

MCCC NEWS



The Official Publication of the *Massachusetts Community College Council* / Volume 4, Issue 1 / September 2002

MCCC Fall Leadership Conference

As has been customary in recent years, the Executive Committee and Board of Directors will host a Fall Leadership Conference on Monday, September 23rd, from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.. The purpose of the meeting is to prepare local leadership with updates, orient new leaders and strengthen bonds between leaders statewide.

This year's meeting will be held at the Best Western Royal Plaza, Marlboro, conveniently located off the westbound lane of Route 20, near Route 495. Directions are on Page 2 and are available on the MCCC website <http://www.mccc-union.org>.

The meeting begins at 4:00 p.m. with coffee and conversation, and opens formally with a welcome and introduction of the presenters. The participants will break up into groups for spotlight presentations from 5:00 until 6:00 p.m. MTA Consultants Katie D'Urso and Michelle

Gallagher will present on Leadership Training. Strategic Action Committee Co-Chairs Sandy Cutler and Joseph LeBlanc will lead a workshop on Strategic Action. The theme for the third workshop remains undecided as of this writing.

A dinner (chicken or pasta) will follow. After dinner, at 7:00 a plenary session featuring a conversation with MTA Leaders including newly elected MTA President Cathy Boudreau and MTA Vice President Anne Wass, will be held.

Each chapter's representation is capped at six members. New chapter leadership is strongly encouraged to attend, but any unit members may participate. Interested members should notify their local chapter presidents immediately. Selection of chapter participants is at the discretion of each chapter's president. Chapter presidents are urged to select

members keeping the workshop foci in mind.

All attendees will receive a newly minted limited edition MCCC pen.

Monday, September 23, 2002
4:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Best Western Hotel – Marlboro, MA
(Directions on Page 2)

4:00 – 4:30 Networking

4:30 – 5:00 Welcome – Rick Doud

5:00 – 6:00 Workshops

• Board/Chapter Leadership Training
Katie D'Urso and Michelle Gallagher

• Political Trends – SAC Presentation
Joe LeBlanc and Sandi Cutler

• Third Workshop
Theme and Presenter Undecided

6:00 – 7:00 Dinner

7:00 – 8:00 Plenary Session

• Q and A with MTA Leadership ■

Override of Health Care Cost Increases

The 85/15 % ratio for Commonwealth of Massachusetts' employees health care contribution was preserved in eleventh hour "nail biter" override in the House on July 31.

In a monumental effort, coordination of our membership by our own Strategic Action Committee, in conjunction with our MTA lobbyists and other public employee unions throughout the summer 2002, succeeded in preserving 85/15.

Earlier this year, Governor Jane Swift assured public employees that she saw increases in the percent of their health care contribution as an "unfair tax on public employees." During the summer she renegeed on that promise and presented the legislators with a far ranging menu of budget cuts in sensitive areas, and a proposal to increase health care contributions of public employees in a three-tiered system.

Under her plan, employees earning over \$50,000 would increase their contribution to 25%. This would mean annual increases for most of our members ranging from \$750 to \$1300 depending on their vendor, and whether they contributed as an individual or a family plan.

In January 2002 the GIC, with its six Republican appointees voting in favor,

Continued on Page 4

New MCCC Office Opens

The new MCCC office is open and our office staff relocated and fully functioning at the new location. The MCCC purchased two adjacent office suites in Mechanics Place, a professional building at 27 Mechanic Street, close to the Worcester Centrum, during the summer.

Suite 104 contains about 2000 square feet of space including storage. This is double the space currently rented at 319A Drury Square Auburn. This suite will hold all the operations currently conducted at 319 Drury Square and, after suitable renovation, will provide a large meeting area for Executive Committee and Board of Director meetings.

The adjacent Suite 103, approximately 1000 square feet, will hold the records of the MCCC and provide additional office space.

Proximity to the Centrum, the Centrum Mall shopping area, and various ethnic restaurants contribute to a feeling of vitality in the immediate surrounds of the new office. MCCC Operations Manager Phil Kennedy reports that the area is thriving with activity throughout the day during the business week.

Inexpensive, secure and convenient parking is available in a multilevel garage less than a block from the Mechanics Place Professional Building.

Mail should be directed to 27 Mechanic Street, Suite 104, Worcester MA 01608-2402. The old post office box addresses will be continued for a few months until their leases expire.

The MCCC also has a new website address!

It's www.mccc-union.org. ■



New MCCC Office at 27 Mechanic Street, Mechanics Place, Worcester MA

NEW MCCC Web Address!

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

The MCCC website is the best and most up-to-date source for late breaking developments. Additional documents of interest and import to Day and DCE unit members have been added.

The MCCC Webpage is a valuable resource for MCCC updates, job opportunities and linkage to the NEA and MTA resources available to MCCC unit members. Calendars of MCCC meetings, and committee assignments may be found there.

The new Day Contract Extension is available in downloadable (Acrobat Reader) format. Other Agreements, including the Distance learning Agree-

ment and the DCE Contract are also downloadable. Updates on the campaign to fund the day agreement will be posted as news breaks.

Information about the local chapter leadership may be found on the page. Links to our healthcare insurance providers are also available.

Additionally, MCCC events and news are available, as well as "old news" in the form of archived newsletters. Frequent updates on negotiations, links to other higher education sites, and contact information for MCCC officers is also available. Bookmark the site for frequent referral. ■

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MCCC / MTA Newsletter
27 Mechanic Street, Suite 104
Worcester, MA 01608-2402

The Maquiladoras: A Summer Trip To The Texas-Mexico Border

submitted by: Linda Stern, Mass Bay Community College

Around 4000 maquiladoras, or foreign-owned assembly plants, dot the border towns in Mexico; they are mainly American. I traveled down there last summer as part of a Solidarity Delegation, organized by the Austin office of the American Friends Service Committee. We attended a weekend of meetings and tours led by the Comite Fronterizo de Obreras (Border Committee of Women Workers or CFO).

We visited the home of one of the maquiladora workers, Julio, where we had an all day meeting; about 20 of us gathered in his dirt-packed yard, along with 5 or 6 union organizers. His house, made of concrete blocks, was one of the sturdier houses we saw in this colonia; a curtained out-house was in the back. Several large posters with news clippings and the like had been taped to a couple of trees in the front yard for our meeting. One poster listed prices of various staples that an average salary might cover; there were no fruits or vegetables on the list nor was there any meat.

Jorge and Paola were the two organizers of our weekend program; they had just arrived in Nuevo Laredo to organize in the maquiladoras; working out of a car, they went door to door. Paula was a volunteer organizer they had just met; speaking with us was her first speaking opportunity. Marguerita wore a t-shirt that read, in English, "Listen to Women for a Change". Javier helped to organize the CFO victory at a recent union election at Alcoa.

Shifts can run up to 10 to 12 hours a day or more with many workers having to work 6 or 7 days a week. Bathroom breaks and toilet paper are frequently monitored. Pay per week ranges widely from about \$20 to \$90. One worker stuffed envelopes for a Readers Digest "junk mailing;" another glued mirrors on plastic cosmetic compacts.

Springfield Wire de Mexico in Nuevo Laredo, a subsidiary of the Springfield Wire Inc. in Springfield, Massachusetts, makes refrigerator coils, dishwasher elements, compressor heaters, and heater wire. There are about 3000 workers on three shifts. Many chemicals are used in the manufacturing process, and none of the workers are given sufficient information about the possible side effects of these chemicals. The company has refused to let health inspectors from the town come in to inspect and they have surveillance cameras aimed at anyone going by.

The CFO has worked with other Mexican and American labor unions; Alcoa and GM workers from both countries have attended not only each other's meetings but have also attended stockholder's meetings together. The AFL-CIO Solidarity Center has lent support as have the U.S. Steelworkers.

The determination of these organizers was inspiring. Paula, asked if she was afraid she might lose her job, stated "I am not afraid; I can get another job like this one." Paola, when asked if he was afraid for his personal safety, laughingly said, "Well, if I get killed, I just won't be here any more." Another: "You've helped me break my chains."

Whether in the content of our courses and resources or in our concern for the increasing domination of transnational corporations, globalization is one of the most important issues of our time.

The number of maquiladoras has drastically increased since NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, was passed in 1994. Most of the labor force is female who customarily start working around the age of 13 or 14 when they drop



American Friends Service Committee Solidarity Delegation.
MBCC Librarian, Linda Stern middle row, right.

out of school; they are paid at a lower hourly rate than the men. Proof of not being pregnant is sometimes required for employment though it's a violation of Mexican labor law. There has been a horrendous string of murders in the area around Ciudad Juarez, west of where we were; in the last nine years, at least 274 young women have been sexually assaulted and brutally murdered.

Confederacion de Trabajadores Mexicano or Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM) is the official union, too closely allied with management to be trusted. The CFO, whose goal is the organization of independent, democratic unions, helps workers to understand their rights. They study Mexican labor law, strategize about actions, and role play various scenarios.

We drove by Dimmet, a factory that makes Levi's, Calvin Klein, Liz Claiborne, & Polo; they had just vacated their facility to move south of the immediate border area where they pay an even lower hourly rate; the workers suddenly left unemployed in Nuevo Laredo received no severance pay, though it too is mandated by Mexican law. Strangely, landscapers were still being paid to keep up the grounds of this empty factory building.

Some housing is supplied by the government, but most workers live in a jumble of shantytowns with minimal public services. Housing is improvised using wooden pallets, tin, concrete, cardboard, scraps of almost anything.

Structural adjustment agreements such as NAFTA are part of the trend toward globalization. These will continue to reorganize trade relations for the benefit of transnational corporations. Chapter Eleven of NAFTA gives corporations the right to sue an autonomous city, state, or country, for having environmental laws that cut into its profits. For example, a Canadian company, Methanex, that makes MTBE, a gasoline

additive, is suing the state of California as the state's environmental regulations prohibit the use of MTBE.

The proposed Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) will merge all the countries of North and South America, excluding Cuba, by 2005 into one trade unit; this will extend some of these same glaring inequalities. The recent passage of Trade Promotion Authority or "Fast Track" by Congress last summer further centralizes the power in the hands of the current Republican administration.

Here are a few resources for your personal or academic use.

Books

Charles Bowden. *Juarez: the Laboratory of Our Future*. NY: Aperture, 1998.

Joseph Stiglitz. *Globalization and Its Discontents*. NY: W.W.Norton, 2002.

Periodicals

Sam Dillon. "Profits Raise Pressure on Border Factories." *New York Times* 15 Feb. 2001: 1

Evelyn Nieves. "To Work and Die in Juarez." *Mother Jones* June 2002: 50.

Videos

Tan Cerca/So Close: Delegation to the Border with the Comite Fronterizo de Obreras

Seniorita Extraviada ("Missing Young Women") (currently on PBS)

Maquila: A Tale of Two Mexicos, by Saul Landau and Sonia Angulo

Web resources

American Friends Service Committee: <http://www.afsc.org/pindx/mexus.htm>
Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras: www.afsc.org/pindx/mexus.htm

Women on the Border website: www.womenontheborder.org [articles in English & Spanish; interviews] ■



Science Professor and MCCC member
Amadou L. Ba of Bunker Hill C.C.

Professor Ba To Washington

Science Professor and MCCC member Amadou L. Ba of Bunker Hill C.C. has been granted a leave of absence to fulfill an appointment as Ambassador to the United States for the Republic of Senegal. Senegal is a coastal West African nation.

Ba has taught biological sciences to nursing, allied health and liberal arts students at BHCC and has been active in that college's governance committees for the past three years. He will complete summer classes before moving in August to work at the Senegalese Embassy in Washington with his wife and 16 year old daughter and 14 year old son.

Since moving to the US in 1982, while studying and working, Ba has been active in educational, technological and communications forums with the theme of African development. Recently he supported the election of Senegalese President Adoulaye Wade. The new president selected Ba to work in his New Partnership for African Development (NPAD). The program focuses on infrastructural growth, education ideas and exchange, market access, and technology and communications. ■

Directions to the Best Western Royal Plaza

181 Boston Post Road West,
Marlboro, MA 01752
Telephone: (508) 460-0700
FAX: (508) 480-8218

From Boston & Route 128: Mass Pike West (I-90) to Route 495 North. Take exit 24B onto Route 20 West. The Royal Plaza is 1 mile on the right.

From Worcester: Route 290 East to Route 495 South. Take exit 24B onto Route 20 West. The Royal Plaza is 1 mile on the right.

From Springfield & the West: Mass Pike East (I-90) to Route 495 North. Take exit 24B onto Route 20 West. The Royal Plaza is 1 mile on the right.

From Cape Cod and South: Route 495 North. Take exit 24B onto Route 20 West. The Royal Plaza is 1 mile on the right. ■

President's Message

September 2002



Rick Doud,
MCCC President

The final days of this year's legislative session resulted in some widely mixed results for the MCCC and the other higher ed units. Both results however will call for our continued political action.

The good news was that thanks to our combined efforts we were able to keep our health insurance contributions at the current 85/15 level. Our ability to hold the line resulted in saving MCCC unit members between \$700- \$1300 per year based on their type of coverage. Make no mistake about it; our efforts made a difference! Thanks to all of you who made phone calls, as well as to our Strategic Action Committee, MCCC lobbyist Charley Flaherty, and the MTA. This battle will undoubtedly need to be fought again if state tax revenues continue their slide.

The bad news was the Commonwealth's refusal to fund signed collective bargaining agreements. While this did not directly affect MCCC unit members, it does eliminate pay increases for UMass, APA and

AFSCME members. Remember that many of our campus colleagues are AFSCME unit members. In the long run these vetoes will have a direct effect on the MCCC. Recall during our campaign to fund the classification study, we relied on the fact that the state always funded signed agreements. That past truth no longer holds. As you know the acting Governor initially approved the contracts and submitted them to the legislature for funding. The legislature approved the contracts, but at the last minute Jane Swift vetoed the contracts and the legislature refused to override the vetoes.

The refusal to fund these negotiated contracts will have a chilling effect, to say the least, on bargaining future contracts for the MCCC. When signed agreements are ignored the already fragile trust that exists in bargaining will be seriously damaged.

If these contracts are not funded soon, I will be calling on all of you for your support of our higher ed brothers and sisters. The AFSCME unit members at our campuses are directly affected by these actions, and we must let them know we stand with them in their fight. The struggle of the UMass, APA, and AFSCME unions is our struggle. We must join them in political actions when called upon during the fall semester. Their cause is our cause. Together we must respond to this attack on the collective bargaining process. In solidarity. ■

Volunteers Needed

Labor/Management Workload Committee

The one year contract extension agreement calls for the creation of a joint labor management committee to study the impact of the 5th course on the quality of instruction, and its appropriate application to clinical and lab like courses. The committee will be comprised of equal numbers of MCCC unit members and management. The committee will be formed no later than October 15th. The committee is charged with studying workload issues and preparing a report for the Chancellor by April 1, 2003. Applications need to be made no later than September 30, 2003 by email to President Rick Doud at President@mccc-union.org or by mail to the MCCC central office in Worcester. In recognition of the time commitment required, full-time faculty serving on the committee will receive one section of reassigned time for the spring 2003 semester.

Labor/Management Committee on Professional Staff Classification Issues

The one year contract extension calls for the creation of a joint labor management committee to study the appropriateness of the system of classification as applied to professional staff unit members. The committee is charged with studying the methodology used, and comparing classifica-

tion systems applied to other similar professional positions in the state of Connecticut and the ten similarly situated states used in the original study. The committee will be comprised of equal numbers of MCCC unit members and management. The committee will be formed no later than October 15th. The committee is charged with preparing a report for the Chancellor by April 1, 2003. Applications need to be made no later than September 30, 2003 by email to President Rick Doud at President@mccc-union.org or by mail to the MCCC central office in Worcester. In recognition of the travel and time commitment required, professional staff will be released from their job responsibilities as necessary to attend all committee meetings.

DCE Action Committee

The 2002 MCCC Delegate Assembly passed a motion calling for the establishment of an ad hoc DCE actions committee. The committee is charged with further studying the DCE action plan presented at the Delegate Assembly, and to devise a plan of action to be taken by the DCE unit. This plan is to be submitted to the MCCC Executive Committee for review and implementation. Applications need to be made no later than September 30, 2003 by email to President Rick Doud at President@mccc-union.org or by mail to the MCCC central office in Worcester. ■

MCCC Meetings Calendar September 2002 to August 2003

Year	Month	Executive Committee	Board of Directors
2002	September	6	20
2002	October	4	18
2002	November	1	22
2002	December	6	*
2003	January	3	24
2003	February	7	14
2003	March	7	21
2003	April	4	18
2003	May	2	*
2003	June	6	20
2003	July	31	*
2003	August	1	29

*If called. Not normally held.

OTHER MEETINGS

2002	September 23	MCCC Fall Leadership Meeting
2003	May 10	MCCC Delegate Assembly, Auburn
2003	May 30-31	MTA Delegate Assembly, Boston
2003	July 1-July 6	NEA Representative Assembly, Dallas

Editorial Comment

Whistling Past The Graveyard by Peter Flynn

MCCC unit members narrowly averted two very negative outcomes during the summer of 2002. Members secured a 2.43 pay increase paid out beginning July 1, 2002. Additionally the Governor Swift proposal to boost health care contributions was overridden in a virtually last minute legislative action.

These outcomes are more remarkable in the context of the freeze on raises for our brethren in other higher education units and AFSCME. This unprecedented action of the Governor in reneging on negotiated contracts and the acquiescence of the legislature should raise a red flag to organized labor in the Commonwealth.

There are, no doubt, many unit members who will interpret the suc-

cess of the MCCC leadership in achieving the raise and maintaining the proportion of health care contribution as luck- or perhaps karma, won through suffering in seemingly endless contract cycles with less propitious outcomes. I assert that these successes are fruit of the commitment of leadership to pro-action.

It's important for our membership to maintain both vigilance and momentum in this economically turbulent environment. Our ranks are depleted by early retirement. That means remaining members, each and every one, need to make a personal commitment to participation in the ongoing quest to maintain working conditions, benefits, and compensation of our members. ■



Strategic Action Committee activists Sandy Cutler, Roberta Albano, and Joseph LeBlanc

Do You Need Health Insurance?

The Nongroup Health Insurance Program is for Massachusetts residents who are not eligible for employer-based health coverage. These individuals can purchase nongroup health care insurance or coverage from any carrier offering plans. Carriers offering this coverage may not refuse any applicants based on their health nor impose preexisting condition exclusions

or waiting periods. The open enrollment period is September 1st through October 31st for coverage to be effective on December 1st of that year. Rates are not cheap but may be better than most other options.

For more information check out the union web site at <http://www.MCCC-union.org/PTHHealthInfo/>. ■

Know Your Day Contract

August 2002

Aug. 31 Spring 2002 Sabbatical recommendations to Trustees (p.18)

September 2002

Aug. 29 First day for professional day meetings (p.34)

Sept. 2 Labor Day

Sept. 3 Earliest classes may begin (p.34)

Sept. 15 Unit members receive notice of accumulated sick days (p 13)

Oct. 1 Tenure eligibility list distributed (p.30)

Oct. 1 Sick leave bank open (p.12)

Oct. 3 Furnish employer with dues to be deducted per employee (p.10)

Course materials (Form XIII-E2) for Fall 2002 must be distributed to students and submitted to supervisor before end of drop add period.

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. n

Much Can Happen In The State House During 'Informal' Session

By the State House News Service

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON—Politicos and news editors need not worry about any void on Beacon Hill now that formal House and Senate sessions have ended. There'll be plenty of activity to satisfy every interest during the coming months.

The immediate future will feature implementation of long-threatened cuts included in the state budget that Acting Gov. Jane Swift signed. State officials have warned there will be many layoffs and service reductions. The budget is balanced on paper, but structurally out of balance and in danger of lapsing into deeper trouble if tax revenues don't keep pace with projections.

While formal House and Senate sessions may have ended, hundreds of bills remain alive and well. If recent history is any measure, at least a hundred more will reach the governor's desk between now and Jan. 1, when the House and Senate members elected in November will take their seats. The five months remaining in this legislative session will feature twice-weekly "informal" sessions when mostly routine bills will move back and forth between the branches and into Swift's realm. But major bills also move during these informal sessions. There will likely be a need to replenish some critical budget accounts that run dry unexpectedly, and major laws are often passed during such sessions as long as no one objects.

Legislators have been known to tinker with the campaign finance laws during informal sessions and they even repealed the capital gains tax during one low-profile session. Beyond the legislative activity that will continue for the next several months, another higher profile drama is about to be played out. The four candidates vying for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination have been waiting for the Beacon Hill budget wars to subside, and the pace in that and other campaigns will now pick up as we approach the Sept. 17 primary election. The race for governor has grabbed most headlines to date, but there's also a crowded contest for lieutenant governor among the Democrats and a race for that same office in the Grand Old Party, which is also hoping to retake the treasurer's office.

In 1995, lawmakers changed their joint rules to end formal session by August 1 in every election year. The change was crafted to halt the lame duck sessions that had become the norm. While the rule change ended formal sessions, they allowed both branches to continue meeting year round.

Since the rule was imposed, Bay State lawmakers have passed as many laws during their informal sessions as in the 17 months leading up to the July 31 end of each two-year session. The House and Senate will continue passing bills until Jan 1, 2003 when the legislators elected in November take their seats for the 2003/04 sitting of the General Court. During the same five-month stretch two years ago, 187 new laws were placed on the books. And they were not just the routine matters expected to move during the informal sessions when it takes just one member to block any action because everything requires "unanimous consent." It's a stretch during which legislators can prove their metal by doing the legwork needed to advance their bills. Those who are the most persuasive and can convince their colleagues to drop any resistance will succeed.

The first of the 187 bills that became law during informal sessions two years ago established standards for public bathing waters and the last that hit the statute books in the following January established procedures for junking motor vehicles. Lawmakers are fond of routinely informing the public that only non-controversial matters that do not require debate are considered during informal. That's true some of the time but not all of the time.

Other laws enacted during the waning months of 2000 related to genetic testing and privacy protections, the civil commitment process for mentally ill persons, teacher certification, simulcasting of horse and dog races, group marketing plans, communications with psychologists, and health care coverage for those with speech and hearing disorders. SWIFT'S OPTIONS: As she reviews scores of bills, Swift has several options. She can sign a bill into law, veto it outright, or send it back to legislators with a proposed amendment. And in the case of any supplemental budgets or bond bills, she can veto individual line items without jeopardizing the entire bill.

That is not the case with the other bills on her desk. If she disallows one of those, it remains vetoed because the House and Senate have ended their formal sessions and vetoes can only be overridden via roll call votes. There'll be no such thing as a pocket veto until after Dec. 31 when the 2002 legislative session actually ends.

If Swift fails after 10 days to sign a bill that reaches her desk in late December, it is a pocket veto since the group of legislators who sent her the bill will no longer exist, having been replaced by a new class on Jan. 1. Between now and the end of the year, any bill the acting governor fails to sign within 10 days becomes law without her signature. ■

Health Care Increase...

Continued from Page 1

voted to double the amount of co-pay per transaction beginning July 1 2002. Practically, this means medicine and office visits rise from \$5 or \$10 per incident, to \$10 and \$20. Emergency room visits now require a \$50 co-pay.

The combination of these increases with the proposed increase in annual expense outlined above could have increased an individual's health care expenses by as much as 40 percent annually, depending on the individual's pattern of health care consumption.

Mailings and a phone-your-legislator campaign helped to preserve the ratio for at least another year. Beacon Hill observers say the battle to preserve 85/15 will be ongoing and perennial. ■

SAC REPORT

Your Calls Made A Difference; Legislature Overrides Swift's Veto Of 85/15

by Joseph T. LeBlanc, MCCC Vice President

Until the afternoon of the last day of the legislature's formal session, it looked like we were going to fail to keep our health insurance contributions at 85/15. For days, MCCC lobbyist Charlie Flaherty, along with Arline Isaacson and the rest of MTA Governmental Services, lobbied furiously to override Acting Governor Swift and save our members as much as \$1300 a year in additional premiums. A coalition of union leaders worked to generate hundreds of calls in just a few days. Retirees also called to protest cuts in their health insurance benefits.

On Tuesday July 30, MCCC President Rick Doud and I lobbied at the State House with STCC faculty members and SAC activists Sandy Cutler and Roberta Albano. We were told the fiscal crisis would make 85/15 difficult to override. Legislators and their aides told us they understood that we are paying higher co-payments and deductibles, but that it would be up to Speaker Finneran to schedule override votes.

Our chances did not look good. Finneran said no votes would be taken, though rumors persisted he might allow as much as \$50 million in overrides. Flaherty and the MTA advised us to barrage the State House with phone calls. State revenues were continuing to decline, and House leaders and senior staff persisted in telling him that 85/15 would not be taken up. The phones kept ringing. Pressure was building.

The MTA lobbied legislators to sign a petition for both the health insurance and higher ed. contracts, getting more than 100 representatives to sign. In his conversations with legislators, Flaherty pointed out that if Swift wasn't overridden on 85/15, then the rate would be set at 75/15 according to state statute.

Momentum broke our way on the last

day. On July 31, Flaherty called in the late afternoon to say the matter would be taken up and at 11:50 p.m. the House voted for 85/15 in a lopsided vote. The Senate concurred as the legislature ended its formal session. Swift was defeated once again in her efforts to impose what amounts to an unfair and unjust tax on state employees.

The MCCC did not formally endorse any candidates for statewide election at its August Board of directors meeting. After a discussion of the pro's and cons of such a move and comments about the candidates' education platforms and their positions on public higher education, board members felt it was in the MCCC's best interest to endorse no one before the primary. Quite simply, the election of any of the Democrats over Mitt Romney in November will be grand news and a boost for our public schools, colleges and universities.

The MTA has endorsed Tom Birmingham for Governor and John Slattery for Lt. Governor. Birmingham is the author of the Education Reform Act and the choice of most labor unions in the primary. Slattery recently worked hard to override Swift on 85/15. He is also known for having provided the one vote margin to defeat a bill to return capital punishment to the Bay State.

MCCC lobbyist Flaherty recently received favorable mention in a Lowell Sun story titled "Trust the key for lobbyists on Beacon Hill." Flaherty and Thomas Joyce (from Joyce and Joyce Counselors at Law) are cited "...as among the most effective in their profession. Both have been involved in politics for years and have strong personal and professional relationships with House and Senate leaders." Flaherty says trust, more than money, is the key to success in lobbying on Beacon Hill. Without such trust, all the money in the world won't buy you access. ■

MCCC News

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

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Joseph LeBlanc

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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 Peter Flynn, Northern Essex Community College, Haverhill, MA 01830, e-mail Communications@mccc-union.org

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 Oct. 15 to:
Sandy Cutler: cutler@stcc.mass.edu, 413-566-5855 &
Joe LeBlanc: Vice_President@mccc-union.org, 207-384-7082