

MCCC News

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The MCCC Board of Directors overwhelming voted to encourage all chapters to go on Work-to-Rule starting immediately. (Photo by Don Williams)

Members Take Action for a Fair Contract; Board Votes for Work-to-Rule

With Day contract negotiations stalled after nearly a year of bargaining, and management digging its heels MCCC day members are being urged to take action.

Northern Essex led the way on April 18 holding "Fair Contract Now" posters at the college entrance. North Shore followed up on the 24th before the college's trustees meeting. But after management hardened its position in negotiations later that day, the Union had had enough.

Friday April 26, the MCCC Board of Directors overwhelming recommended that all chapters vote to engage in work-to-rule. This means to stop doing any job activity that is not specifically contractually mandated. Although the semester is almost over, there are many activities that happen this time of year that may be affected. Also there are many events such as graduations where Union protests can also be effective.

This contract expired on July 1, 2018, and the teams have been negotiating for nearly a year. With wage increases being rigidly held at mere 2

percent per year by Gov. Baker, in line with other state unions, the final sticking point is management's insistence on unit members being mandated to use the Learning Management Systems (LMS) and advising software on their campuses.

The Union sees this as a serious attack on academic freedom. Faculty would be evaluated on their use of the systems like Blackboard, Canvas, and Moodle, which vary between campuses. Supervisors could be able to scrutinize the day-to-day activities of a course, opening a Pandora's Box of issues in the evaluation process. One MCCC team member referred to this as management spying on us and our students.

Our team has pointed out that faculty using such proprietary software as My Math Lab would have to use two LMSs to comply with management's requirements, or would have to give up that proprietary software. For professional staff members, management could micromanage interaction with students and gain access to notes you take on students.

MCCC Team Chair Claudine Barnes reported that they had discussed a pilot program to test the use of LMS and advising software without evaluations. A committee would review the results and make recommendations for future bargaining teams. The union made some suggestions in response.

"Management's response was horrible," Barnes said. "They are demanding mandatory participation from all 15 community colleges, all unit members including those not currently using LMS or advising software must participate." They are looking to harvest raw data from using the software and are not interested in studying the efficacy of mandated use of the systems.

Once language mandating LMS and advising software use is in the contract, it will be there forever. Adjunct faculty can expect that if it gets in the Day contract, management will demand it in the DCE contract. MCCC Treasurer Gail Guarino pointed out that "nowhere else in our contracts is a tool [like LMS] specified." It's a dangerous president.

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Mark Your Calendar May 16

We have a once-in-a-generation chance to pass bills increasing the amount of state aid for our public schools and colleges by more than \$1.5 billion a year.

On Thursday, May 16 at 5 p.m., join with students, educators, parents and community members at the State House to call on our legislators to Fund Our Future and reverse years of underfunding of our public schools and colleges!

The Fund Our Future Coalition is organizing a **big rally outside of the State House at 5 p.m. on May 16** to demand that our legislators pass of two key education funding bills, the *Promise Act* and the *Cherish Act*.

Are you in Springfield?

Make plans to be on the steps of the Springfield City Hall at 4:30 p.m., Thursday, May 16.

**FUND OUR
FUTURE**

Time to Cherish Community Colleges

By Joe Nardoni, Middlesex Community College

Multiple studies have confirmed that Massachusetts is underfunding its public colleges and universities. State investment in public higher education is down 31 percent from its peak in 2001.

This lack of funding has fallen hardest on the students, faculty and staff of the Community Colleges, who have borne the brunt of a status-based funding process that has seen an unfair percentage of money going to UMass institutions and its “flagship” campus, creating a system that has institutionalized racism and classism between our higher education segments. The Community Colleges teach a much larger percentage of ethnic minority students than the other systems, a higher percentage of our graduates stay in Massachusetts and pay taxes than the other two systems, and still we are consistently shortchanged in funding.

The result is that more of our students struggle to pay their debts, often having to postpone their education so they can save the money to continue; more of our students have to work to support their families, forcing them to attend school part time; more of our students suffer from housing and food insecurities; more of our part-time faculty and professional staff have to cobble together jobs on multiple campuses in order to earn a living wage, only to be told by the SJC that, unlike every other citizen of the Commonwealth, they cannot qualify for benefits because they cannot claim to be the same person in all their dealings with the government; and the hard work of FT faculty and professional staff, who have higher teaching loads and must provide more intensive support services to more undergraduate students than our counterparts in the

UMass and State University systems, is systemically undervalued--all because we teach the neediest students in our Commonwealth.

This state of affairs is illogical; it is unfair; and it must stop.

That’s why the MCCC supports passage of a **modified** Cherish Act, which will phase in an increase in funding to establish equal allocations between the UMass, State University and Community Colleges systems, and authorize additional funding across the board to make up in part for the generational lapse in support for public higher education. Our students and their families can’t wait and, our members can’t wait to have justice restored to a blithely blind process of benign neglect that is crippling our initiatives to turn our community college system into the nation’s best. ■



MCCC member of the MTA Board of Directors, Joe Nardoni, pushes for a fairer share of the state higher ed. budget.
(Photo by Don Williams)

State Higher Ed. Budget Gaps

The state budget process is well underway. And while higher education campuses are seeing increases, the amounts are not enough to cover all of the expenses.

The UMass system had requested funding of \$568.3 million in order to avoid raising tuition and fees. But both the Governor’s and the House budgets only propose \$558 million. UMass says that the \$10 million shortfall from its request will force a 2.5 percent tuition increase.

The Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation said that overall higher education

funding will above this year’s level by \$55 million, with an additional \$40 million going to UMass and \$12 going to state universities and community colleges that were “primarily associated with collective bargained increases in wages and salaries.”

UMass has raised tuition in each of the last five years. Last year it was by 2.5 percent. As reported by State House News Service, UMass President Martin Meehan said that “uncertainty over state collective bargaining funding ‘has been a significant issue in previous contract

cycles and has had an impact on student costs.”

Community colleges are in a similar predicament, and many will be increasing fees for the next semester. The split between campus-set fees and state-set tuition continues at the state universities and community colleges, while UMass can set both tuition and fees without state intervention.

Legislators have offered amendments to increase higher ed. funding in this budget. One focuses solely on UMass. But another, sponsored by Rep. Natalie Higgins of Leominster, would have not only increase UMass funding to the requested \$568.3 million, but would also have added increases of about 9 percent for the state universities and community colleges.

Higgins is a UMass graduate and previously served as the executive director of the Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts (PHENOM). This group is a prime advocate of the MTA sponsored “Cherish Act” that would increase higher ed. funding significantly over the next five years that will come up for a vote later in the legislative session.

Unfortunately, the amendments did not pass, and higher ed. funding levels are back to the Governor’s initial proposal. MTA and the other Fund Our Future partners will continue to lobby for the Cherish Act, and the MCCC will continue to push for an equal split of higher ed. funding between the sectors—giving community colleges a fair share. ■



Rep. Natalie Higgins proposed an amendment to the state FY2020 budget that would provide additional funding to all 29 campuses. (Photo by Don Williams)

Action for a Fair Contract...

Continued from front page

A few Academic Vice Presidents are behind the push for the LMS use, and the union will be targeting those chapters in particular. Their claim is that it will enhance student retention. The union doesn’t buy that argument.

Contract Action Teams have been established with point people at each campus, and they will be coordinating demonstrations appropriate for their campus cultures. MTA has brought in former MCCC President Joe LeBlanc out of retirement to help coordinate the contract action.

The clock is ticking on the funding process. Having a Tentative Agreement (TA) negotiated and ratified by June 1 is the Union’s objective. Debate on the FY 2020 budget is going on in

the legislature now. So a supplemental budget appropriation will have to be filed by the Governor to fund the raises. Experience shows that funding more than a year of retroactive raises is dicey. And when contract funding is included in a supplemental budget, there are many delays as other financial needs are wrapped up into the “supp,” complicating the process.

MCCC team member Tom Kearns said that he’s willing to forgo the retroactive portion of raises. “I’ll try not to spend it all in one place,” he added. The small amount of money is not worth giving in to management’s intransigence.

Our MCCC Team has done its best to defend members’ rights. It’s time for the membership to show its power and bring this contract to a fair conclusion now. ■

MOVING?

Please make sure the MCCC has your correct mailing address.



This affects receiving the newsletter, elections, important mailings and notices.

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

Union Strength

2019 Delegate Assembly President's Report

The union world has been on the move since my election to MCCC President a little over a year ago. Despite the Janus v. AFSCME Decision, support for unions has been steadily climbing. Far from the short-sighted anti-union perspective of Janus and his ilk prevailing, people are re-discovering that it is not good enough to just have a job. After all, what good is the creation of 1,000,000 more jobs, if those jobs demean employees and pay wages they can't live on. Working conditions matter. Livable wages matter. Respect from one's employer matters.

History has shown us that expecting employer altruism to improve salaries, working conditions and job security is a fool's game. Collective bargaining is what gives us leverage to demand higher wages and improved working conditions. However, we cannot take for granted the existence of such leverage just because we are in a union. Unions are only as strong or weak as the people who belong to it. The strength of the MCCC lies in what I have come to think of as "*the Donnie McGee factor*."

When I first started working in the Massachusetts Community College System almost two decades ago, I was lied to. I was advised by my Human Resources Representative not to join the State Employees Retirement System (SERS) because, he said, it was bankrupt, and I would never see my money again. So I got into the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) with no inkling of how big a mistake that choice was. But

of others. When Section 60 passed to allow people in the ORP to buy into SERS, I watched Donnie step back again and again to allow others to take credit for the outcomes she single-handedly achieved because she didn't care about credit. She cared about results and progress. She patiently and compassionately took on complaints and criticism from those who were displeased with the implementation of Section 60. She just kept working on their behalf no matter how they criticized her.

The question I have heard asked again and again is the following: "what can/will/has the union do/done for me such that I should pay dues?" Donnie asked, "what can I do to improve the lot of my union brothers and sisters." Donnie's is the right question. Therein lies the strength of unions. The MCCC would have no leverage at all if everyone sat back, expecting altruistic actions from others. The strength of the union does not lie in the exchange of dues for services. It lies in the *Donnie McGee factor*. We strengthen our union, when we

The strength of the union does not lie in the exchange of dues for services. It lies in the Donnie McGee factor. We strengthen our union, when we improve the lives of those in the union.

Donnie McGee did know. She was hearing from people who told her how they were lied to; how they would never have enough in their ORP to retire. Something needed to be done. So Donnie went to work to get something done.

She was relentless at the statehouse. At MCCC events over the years, lawmakers presented with awards for their support of the MCCC, relayed stories of the countless ways in which she lobbied on behalf



Margaret Wong, MCCC President

improve the lives of those in the union. And that strength in turns gives us added leverage to further improve our working conditions.

So here is what I firmly understand now after almost one year of being the MCCC's president: the question, "what union services do I get for the dues I pay?" is inherently anti-union. If the relationships between union members were merely transactional, a union does not really exist, and collective bargaining strength is undermined. *The Donnie McGee factor* has taught me the right question to ask, the question we should all be asking if we want to build greater union strength, is "what can I do to improve the lot of my union brothers and sisters?" ■



Write Us

Letters to the Editor

Only submissions by MCCC unit members will be accepted. Letters should be no more than 200 words in length. The author must include name and chapter affiliation, which will be published with the letter. Authors must provide the editor with contact information in the form of either email address, mailing address or telephone number. Letters will be published on a space available basis and may be edited for length and appropriateness. Not all submissions can be published.

Guest Columns

Guest Columns should be no more than 400 words in length. Columns by authors who are not MCCC members may be accepted. The author's name and affiliation will be published with the column.

Mail to: Donald Williams, North Shore Community College
1 Ferncroft Road, Danvers, MA 01923

Or email:
Communications@mccc-union.org



Northern Essex Community College members (from left) Ginger Hurajt, Tom Greene, Susan Leonardi, Pam Donahue, and Andy Morse got the first protest action going in this contract fight. (Photo by Joe LeBlanc)

Sannicandro to Head Newly Renamed MCCA

Former State Representative Dr. Thomas Sannicandro was named director of the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges (MACC). This is the new name for the organization formerly known as the Massachusetts Community College Executive Office. The MACC represents the collective interests of the 15 colleges and serves the Council of Presidents.

Sannicandro served 12 years in the legislature where he served in a number of leadership positions including Chair of the Joint Committee on Higher Education. In 2013 the MCCC presented then Rep. Sannicandro with its "Friend of the Community Colleges" at our Fall Conference.

Most recently serving as the Director of the Institute for Community inclusion at UMass Boston, Dr. Sannicandro holds a Ph.D in Social Policy and an MA from the Heller School at Brandeis, an MPA from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, a J.D. from Suffolk University Law School, and a BA from College of the Holy Cross.



Then Rep. Thomas Sannicandro, who received the "Friend of the Community Colleges" award from the MCCC in 2013, is now Director of the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges working for the 15 college presidents.

(Photo by Don Williams)

Visit The MCCC Online!

www.mccc-union.org

The MCCC website is the best and most up-to-date source for late breaking developments important to Day and DCE Unit members in addition to being a valuable resource for MCCC contact information, bargaining and legislative updates, contracts, committee assignments, bylaws, local chapter leadership, calendar of meetings and events, and the MCCC News newsletters (current and past).

Find links to NEA, MTA and MCCC on Twitter and Facebook.

Bookmark the site for frequent referral.

There is a "Members Only" area with additional information. You log on to that with the same credentials as your MTA Members account. Don't have an account? Create one using your membership card info at MassTeacher.org.



Like us at mccc.union



#Respect4MCCC.



MCCC News

<http://mccc-union.org>

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The MCCC News is a publication of the Massachusetts Community College Council. The Newsletter is intended to be an information source for the members of the MCCC and for other interested parties. Members' letters up to 200 words and guest columns up to 400 words will be accepted and published on a space-available basis. 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. email: Communications@mccc-union.org

Know Your Day Contract

May 2019

May 1 President's tenure recommendations and sabbatical notification due (pp. 44 & 27).

May **Last Day of classes.** Faculty submit college service and student advisement form (p. 57).

May 21 Tenure decisions due (p. 45).

May 27 Memorial Day observed.

May 30 Professional staff College service and student advisement forms (p. 59).

June 2019

June 1 Applications due for Sabbatical Leave beginning January 1 for professional staff or Spring semester for faculty (p. 27).

Professional staff work beyond the Academic Year. The dates below do not affect faculty.

June 1 E8-Summary Evaluation by supervisor due (p. 58).

June 1 Letter stating preferred work assignment submitted each year to supervisor (p. 50).

June 1 Develop E-7 Form with supervisor. E-7 Form serves as basis of evaluation for the year. E-7 includes job description items (goals), objectives (if mutually agreed), and activities/methods (Appendix).

July 2019

July 1 Notification of work assignment due from supervisor (p.53).

July 1 Off-Campus Days-3 days off campus for activities outside of those assigned (conferences, catching up on literature in the field, etc.). They may be taken in increments of a half-day or more. The 3 off campus days begin with fiscal year (p.54).

Fair Contract NOW!

