

MCCC News



The Official Publication of the *Massachusetts Community College Council* / Volume 21, Issue 1 / September 2019



MCCC Fall Conference
Wednesday, October 2
3:30–8:30
Boston Hilton Hotel
Westborough, Massachusetts
 (Registration info will come from your chapter)

Commissioner Santiago Visits MCCC

Commissioner of Higher Education, Carlos Santiago met with the MCCC Board of Directors at their Aug. 21 meeting to give a presentation on the Department of Higher Education’s (DHE) Equity initiative and to have a dialogue with the union’s leadership over the current conditions in higher education.

Titled “Equity Strategic Framework” the initiative The DHE will develop a statewide strategic framework focused on equity, to be reflected in our policies, programs, and initiatives. The expectation is that, by doing so, the Massachusetts system of public higher education will

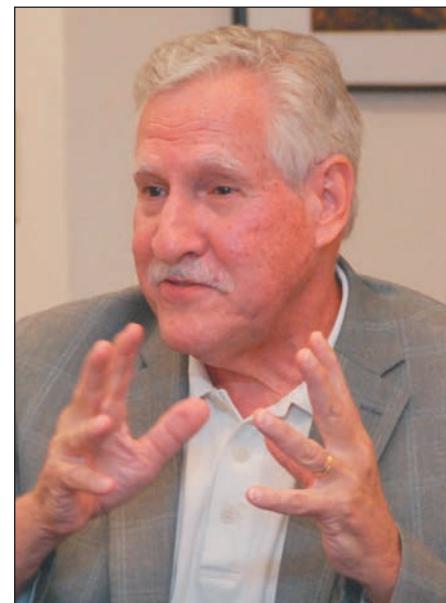
enhance economic and social mobility for all citizens, but particularly for those that have historically been underserved and underrepresented, especially students of color, throughout all levels of education.

(The details can be found at the DHE website <https://www.mass.edu/strategic/equity.asp>)

Santiago opened his presentation by noting that Massachusetts has the highest high school graduation rate, the highest college going rate, and the highest rate of post-secondary degrees in the country. Yet only 50 percent of East Boston residents (where he now lives) have high school diplomas. This is emblematic of the problems the initiative addresses.

The Massachusetts economy depends on a highly educated work force, and he cited the growth produced during the period of 1947-1979, which he called “the glory days of public higher ed.” when tuition and fees were low and social equity grew.

But, now, with a declining birth rate, the state has fewer people to fill the high-skill jobs. With the birth rate expected to be flat until 2032 due to the effects of the 2007-2009 recession, the state is going to have serious gaps in the workforce—and the overall economy could suffer.



Commissioner of Higher Education, Carlos Santiago met with the MCCC Board of Directors to promote the Department of Higher Education’s “Equity Strategic Framework” and to discuss issues of concern. (Photo by Don Williams)

Meanwhile, the people with a high school diploma or less find themselves in low-paying jobs and are priced out of access to higher ed. by increasingly expensive public college and university tuition and fees. The system is not serving them. At this point the initiative has

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MTA Conference Builds Relationships

UMass, Amherst was, for the fourth time, the location for the Massachusetts Teachers Association Summer Conference from Aug. 4–7. There were the usual array of workshops and events, but this year there was a special focus on organizing and the “Campaign to Fund Our Future” that will heat up as the legislature come back into session in the fall.

The tone was set from the start with the opening session Sunday evening titled “Naming Our Moment, Building Our Movement.” That was followed up by a discussion session with Eric Blanc, author of the book *Red State Revolt: The Teacher’s Strike Wave and Working-Class Politics*.

Three multi-day tracks focused on developing union leaders from new members to new local presidents. There were some sessions that gave professional development credits for K-12 teachers and others primarily to that segment. But others had broader applicability to higher ed. with presentations on contract negotiations, grievance processing, and even one with the catchy title, “Lies My Ed Tech Vendor Told Me.”

Higher ed. day kept with its traditional Wednesday slot with a few segment-specific events and workshops. The morning

was dedicated to a plenary session on the challenges facing higher ed. and ways we can organize our members and college communities to win our objectives. The MCCC was well represented, but with several UMass unions affiliated with MTA in attendance, they were the majority.

Jeremy Thompson from the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center shared data from the Center’s recent research on higher education. Massachusetts has some of the highest tuition and fee increases in the country, and along with deep cuts in state financial aid has caused a doubling of the costs of education borne by students and their families (from about 30 to 60 percent).

Massachusetts was also second in the nation for growth of student debt from 2004 to 2016. According to the Center’s 2018 study, “Average debt among state university and UMass graduates now almost equals the average debt among of the state’s private colleges and universities.”

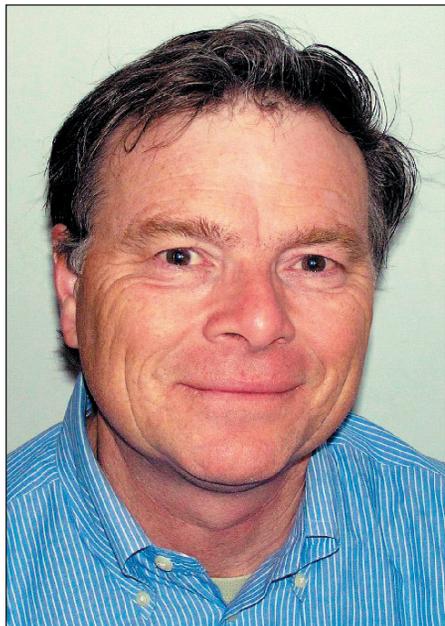
A 2019 study showed that low income and minority students were more likely to attend public colleges. The cost increases hit them especially hard. And because

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MCCC Vice President Rosemarie Freeland (standing) and Milissa Daniels, both from GCC, worked with a group of MCCC members to brainstorm issues facing the union and how to address them at the MTA Summer Conference at UMass, Amherst. (Photo by Don Williams)

Welcoming New Members



Don Williams,
MCCC Communications Coordinator

The photo on this page, with a union leader pointing to the slide “Welcoming and Engaging New Members into your really cool Local” says it all.

After the Janus Supreme Court Decision, when employees are no longer required to join the union or pay it a mandatory fee, it becomes vital to give people a reason to join the union.

Experience by other unions who faced state mandated “right to work” rules before the federal Janus decision, such as Wisconsin, found that it was essential to contact new hires early in their employment.

There’s an argument that the “agency fee” allowed unions to be lazy about recruiting new hires. Given that the new folks had to pay something to the union as a condition of employment, most of those people opted for the slightly more expensive union membership. Some people are opposed to unions and wouldn’t join regardless, but others didn’t join in the past to save the dues difference, while still receiving most of the benefits of the union’s work.

Now, new hires don’t have to pay the unions anything as a condition of employment. Once they start their employment without paying dues, it’s harder to get them to give up the income to belong to the union. If they start off with a dues deduction, they are less likely to miss it. Let’s face it, community college faculty and staff are not well paid, and this is especially true for new hires.

Why would people join the union? There are many reasons why someone

would join, and without the “agency fee,” we will need to look at these reasons carefully. For simplicity, I’ve broken them down into three groups of members: solidarity, advocacy, and insurance.

The most powerful reason for someone joining the union is that they have a family connection to unions and/or a strong political commitment to the power for social change that unions have. These “solidarity” folks are potential leaders and activists who should be nurtured and encouraged.

Some join for more pragmatic reasons. Working for such a large employer as the state, with the various layers of management, leaves the typical employee relatively powerless. Contracts, raises, health and pension benefits, and work rules are all beyond your control. Potential new members will need to understand how much work this “advocacy” involves and expense this representation demands.

Other people look to the union to protect their jobs and insure fair treatment. Some of this is done through channels like the chapter MACER meetings. But this avenue also includes the formal process of grievances, to mediation, and potentially to arbitration. This is a direct service and many members may feel that their union membership is an insurance policy against management misbehavior.

Legislation has been passed by the state legislature to address the problems caused by the *Janus* decision. Gov. Baker

vetoed it, but the MTA expects that it will be overridden when the legislature comes back in session this month.

Features of the legislation include rules that require agencies (like the community colleges) must make new hires available early to the unions for orientations. It makes their contact information available to the unions, including personal cell phone numbers, which was the provision that prompted the veto.

Also, and this is a tricky one, the bill allows unions to charge non-members for the services they provide, like grievance representation. Prior to Janus unions had to provide most of the services for free to agency fee payers. Doing this would address the “insurance” members. Depending on how much a union charges for services vs dues, people might decide to join, like having car insurance.

MTA locals are debating what to do about the fee for service model. Getting fees from non-members would offset union expenditures. While these fees might attract “insurance” membership, they might also alienate some potential members.

Of course, we welcome all members. But ideally, we’d like to get all of our members to be “solidarity” members. If new hires see the MCCC as a “really cool local,” and they join to be a part of something larger than themselves, this would turn *Janus* on its head. Instead of weakening union power, we would expand it.

MTA Conference ...

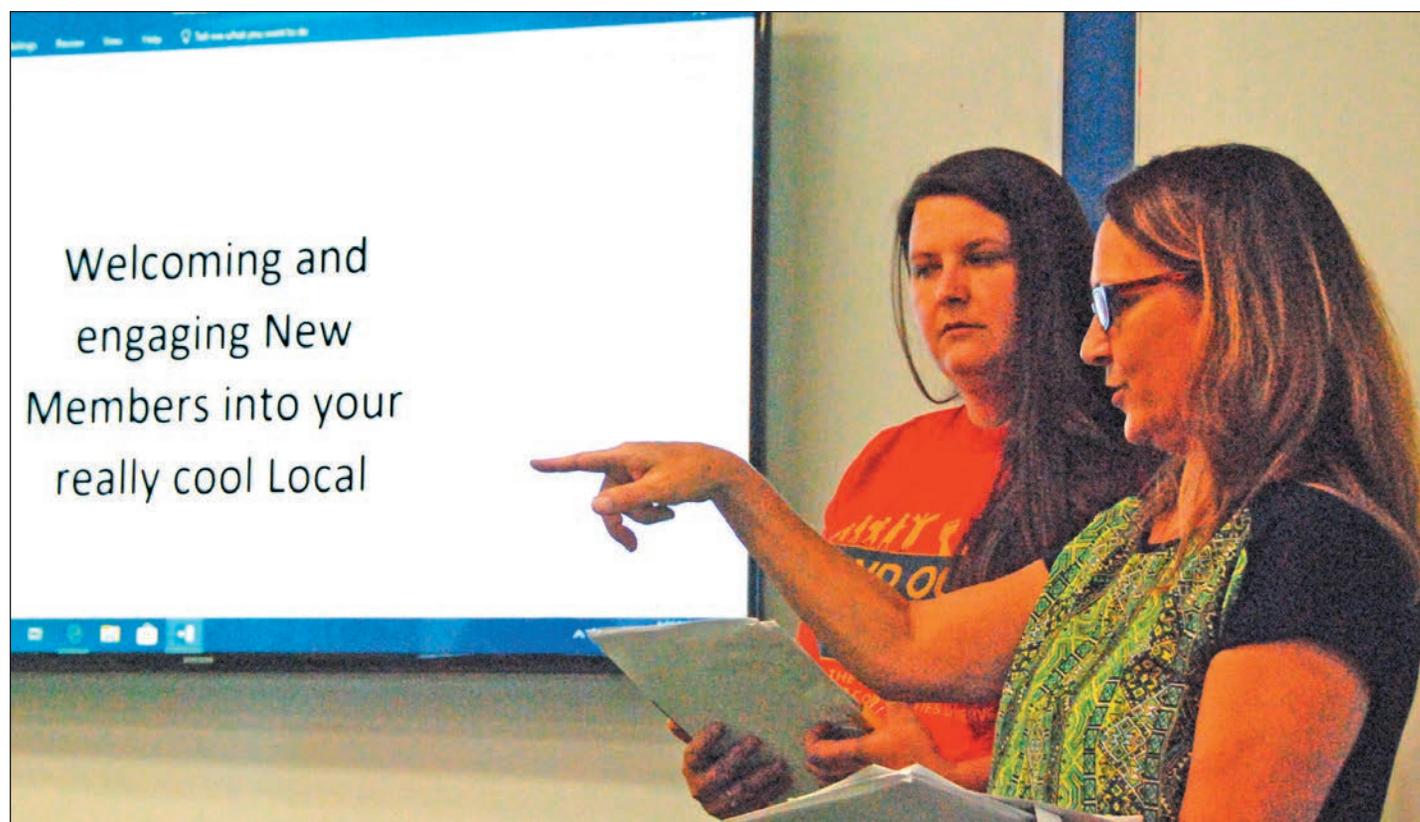
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they are more likely to attend part-time, they may not be eligible for some cost reduction programs that require full-time attendance. All of these statistics provide lots of evidence to bring to the public’s attention and to lobby the legislature for increasing higher ed. funding.

Afternoon sessions dedicated to higher ed. included “Organizing for a Debt-Free Higher Education,” “How to be an MTA Political Action Leader,” and “Welcoming and Engaging Your New Members in Higher Education.” All of them focused on organizing in one way or another.

With the desperate need for more funding from the legislature, higher ed. unions will need to increase their membership in the post-Janus era. They will need to develop winning issues to support the funding and organize all their union members and community members to speak up.

The conference wasn’t all business. Each evening a couple of social events were held: from a dance sponsored by the Ethnic and Minority Affairs Committee (all were welcome), to a cocktail party sponsored by the MTA staff organization (FSO), to the closing “Bash” on the final night. These brought together members

from different segments of public education and different regions of the state to build solidarity among all of the state’s educators. ■



Sheila Gilmore (left) and Jackie Bishop from the University Staff Associates (USA) union at UMass, Amherst, gave a presentation at the MTA Summer Conference on how they have engaged new members.

(Photo by Don Williams)

Imagine Our Power

Welcome, everyone, to the start of a new academic year. The MCCC has lived through year one post-Janus and so far, things are holding steady. Yet now is not the time to become complacent. The threat to collective bargaining is as great as it has ever been.

Our hard-won benefits—health insurance, vacation accrual, sick time— are losing ground against the tide of wealth consolidation into fewer and fewer hands. The 2% raises given to us by the governor, despite the strongest economy in over a decade, doesn't even cover the cost of living increases. Yet more is being demanded of us. Reassigned time that members have received for decades is suddenly eliminated. Consolidation and reorganization are leading to retrenchments. Every year, more full-time work is eliminated and replaced with unbenefited gig work. Do more with less we are told.

At my campus, the afternoon cookies and coffee, the tiny show of regard for the hours of meetings and heavy lifting of programs expected of us, has been eliminated. One of the elevators, the only one to the fourth floor where resides the only office in the building for adjunct

faculty, doesn't work. It hasn't worked for weeks. All the drinking fountains are covered over with plastic wrap. No one knows when or if the water will ever be safe again to drink. No one has a clue when the elevator will be working again. The college has no funding for "hospitality," or, it seems, for basic operations and repairs.

As the governor and some in the legislature drag their feet or otherwise just don't feel any sense of urgency to try to get our measly 2% raises funded, despite it being a year and a half overdue, others have decided that now is the time to add insult to injury and try to cap our sick leave.

Meanwhile, Commissioner Carlos Santiago has come to recognize that something must be done about the steadily widening gap between those whose achievement have been going up steadily over the past two decades, even as for others the decline has been equally as steady. Because of the role the community colleges play in the education of students of color in the Commonwealth, it is the community colleges that must do the heavy lifting to close this gap.

Once again, we the educators in the

community colleges are expected to address the gross education inequities that decades of neglect has caused, even as the neglect continues— 500 days without a cost-of-living raise, no potable water in our buildings and no way for some of us to get up to our offices. Now seems like a good time to remind everyone that the working conditions of educators are the learning conditions of students. It is not just the faculty and professional staff who are harmed in the push toward replacing full-time benefited work with underpaid, unbenefited work. Students are equally harmed.

Now, therefore, more than ever, is the time for organized labor to rise again and reclaim the potency of collective might. We have seen the power of collective action from West Virginia to Arizona, from California to Hong Kong. Just imagine what can be achieved if the 6500 dedicated faculty and professional staff



Margaret Wong, MCCC President

of the commonwealth's 15 community colleges were mobilized and activated for our collective common good and the good of our students. Just imagine it...

In solidarity,
Margaret Wong

Commissioner Santiago...

Continued from front page

\$75,000 in funding from the Lumina Foundation for studying the ways that colleges could provide the support that these students need to be successful graduates.

He said that two thirds of minority students in Massachusetts public higher ed. attend community colleges, so our institutions are key in making the initiative a success.

Board members had an opportunity to ask Commissioner Santiago some questions. And a key one posed by Middlesex Director, and MTA Board member, Joe Nardoni was about funding. The commissioner was candid in admitting that he would love to see the colleges get more money, but the only money he has to give out is \$7 million in financial aid to students. He noted that Kentucky, a much poorer state, has \$300 million available for financial aid.

He pointed out that Massachusetts' system of higher ed. is decentralized. The legislature sets the funding for the institutions, not the DHE, and he has little input on that process. He said that almost half of the students in the system attend community colleges, yet they only get 25 percent of the funding. Also community colleges don't have the ability that the

state universities, and especially UMass, have for other sources of income besides state appropriations and tuition/fees.

Members urged him to use his bully pulpit to advocate for community colleges. He said he has, but there are limitations to what he can do. Regarding the poaching of community college students, he noted that he told the state universities and UMass that, "Competition for the last student will kill us all."

Claudine Barnes from Cape Cod raised another area of concern about the suspension of some community college nursing programs by the Board of Registration in Nursing (BORN). As chair of the Day Bargaining Team she has been dealing with these issues and it seems that BORN has been especially tough on community college nursing programs.

Santiago said that the DHE is very concerned about these suspensions and has been actively addressing the issues with BORN. These are vital programs for social mobility and are extremely important to preserve.

The appearance lasted well over an hour and the exchange was convivial. The commissioner was open and supportive but unable to offer any concrete remedies for the Board's concerns. ■



Joe Nardoni (MxCC) and Mary O'Connor (HCC) participated in Higher Ed. Day at the MTA Summer Conference at UMass, Amherst. (Photo by Don Williams)

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

Call to Union Members to Be on The DCE Negotiations Team

The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) for The Division of Continuing Education (DCE) is set to expire on August 31, 2020. A new DCE Negotiations Team needs to be constituted this fall to begin work starting in January 2020. The team, made up of the MCCC President and Vice President and a minimum of 5 DCE members, will be negotiating with management on hours, wages, and conditions of employment.

COMPENSATION:

While the team is active, team members will receive a stipend each semester (fall and spring only) equal to a 3-credit course at Step Two under the DCE CBA.

DEADLINE:

September 24, 2019

APPLICATION PROCESS:

Please forward to presmwong@mccc-union.org a copy of your Resume/CV and a statement that addresses the following:

- (1) what your role is at your community college
- (2) why you want to serve on the DCE Bargaining Team
- (3) what has been your involvement with the MCCC and your local chapter
- (4) a description of any contract bargaining experience you have had.

Know Your Day Contract

October 2019

- Oct. 1** Tenure eligibility list distributed (p. 44).
- Oct. 1** Sick leave bank open (p. 21).
- Oct. 2** Furnish employer with dues to be deducted per employee (p. 17).
- Oct. 6** Supervisor shall return Course Materials to faculty members by end of fifth week of semester. Members have 14 calendar days to respond to supervisor's concerns (p. 61).
- Oct. 14** Columbus Day holiday observed.
- Oct. 15** Notice of termination at end of fifth year or later (p. 44)
- Oct. 24** Accrued professional staff vacation time in excess of 64 days (480 hours) converts to sick time. This now occurs twice per year, falling on the end of the last pay period of April and October (p. 24).
- Oct. 30** Last day to opt out of sick bank (p. 21).
(Note: membership in sick leave bank is automatic upon first October of a member's employment.)

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. Cited page numbers are from the 2015-2018 Agreement.

MCCC Meetings Calendar 2019-2020

YEAR	MONTH	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	BOARD OF DIRECTORS	OTHER EVENTS
2019	SEPTEMBER	6	20	
2019	OCTOBER	4	18	10/2 MCCC Fall Conference
2019	NOVEMBER	1	15	
2019	DECEMBER	6		
2020	JANUARY	3	17	
2020	FEBRUARY	7	21	Nominations Due *
2020	MARCH	6	20	3/1 Bylaws Proposals Due
2020	APRIL	3	17	4/25 MCCC Delegate Assembly
2020	MAY	17		5/1-5/2 MTA Annual Meeting Springfield
2020	JUNE	10 (Wed)	17 (Wed)	
2020	JULY	-	-	7/2-7/6 NEA-RA Atlanta, GA

* Date to be determined.



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

Day Contract Funding in Process

As the 2018-2021 Day Contract is being finalized for printing, the funding process has also been moving along, if a little slowly.

The Department of Higher Ed. was concerned that the proposed funding was not sufficient to cover some professional staff salary adjustments. Governor's office contended that full funding had been proposed. Commissioner Santiago told the MCCC Board that the issue was resolved, and that the adjustments would be fully funded.

Gov. Baker had insisted on an absolute limit of 2 percent annual overall increases for collective bargaining contracts. He held up a number of contracts because they had exceeded his limit, in some cases over very small amounts.

Michael Murray, DHE HR Director sent a message to the union that the supplemental budget bill would be filed by the Labor Day weekend. That appropriation bill will have to move through the legislature. The process can be maddening slow, and may require member lobbying to move it along.

Hopefully the bill will move quickly and the governor will sign it in time to have the increases and retroactive pay in members' hands before the holidays. ■



MOVING?

Please make sure the MCCC has your correct mailing address.



This affects receiving election materials, important mailings and notices.

Call the office at
1-877-442-MCCC toll free

or go online at

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