

MCCC News



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Savage Program, Faculty & Staff Cuts at STCC

With the COVID-19 confusion and forced readjustments last spring, many community colleges saw an opportunity to push agendas that were not directly related to the virus response. But Springfield Technical Community College took a massive step and cut seven career programs and 21 faculty and staff positions.

In June President John Cook announced the closing of automotive technology, biomedical engineering technology, biotechnology, civil engineering technology, cosmetology, dental assistant training, and landscape design and management technology. Faculty members and the Union were given very little notice.

Cook claimed that the programs had low enrollment and were expensive to run. He anticipated at least a 10 percent enrollment drop for the fall semester and with the resulting loss of revenue along with uncertain state funding made the decision necessary.

Supporters of the programs including students and alumni along with faculty and staff rallied to maintain them. They noted that these are the only programs of their type in western Mass. They pointed out that career-training programs like these had been promoted by Gov. Baker. And they argued that the programs were an economic bootstrap for poor and minority students.

Legislators also joined in the protests that occurred over the summer. Rep. Angelo Puppolo, Jr., himself a STCC graduate was quoted in the *Springfield Republican* saying, "These programs that were cut are professions, they're jobs, they're careers."

Rep. Bud Williams, another STCC alumni, along with Rep. Carlos Gonzalez and Sen. James Welch, also voiced their support for maintaining the programs. Cook's response was to urge the legislators to increase funding to the colleges.

MCCC Chapter President Renae Gorman, in her first year in office, stepped up to be the point person coordinating opposition to the cuts. In a

statement she said, "this decision was an ill-considered and unnecessary one that turns willing students away from programs that are pathways to secure, well-paying jobs."

She also noted that according to research done by Rep. Williams, STCC is the only community college in the system making any significant cuts to programs or full-time employees.

MCCC leaders and MTA personnel also helped in organizing events and providing support.

Cook claimed that the programs needed higher enrollments to justify their costs. He has suggested that some programs, such as automotive, could be restructured into non-credit offerings. It would seem that facilities and equipment costs for these programs would remain the same, the biggest cost reduction would be in faculty.

Cook has repeatedly said that the college followed all the proper steps to close the programs. This included several impact bargaining meetings (which only college lawyers attended) with the MCCC. But both Cook and Vice President of Academic Affairs Geraldine deBerly have been adamant that the decision was final.

The programs are now closed to new students. For the current semester, students in their second year will be continuing to finish out their degrees with, in some cases, the former full-time faculty now teaching as adjuncts.

Cosmetology finished over the summer. Automotive Technology program is on hold because both full time faculty left as a result of how administration treated them during this process. They were terminated and refused to teach as adjuncts. Biomedical is finishing the year. Dental assisting will finish this semester, as is the landscaping program. One faculty from dental took early retirement, and one faculty member was allowed to continue as full time to be vested. Most everyone else is continuing as adjunct.

"The morale at STCC is low." Gorman said, "I was told by the president

that we should focus on our mission of helping students and not about our morale. It is tough to keep members

engaged during a time when we haven't been able to meet physically as a group to process this out together." ■



Romero Gomes faculty member in the STCC Automotive Technology Program spoke to protesters gathered during the summer to demand program reopening. (MTA Photo)

CAMPUS ROUND UP

With 15 colleges scattered throughout the state, a range of situations and responses at the various campuses have resulted in various changes in college policies. Situations have been changing rapidly over the Summer, and now that things have settled down, members may benefit in understanding what is happening at other colleges.

The information below is a snapshot as of Sept. 30. The "campus roundup" has highlights of the differences between colleges. As of that date, MCCC leaders were told that 14 of the 15 colleges will be doing things the same way in the Spring 2021 semester as they are doing this semester.

Chapter presidents were asked about their campuses' policies in a few areas: 1) course delivery methods, 2) course assignment procedures, 3) staff members remote/on-campus, 4) college protection, 5) any layoffs or retrenchments. Chapter directors reported their campuses' enrollment numbers at the September Board of Directors' meeting.

Berkshire

Enrollment down 12 percent.

1) 85% of our classes are fully online

or hybrid virtual. The remaining courses, primarily nursing, allied health and some in performing arts, are meeting with social distancing measures in place.

2) Day faculty were already in place; adjuncts were assigned using the seniority list, but there are severe cuts in the number of course sections offered, so hardly any adjuncts have two or more courses, and some with seniority were not given a course at all.

3) Staff are primarily working from home, although some go come in one or two days a week. The bulk of our staff will not return until fall 2021, due to Covid and construction.

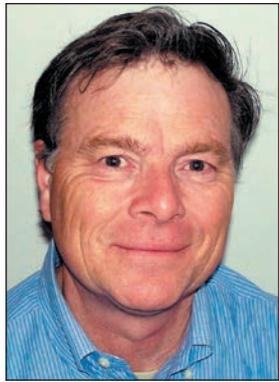
4) Everyone must sign in electronically, sanitizing measures are in place, including between classes, and everyone must wear a mask,

5) We have had one MCCC lay-off thus far, which came with the long term closing of the field house. Interestingly, it was just announced that several administrators were promoted (without pay increases...yeah right) and we hired seven or eight new

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Annus Horribilis

What an incomparable year! And it's nowhere near over yet. We've run out



Don Williams, MCCC Communications Coordinator

of adjectives to describe it. Queen Elizabeth II used the term to describe a far less stressful year *Annus Horribilis*.

1968 was a year that many of us lived through. Anti-war protests were happening all over the country a contentious presidential election. Assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. that caused race riots. And then Robert Kennedy. The year ended with the election of Richard Nixon. We all know how that turned out.

I recently read an article, the source of which I cannot find again, that compared this year to some of the contenders for worst year of the 20th century.

1932 was the year the Great Depression really set in. Dust storms began in the Great Plains. There was a contentious presidential election. Pres. Hoover used the army to put down the encampment of the Bonus Army of World War I veterans seeking promised payments. Hitler began his rise to political power.

1919 found the country just coming

out of the Spanish Flu pandemic. There was no presidential election, but Pres. Wilson was incapacitated by a stroke that was hidden by his wife and staff. Black veterans returning from Europe after World War I, demanded equal treatment at home, sparking the "Red Summer" waves of white violence and the resurgence of the KKK.

Every one of these years had its unique combination of events, and as the old quote says, "History doesn't repeat itself, but it rhymes." Which of the past years most rhymes with 2020 is a parlor game that doesn't tell us much. But changes came after these years, some good some bad, and it's definitely worthwhile to look at the changes this year might produce.

Higher education has been facing challenges for two decades, and the shut down of face-to-face classes and transition to remote and on line has shaken us to our core. The whole concept of a college education is being transformed before our eyes. The societal changes are also massive, with the idea of the workplace—particularly office work—also facing huge transformation.

With all the looming threats we are currently facing, there are some rays of light. The pandemic has put a laser focus on the political environment. Joe Biden's prospects are rising on the ideas of shared responsibility and help for one another. Winning the U.S. Senate is also a real possibility. Free college, a public option for health care, raising the minimum wage and other social safety net proposals are all gaining currency.

My hope is for 2020's aftermath to follow the domestic effects of 1932. The international rise of fascism was reflected here as well with the first "America First" movement. But the social agenda of The New Deal brought far-reaching positive changes for most Americans. Despite the original opposition to programs like Social Security and Unemployment Insurance, conservative voters now overwhelmingly support them. The same is true for Obama Care (as long as you call it The ACA).

The Democratic Party Platform has many progressive planks, and if the election goes in the party's favor, the possibility is there for a new New Deal. Just getting a public option to the ACA would be the kind of move to convince the public that a social safety net is desirable and in their best interest. Let's hope the country follows Winston Churchill's comment to, "Never let a good crisis go to waste." ■



An MTA arranged Zoom call about the STCC program closings with Commissioner of Higher Education Carlos Santiago was cancelled. Thomas Smith (left) professor of Landscape Design, STCC Chapter President Renae Gorman, and MTA Vice President Max Page were in attendance.

CAMPUS ROUND UP

Continued from front page

faculty (two of whom are teaching no classes because the programs they teach in are "on hiatus.")

Last week we had our first positive case, a student from an allied health program. Lots of quarantining and disinfecting. I heard through the grapevine there may be a second.

Bristol

Enrollment down 10 percent.

Bunker Hill

Enrollment down 15.5 percent.

1) Most classes are remote except for those that have labs or clinical components.

2) Courses have been assigned to full-time faculty as usual. Adjuncts have seen a reduction in courses

3) Professional staff are working mainly at home with some on campus. Advising and other services seen as essential are being done in person. Anyone who can is working from home.

4) BHCC has an institutional plan committee to set and disseminate policies. I have been sitting on this as a spokesperson for MCCC through the summer, and when my schedule conflicted meeting times, we were

able to send another Executive Committee member.

5) We had a retirement incentive plan offered. The college said that there would be no layoffs of full-time benefitted employees, but "that can change." They were going to determine the employment for part-time professional staff after Sept. 30 when enrollment numbers settled.

Cape Cod

Enrollment down 15 percent.

Greenfield

Enrollment down 11+ percent.

1) All "remote" (synchronous com-

ponents left to instructor discretion) except for some nursing clinical components.

2) Course assignments were done at last-minute; our administration waited until the last two weeks before the semester started, in most cases, to assign courses.

3) Nearly all staff are working from home; there are probably not more than ten or a dozen people on campus at once.

4) To work on site, you either need to fill out a request with a specific time

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Candace Shivers Earns Lifetime Civil Rights Award

A longtime activist and two student-led groups are recipients of the 2020 MTA Human and Civil Rights Awards.

The awards will be presented at the next MTA Human and Civil Rights Awards celebration, which is scheduled for June 18, 2021. Because the 2020 award presentations had to be postponed as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, the MTA Human Relations Committee decided to combine the 2020 and 2021 ceremonies into one. It will be the 38th such event.

The recipient of the 2020 Louise Gaskins Lifetime Civil Rights Award is Candace Shivers, an associate professor of sociology and human services at Mount Wachusett Community College. Shivers currently serves as president of the Mount Wachusett chapter of the Massachusetts Community College Council and as a Massachusetts director on the National Education Association Board of Directors.

Recipients of the 2020 Kathleen Roberts Creative Leadership Awards are the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School Black Student Union and the Sutton High School Connections Program. Denise LaPolla, chair of the HRC, said members of the committee “felt terrible that we were not able to honor the 2020 winners in person.” Committee members are looking forward to honoring them along with the 2021 award winners next June, she said.

“This year’s awardees include someone who has served her students, her fellow educators and the cause of public higher education for years as well as two groups of idealistic students who are already making the world a better place,” LaPolla said. “We are thrilled to add them to the MTA’s long list of Human and Civil Rights Award recipients.”

Shivers was nominated by the MTA Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee and the MTA Task Force on Race.

Sharmese Gunn, chair of EMAC and a member of the Race Task Force, wrote in support of the nomination that Shivers has “instilled unionism” in many budding MTA leaders.

Gunn said that Shivers “is a staunch advocate for social justice, labor laws, and fair practice. In simpler terms, she believes in doing what’s right for the world and all its people.” She continually encourages fellow professionals and students of color, women and people who are LGBTQ to get involved in the decision-making process, Gunn added.

Yan Yii, an incoming Massachusetts director on the NEA Board and former EMAC chair, said that “there is no other person I see as more fitting for the 2020 Louise Gaskins Lifetime Civil Rights Award” than Shivers.

“Her tireless commitment to unionism and civil rights is unparalleled,” Yii said, adding that Shivers “consistently advocates for racial and social justice. She is a role model to so many unionists.”

In a letter supporting the nomination, EMAC member Rosa Lopez-Whitehill said that Shivers “embodies the spirit of the MTA.”

“Candace has touched many union members by inspiring them to get involved” and she patiently helps anyone who comes to her for advice, Lopez-Whitehill noted.

Julie Capozzi, a fellow professor at Mount Wachusett, said that Shivers is beloved by her students and “has many students taking her for as many courses as she teaches.”

The groups receiving the 2020 Kathleen Roberts Creative Leadership Awards also have a record of fighting for public education — and for equity.

The Black students who brought back the dormant Black Student Union at Cambridge Rindge and Latin in 2017 faced significant obstacles as they sought to revive an extracurricular student club in a city still struggling with racism, wrote Kevin Dua, a history teacher at the school and adviser to the group, in his letter of nomination.

Dua, a past recipient of the Kathleen Roberts Creative Leadership Award himself and the 2017 Massachusetts History Teacher of the Year, wrote that the group epitomizes “the cores of volunteerism and leadership that character-

ized Roberts’ selfless contributions via political action, community organizing and mentoring.”

While past and current members of the BSU have faced “ongoing discrimination, harassment, prejudice, ageism and racism” within their own community, he wrote, the students have persisted in the belief that creating a “safe, brave space for Black youth, in and out of their school building,” was worth it. In social justice and antiracism work, he added, “These Black student leaders have made an overwhelmingly positive impact and legacy on the lives of others.”

Juliette Low Fleury, a co-founder of the group and a graduate of Cambridge Rindge and Latin, wrote in support of the nomination, “What this group has evolved into has become an empowering, direct source for Black students, and, indirectly, for white students and students of color to recognize their privilege and support to ensure an equitable environment for their classmates.”

The Sutton High School Connections Program is a student, staff and community initiative that addresses social justice issues.

Forty students and seven educators make up the program, which works with others in the community to learn, confront issues of social injustice and teach about acceptance, tolerance, diversity, and privilege.

Michael Whittier, co-president of the Sutton Teachers Association, nominated the group. He wrote as an educator at the high school, but also as a member of the community and the father of a student whose world view has been shaped by the program.

“Ours is a community of privilege,” Whittier wrote, and “a very conservative community by Massachusetts stan-



dards.” Sutton is “the last place that such a program might exist,” he wrote, “but most certainly a place that it is needed.” He added that the program fostered his daughter’s engagement in social justice efforts and developed her leadership skills while she was a student.

Over the last couple of years, the group has expanded its powerful social justice mission, initiating the Connections Conference, known as the “ConCon.” In 2019 the ConCon brought in more than 500 students and educators from 37 schools around New England. Last year’s ConCon, scheduled for March, had grown to include more than 800 participants from 50 schools.

The students were devastated when the event had to be canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. But Connections participants continued meeting remotely after in-person instruction ended — and the group is planning for either an in-person or virtual ConCon this year. ■

Free Life Insurance for Union Members

Members of the MCCC are also members of the National Education Association, and as an NEA member you are automatically covered by the NEA Complimentary Life Insurance (formerly known as NEA DUES-TAB) term life insurance. It is a guaranteed benefit for Active and Life members. All you need to do is register your beneficiary.

The free program offers \$1,000 of term life insurance, up to \$5,000 (de-

pending on years of membership) of accidental death and dismemberment coverage, and up to \$50,000 of AD&D insurance for any covered accident that occurs while on the job or serving as an association leader.

To register your beneficiary or to obtain more information call 1-800-637-4636, or go to <http://www.neamb.com/insurance/nea-complimentary-life-insurance.htm> ■

DCE Negotiations Resume; Contract Action Team Assembling

The DCE contract covering part-time teaching assignments expired August 31, 2020. The MCCC negotiating team, chaired by DeAnna Putnam from Bunker Hill, had been meeting during the spring and had intended to begin meeting with management before the contract expired. The pandemic ended those plans.

An extension to the contract was agreed upon, and the MCCC team has resumed team meetings. Team Chair DeAnna Putnam said the team plans to have their first session with management in November.

She also said, “We plan to hold a statewide Zoom meeting on Tuesday, October 20th at 6:30 p.m. for DCE Unit members so they can meet the team and we will talk about the DCE bargaining survey.” Details will be announced as the date gets closer.

Meanwhile, the MCCC is forming a Contract Action Team of rank and file members representing each chapter. The CAT will coordinate actions to support the negotiating team such as demonstrations and community outreach.

MTA Field Representative Colleen Fitzpatrick will be leading the CAT recruitment. MCCC Negotiating team member George Medelinskas from Northern Essex will serve as the liaison between the negotiating team and the CAT members.

Members who want to help bring negotiations to a speedy and positive resolution by joining the CAT should contact their chapter president or Colleen at cfitzpatrick@massteacher.org. ■

CAMPUS ROUND UP

Continued from page 2

span, or get an electronic key fob to open doors if working regularly on campus. Social distancing, mandatory masks, no food service, non-essential furniture all put away.

5) Five AFSCME positions were cut and more have reduced hours; two MCCC positions were retrenched, but one will be recalled starting 9/27 (our Distance Education Librarian); other MCCC positions are not being filled (including our Transfer Coordinator); a couple of NUPs are not being filled.

We have concerns that work is being moved out of the unit; specifically, the College has hired some consulting firm that develops grants instead of hiring an MCCC grant writer.

Holyoke

Enrollment down 15 percent.

1) Classes are remote for all areas except for those that have labs attached with actual physical clinicals (Nursing, Vet Tech, Rad Tech, etc.).

2) Course assignments were handled as always for full time. For DCE faculty we constantly struggle with the second course for seniority.

3) There is a mix of professional staff working at home and on campus. Advising and other “essential” areas are actually going on campus. Any remote that can be done has been kept remote as much as possible.

4) HCC has an institutional plan listed on its website for return to campus. I have been sitting on this committee as a spokesperson for MCCC.

5) HCC has not had any layoffs/retrenchments/furloughs that have been called such. There are some who did not receive reappointment. HCC has offered an early retirement plan for full time members with the discussion that layoffs and retrenchments are still on the table when the state budget comes out.

Massasoit

Enrollment down 14.5 percent.

Mass Bay

Enrollment down 17 percent.

Middlesex

Enrollment down 14 percent.

North Shore

Enrollment down 11.2 percent.

1) Classes being delivered in a mix of online, hybrid videoconference with Zoom or Blackboard Collaborate Ultra; or full videoconference. Very few face-to-face sessions; mainly with hands-on programs such as culinary, cosmetology, and a few labs.

2) There have been some concerns that seniority may have been bypassed for some adjuncts.

3) Staff are mainly working from home. MCCC members were initially asked to return for rotating shifts to have a “campus presence” in areas in Student Affairs, but the Union chapter successfully pushed back against this, and the President

and VPs agreed to adhere to the MOA and allow anyone who could perform their work duties from home to do so. Currently no MCCC staff are required to be on campus.

4) Precautions include restricted entry--students/staff cleared in advance and admitted by campus police; regular cleaning and sanitizing; social distancing; required masks.

5) A number of part-time employees were terminated in the spring (some were subsequently rehired); no MCCC, though. No positions currently being threatened, but the Interim President has occasionally alluded to the fact that some cuts may be necessary in future.

Northern Essex

Enrollment down 7 percent.

Quinsigamond

Enrollment down 7 percent.

1) We are remote for the fall (fully online and synchronous remote conferences) except for a couple of face-to-face labs.

2) Course assignments similar to other campuses with full-time faculty okay, but adjuncts finding multiple assignments rare.

3) Staff members are working from home.

4) Few folks are working on campus but if we do go to campus, we let

campus police know, and facilities makes sure to come in our offices after we’ve left. Facilities is on campus and cleaning constantly.

5) 7 full-time professional staff and 6 part-time professional staff who worked in our Children’s School have been retrenched/non-reappointed.

Roxbury

Enrollment down 15 percent.

Springfield Tech

Enrollment down 11.7 percent.

1) All of school of Liberal and Professional Studies is online; STEM and School of Health and Patient Stimulation have low density labs happening.

2) Course Assignments...this has been tricky and dependent upon online course development participation. Everyone was expected to participate in training if they were going to teach at all.

3) Staff: there were volunteers for first 2 weeks of classes but majority continue to work remotely.

4) There is a COVID campus re-population plan <https://www.stcc.edu/coronavirus/>

Only 1 gate is open, temperature checks, healthy roster completion before arriving on campus.

5) The program closings at STCC are well-known. (See related article.) ■



MCCC News

<http://mccc-union.org>

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

Know Your Day Contract

October 2020

Oct. 13 Columbus Day holiday observed (p. 25).

Oct. 15 Notice of termination at end of fifth year or later (p. 45)

Oct. 24 4 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.)

November 2020

Nov. 11 Veterans Day holiday (p. 25)

Nov. 21 Unit Personnel Practices Committee established (p. 46)

Nov. 26 - 27 Thanksgiving Holiday (p. 25)

Nov. 28 Professional Staff must use one of the three off campus days (p. 56)

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.



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