the HEUU petition

ing. In this bleak world view we'll all soon be shopping at the local non-union Wal-Mart and wearing clothing manufactured by children in the Third World.

The challenges facing us this year are great. Our community colleges have been cut again in FY '04 and higher student fees are only making up half of the new shortfall. We are paying more for our health insurance.

Another early retirement incentive will soon cut scores of full-time positions with a 20 percent backfill in effect until June, 2005. Bills to provide part-timers with decent pension and health insurance benefits languish until the budget situation improves, something not likely to happen until the legislature corrects the ongoing structural budget deficit.

To make matters worse, Gov. Romney and some legislators are looking at "reforming" your retirement system. The governor's higher ed. reorganization proposal is also likely to reappear. At least the budget isn't getting any worse, but this isn't exactly splendid news for state employees and for the Commonwealth's state government, the largest employer in New England and a powerful force in driving the regional economy.

Here are some ways you can help in coming weeks:

- Beginning Oct. 7 our chapters will participate in State House Watch events. Earlier this semester, Northern Essex CC members picketed in front of the State House. Ten volunteers passed out hundreds of flyers, lobbied for higher ed. contract funding and enjoyed an afternoon of friendship and union solidarity. Contact your union leaders today to volunteer. Two hours of your time will help us to change the political landscape on Beacon Hill.
- Participate in a Romney Watch event. Successful events were held at Worcester State and Northern Essex over the summer. Participants pressured the governor to work to fund the contracts.
- Get to know your legislator. We are seeking volunteers to be official MCCC contacts with the 200 members of the General Court. If you are willing to volunteer a few hours a month to better get to know your legislators, contact me at mccc_vp@comcast.net for details. We'll be kicking off this program in coming weeks.
- Invite a legislator to class. History, political science and other faculty are encouraged to invite a state rep. or senator to class. The goal is to forge a tie with your legislators and your college and its students. Once again, we'll be starting this program in coming months. Let us know if you are willing to invite a legislator to your class and we'll set it up.
- Sign the HEUU petitions. Higher Education Unions United will picket the 2004 Democratic National Convention IF the contracts are not funded before then. The MCCC is asking you to sign the pledge. Your signature as a potential participant will put state Democrats on notice that they must stand up and really act like the party of organized labor. They must fund the contracts as they have funded every other collective bargaining agreement in the history of this Commonwealth. To do any less will be an invitation for organized labor to act up as we face and overcome the considerable challenges facing us.

With your support we will repudiate the naysayers' harsh vision. We can and will do better than that. ■

Leadership...

Continued from Page 1

effective communication avenues.

He said that without question the most effective way to communicate is face to face. Following that come handwritten letters and then typewritten (word processed) letters. Form letters, postcards and petitions do show numbers, but in general, the more personal the communication the more impact it has.

Finally, Blackwell said that having professional lobbyists is vital, but they can't do the job by themselves. They can get you access and give you advice on how to approach issues and individual legislators, but they can't replace grassroots activism. Where lobbyists can be extremely useful is in following up member visits with additional information.

Members felt that this was a very useful presentation and workshop. As Geri Curley, MCCC Director from Bunker Hill, pointed out, "Many of his recommendations we are doing already. But the specificity of his recommendations were very helpful, especially on how legislators prefer to be contacted."

The MCCC distributed copies of Blackwell's book, *Personal Political Power*, to attendees.

If you are interested in reading his recommendations, contact your chapter President or Strategic Action Coordinator and see if they have a copy to loan. ■

To the Editor:

As an adjunct who comes in to teach only two evenings a week, I sometimes miss interesting activities taking place on my campus. But this year, I am going to make a point of participating in (and maybe even helping to organize) some events during Campus Equity Week, October 28-31. Those of us who teach part-time can educate ourselves and others about the negative impact the "overuse of contingent faculty" (to quote the AAUP—see <http://www.aaup.org/Issues/part-time/cwpage.htm>) has on higher education.

Betsy Smith, Ph.D.

Adjunct Profess of ESL

Cape Cod Community College



Write Us

The MCCC News welcomes your letters and opinion pieces. We do reserve the right to edit them for space and appropriateness.

Mail to Donald Williams, North Shore Community College, One Ferncroft Road, Danvers, MA 01923 or email Communications@mccc-union.org.



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

WANTED

3 Strategic Action Committee Regional Representatives

Do you have?

- An interest in promoting the MCCC's political action agenda
- Political campaign and/or grassroots lobbying experience
- Good interpersonal skills
- Knowledge (or willingness to learn) of the legislature's procedural rules
- Time to spend lobbying State Senators and Representatives
- Talents to help the MCCC to fully exercise its political clout

Candidates appointed to these positions are eligible for one course of release time per academic year as well as reimbursement for mileage, tolls and meals. Required monthly meetings will be held in Greater Boston and Worcester.

APPLY TODAY!

Email or fax your resume & cover letter by Nov. 15 to:
Sandy Cutler: cutler@stcc.mass.edu, 413-566-5855 &
Joe LeBlanc: Vice_President@mccc-union.org, 207-384-7082

President's Message

October 2003...



Rick Doud,
MCCC President

As we get deeper into the fall semester I am seeing quite a few unit members walking around with huge smiles on their faces. There seems to be a cadre of individuals who appear to have found true inner peace and happiness. When I asked about the source of such happiness, the answer was quite simple: Early retirement!

Although we will miss them as colleagues, I know we can share in their happiness at being able to retire after giving many years of dedication to stu-

dents, as well as service to their colleges.

After sharing memories and congratulating them on their good fortune I began to think about what was going to happen at the community colleges if we lose many of our experienced members. They are outstanding professionals whom we will not be able to replace in the foreseeable future. The early retirement incentive is going to exacerbate a trend that has been going on for quite some time: the expanded part-time of the faculty and professional staff at our institutions.

For professional staff, as people retire much of their work will be shifted to part-time staff, who are paid an abysmally low salary, usually without benefits. In addition, the remaining full-time professional staff will undoubtedly be asked to work even harder by continuing to serve our students with fewer colleagues and resources.

In the faculty ranks, where the reli-

ance on part-time employment is already at historically high levels, the administration will have no choice but to hire more and more adjuncts.

To see how serious this overreliance on adjunct faculty already is, consider the following statistics. One of our institutions currently offers a total of 127 sections of required writing courses during the day. Of these 127 sections, 39 are taught by full-time faculty and the remaining 85 sections are taught by adjuncts. This ratio is only going to worsen next semester, once people retire.

We must take action soon to ensure that full-time benefited positions are the rule, not the exception, in our system. The MCCC will be looking to address this issue with the college presidents in the very near future. By hiring more and more adjuncts, the presidents are only doing what they feel they must do to ensure access to students. In the absence of state funding, they have

turned to day DCE offerings to keep their colleges staffed and serving students.

We need to work with the college presidents to shed some light on the magnitude of this problem. We hope to work together to bring our case for more funding for full-time positions directly to the legislature.

This problem will require long-term political activism. We must convince the legislature that the continued part-time of our system is not only harmful to our profession, but to our institutions, and, most importantly, to our future students.

The long-run academic integrity of our institutions is at risk. We must preserve the academic excellence of our colleges and maintain the dignity of our profession. It will not be an easy task, but we need to put an end to the trend of part-time.

In Solidarity,
Rick

Editorial Comment

Cowboy Up *By Don Williams*

The term "Cowboy Up" is the watchword of this year's playoff bound Red Sox. It is a rodeo term for bronco riders to get up when thrown and get back on a horse. It was used by a player during the team's usual August slump to encourage the fans to keep up their support. As full-time membership goes into a slump, we all need to "Cowboy Up."

Enrollments are strong, but college budgets are weak. Through normal attrition, but especially through last year's and now this year's early retirement programs, the ranks of full-time faculty and staff have been severely cut. The 20% cap on replacing these senior employees makes the colleges increasingly dependent on part-time employees to provide services to our students.

As MCCC President, Rick Doud, points out in his column, the replacement of retiring full-time employees with part-time ones is not a healthy trend for the colleges. It is also not a healthy situation for the union.

In the upcoming retirements we are losing many long time union activists. We will lose some Chapter Strategic Action Coordinators, one MCCC Director and at least one Chapter President. Many other union officers and former officers will also be leaving.

The generation of passionate unionists who founded the MCCC in the early 70's will soon be gone. And there are few people to replace them. Many of the members that have come into the union in the past 15 years have not gotten involved in union activities, preferring to let "the same old people" do the work. Well, these "old people" won't be there anymore. It's time to "Cowboy Up."

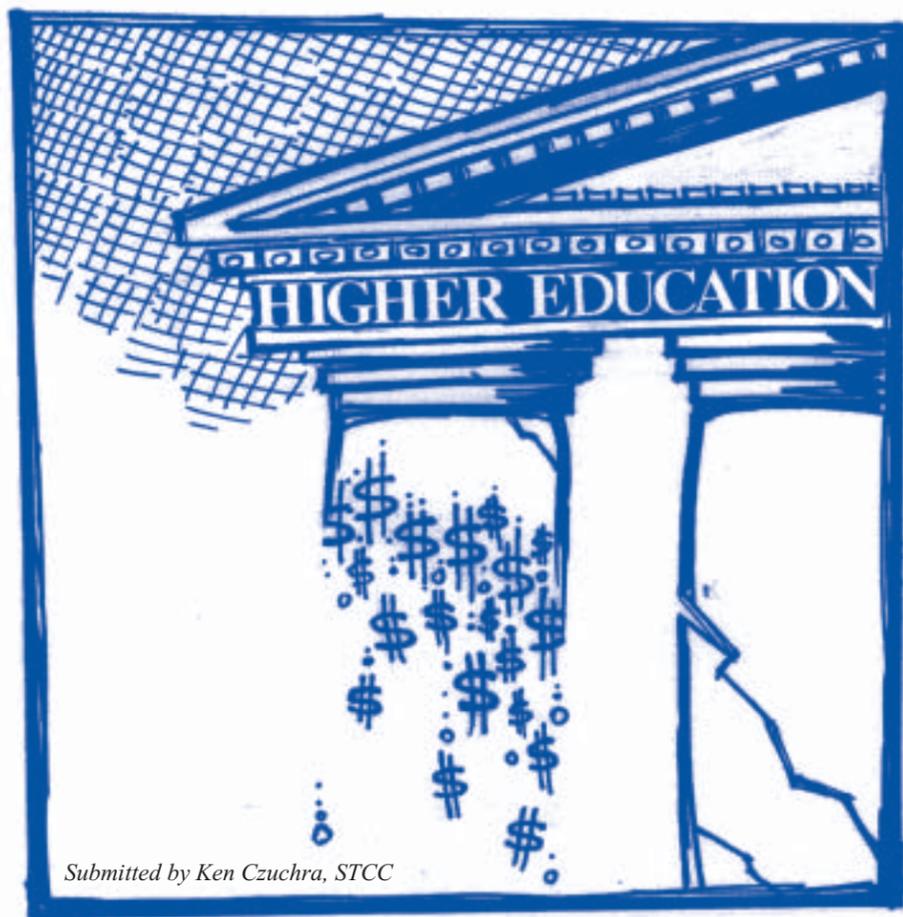
As the colleges rely on more part-time people to replace the retiring full-time faculty and staff, part-timers will need to do their share of union work. Adjunct faculty often complain that the union doesn't do much for them, but you can't complain about others not helping you if you don't try to help yourself. Understandably, it's difficult for part-timers who are scrambling to make a living to do much with the union. But there are positions ear-marked for adjunct faculty that go unfilled. Jane Arnold's letter elsewhere in this issue points out one. It's time to "Cowboy Up."

In the future there will be some new hires, but probably not to the numbers we

would like. Even if there were to be a lot of new hires soon, it would take time for them to get involved in union activities. So the responsibility is with those of us who remain to come forward and get involved. It's time to "Cowboy Up."

Many of the MCCC's 15 chapters have been well organized and active. Others have fallen into inaction from lack of member involvement. The retirement of key members threatens to weaken more chapters. In response to this threat the MCCC has instituted Chapter Revitalization Grants to fund various activities at the chapter level.

The grants are intended to improve chapter organization, to build member involvement and to foster new chapter leaders. A list of chapter presidents with their college phone numbers and email addresses appears elsewhere in this issue. If you have an idea for a grant project or if you want to get involved in some way, contact your president. Don't wait to be asked. It's time to "Cowboy Up." ■



Submitted by Ken Czuchra, STCC

Opinion

By Jane Arnold

Several years ago a colleague asked me how I could put up with being the union representative for DCE at Middlesex. I was astonished. Put up with it? The two entirely satisfactory things in my life at that time were my daughter and my union work. The seven years that I have served as the DCE rep have been fulfilling. I've talked to many adjunct faculty and been able to help some of them. I met with other DCE reps from around the state. Many people thanked me for my work. If nothing else, the benefit of working with Joe Rizzo, Phil Mahler, and Rick Doud has made the job rewarding.

It's also been discouraging. I get tired of saying, "They owe you one course in an area of your competence. No, it doesn't have to be the course you want, or teach well, or like to teach, or the one you developed. Yes, I know someone with less experience is teaching three, but nothing in the contract says they have to behave like decent human beings."

One of the first cases I handled was of student complaints about the attendance of a long-term adjunct. As we sorted through the issues, I asked the dean, "Did you pick

up the phone and call the instructor and ask what was going on?" "No, I did not," was the indignant answer. That was the first time a skilled, dedicated, long-term adjunct said to me, "Why bother? Why fight for this job? If they treat me like this after 15 years of working here, why stay?" After too many such cases, I'm tired of hearing that. But I may have an answer.

When I ran for DCE rep, my motto was "You are the union." The root of union is *uni*, one, and a union empowers members to act together, to act as one. Ben Franklin is credited with having said, "We must indeed all hang together or assuredly we shall all hang separately." Too often, full-time faculty are pitted against adjuncts who are pitted against staff. With the current cutbacks, we're all overworked, and we're none of us doing the job we'd like to do. A lot of people are frustrated and angry. Some have told me adjuncts should have a separate union or try to join another union. Of course, splitting the ranks is the classic management tool. It's the strongest power move. If you can get the peasants to fight the other peasants, they'll stay off your

neck or off your property. It's much easier to hang us separately.

I'm also tired of hearing, "The union doesn't do anything for me." A union gives individuals the power of the whole. Every person who gives up and says, "Why fight for this course?" or "for this job?" or "Yes, the dean lied, but it isn't worth the hassle to prove it," plays right into management hands. Those people shouldn't ask what the union is doing for them, because they've already decided they don't want the union to act.

A union song has the line "Many drops can turn a mill; singly none." Many bricks can build a wall. But if we each throw our own brick, we'll be left with empty hands. You are the union. We are the union. In union there is strength; until we use that strength, we won't see results. Middlesex Community College now needs a DCE representative. Will you take on that job? Around the state, if you don't like what the union leadership does, will you challenge them when they run for re-election? If not, be prepared to go on hanging separately. ■

Know Your DCE Contract

Reappointment Rights and Seniority

You earn reappointment rights after teaching five courses over three consecutive fiscal years at the college. These courses do not have to be in the same department. Two or more courses per year in a work area at the college earns one-year seniority. One course in one area and one course in another area in a year provide one-year seniority in each work area. Loss of accrued seniority results after a two-year break in service at the college. Canceled courses do not count toward a break in service.

Salary

Independent of the calculation of seniority rights, you will move from the step one salary to the step two salary upon teaching your sixth class and move to step three upon teaching your eleventh class. You will advance to step 4 effective upon attaining 8 years of seniority at the college. New faculty at the college start at step one, but may start at step 2 or 3 of the salary schedule based on degrees, qualifications and experience.

| | |
|---------|---|
| Step 1: | \$736 per credit - Fall 2003 - \$751 |
| Step 2: | \$789 per credit - Fall 2003 - \$805 |
| Step 3: | \$848 per credit - Fall 2003 - \$866 |
| Step 4: | \$891 per credit (8 years of seniority) - Fall 2003 - \$909 |

The laboratory component of a course will be paid at the rate of 1.5:1 (1.5 contact hours per week during a regular semester = 1 credit salary).

Appointment

Faculty with reappointment rights will be provided a course interest and availability form. A tentative appointment for one course shall be assigned first to those unit members with the longest seniority. You should, under normal circumstances, be notified of your tentative assignment five weeks prior to the beginning of classes. You should be given a contract indicating the course(s) and salary to which you have

been assigned. Your course must run in the event that an administrator who hires, fires, or evaluates DCE faculty is teaching a course in DCE.

Course Material

Faculty must submit the course syllabus within one week of the beginning of classes. This should include the items appearing on the course material checklist contained in the collective bargaining agreement. Note, however, that faculty enjoy academic freedom which provides for professional latitude in fulfilling one's contractual obligations in this regard.

Instructors have the right to choose the text book(s). The exception to this is when it is a departmental selection and you are given an opportunity to participate in the decision making process, or when the appointment is made as the semester is to begin.

Evaluation

A classroom observation must be conducted prior to the unit member attaining reappointment rights. Student evaluations are to be conducted during the second or third to the last week of the course. Classroom observations can only be conducted after that point for stated written reasons.

If you have any questions on the DCE contract, call DCE Grievance Coordinator Joe Rizzo at 603-898-6309 / Grievance-DCE@mccc-union.org ■

MCCC Meetings Calendar

October 2003 to August 2004

| Year | Month | Executive Committee | Board of Directors |
|------|----------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 2003 | October | 3 | 17 |
| 2003 | November | 7 | 21 |
| 2003 | December | 5 | * |
| 2004 | January | 2 | 23 |
| 2004 | February | 6 | 20 |
| 2004 | March | 5 | 26 |
| 2004 | April | 2 | 16 |
| 2004 | May | 7 | * |
| 2004 | June | 4 | 18 |
| 2004 | July | — | — |
| | August | — | 20 |

*If called. Not normally held.

OTHER MEETINGS

| | | |
|------|---------------|---|
| 2004 | May 8 | MCCC Delegate Assembly, Auburn |
| 2004 | May 21-22 | MTA Annual Meeting, Boston |
| 2004 | July 2-July 7 | NEA Representative Assembly, Washington, D.C. |
| 2004 | August 9-12 | MTA Summer Conference, Williamstown, MA |

Know Your Day Contract

October 2003

- Oct. 1** President must notify candidates for tenure p. 30
- Oct. 3** Deadline to request agency fee status p. 10
- Oct. 13** Columbus Day holiday observed
- Oct. 30** Last day to opt out of sick bank p.13
- Oct. 30** Schedule preferences due p. 32

November 2003

- Nov. 11** Veterans Day holiday
- Nov. 21** Unit Personnel Practices Committee established p. 30
- Nov. 27-28** Thanksgiving Holiday

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. ■

MCCC News

<http://www.mccc-union.org>

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Donald R. Williams, Jr.

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Rick Doud

Vice President:

Joseph LeBlanc

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

Are You Over 70?

If you are a full-time employee of the state and you are over 70 years old you are not required to have the pension deduction taken from your salary. If you are at the 80% pension stage (32 years or more of service) this would be especially advantageous to you.

There are some conditions to keep in mind. Once you stop having the 5% deductions taken out of your pay, those years will not be counted in your retirement basis. With significant raises unlikely for the immediate future, the effect may be negligible compared to the 5% savings of the deduction.

Chapter 32, Section 90 G 3 /4 of the Massachusetts General Laws is the relevant law. You should contact a Retirement Counselor at the State Board of Retirement at (800) 392-6014 for more information. ■

Important Contact Information

If you want to volunteer for a union position, or if you have ideas for revitalizing your chapter to get members more involved contact your Chapter President. For those who don't know who their Chapter President is, see the list below.

| College | Chapter President | College Phone | Email |
|----------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Berkshire | Wayne Klug | (413) 499-4660 x321 | wklug@berkshirecc.edu |
| Bristol | Paulette Howarth | (508) 678-2811 x2390 | phowarth@bristol.mass.edu |
| Bunker Hill | Ted Ridout | (617) 228-3251 | tridout@bhcc.mass.edu |
| Cape Cod | Nancy Dempsey | (508) 362 2131 x4516 | ndempsey@capecod.mass.edu |
| Greenfield | Kit Carpenter | (413) 775-1226 | carpenter@gcc.mass.edu |
| Holyoke | Bill Lefrancois | (413) 552-2464 | wlefrancois@hcc.mass.edu |
| Mass Bay | Ned Mcguire | (508) 270-4285 | emcguire@massbay.edu |
| Massasoit | Kenn Anania | (508) 588-9100 x1814 | kanania@massasoit.mass.edu |
| Middlesex | Ken Dunn | (978) 656-3340 | dunnk@middlesex.mass.edu |
| Mt. Wachusett | Carol Mielo Swerzenski | (978) 630-9239 | c_swerzenski@mwcc.mass.edu |
| North Shore | Don Williams | (978) 762-4000 x6607 | dwilliam@northshore.edu |
| Northern Essex | Peter Flynn | (978) 556-3363 | Pflynn@seacoast.com |
| Quinsigamond | Marilyn Martin | (508) 854-4374 | marilynm@qcc.mass.edu |
| Roxbury | Richard Eells | ((617) 427-0060 x5349 | reells@rcc.mass.edu |
| Springfield | Carol Mathison | (413) 755-4330 | mathison@stcc.edu |

"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 a year 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 the fall election
- 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 Priscilla Cairra 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