

MCCC News



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BHE Urges CCs to Hold Face-to-Face Classes

At its March 23 meeting the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education took up the issue of increasing the number of in-person classes at the 15 community colleges.

Prior to the meeting, rumors were circulating that Secretary of Education James Peyser was adamant about community colleges returning to largely in-person classes in September. There was a sense that pressure was being applied to the college presidents.

Nationally first-year community college enrollments are down 19 percent. Massachusetts community colleges have averaged an overall nine percent drop, but last fall, first-year Black and Latino students were down about 30 percent.

Many four-year colleges, including Boston University, Northeastern, Harvard and the U Mass system, have announced that they will be having most students fully on campus with all the traditional activities in the fall.

Given that Massachusetts community colleges enroll nearly half of all public

college students, and that they serve a large percentage of minority and low-income students, there is concern about equity. The Board was concerned that our students may have more difficulty with remote learning and have a greater need for face-to-face instruction.

President James Mabry from Middlesex Community College spoke for the college presidents telling the Board that the community colleges are planning to offer a variety of modalities including face-to-face, virtual classes, and hybrid options. He said that the colleges had surveyed their students and many do want options.

Mabry used the example of some campuses that are setting up first-year orientations in August where students will spend some time on campus to meet their peers under tents.

College leaders voiced the need for more detailed guidelines from the state about such issues as how much distance students should keep apart. Peyser said that they have been waiting to see the

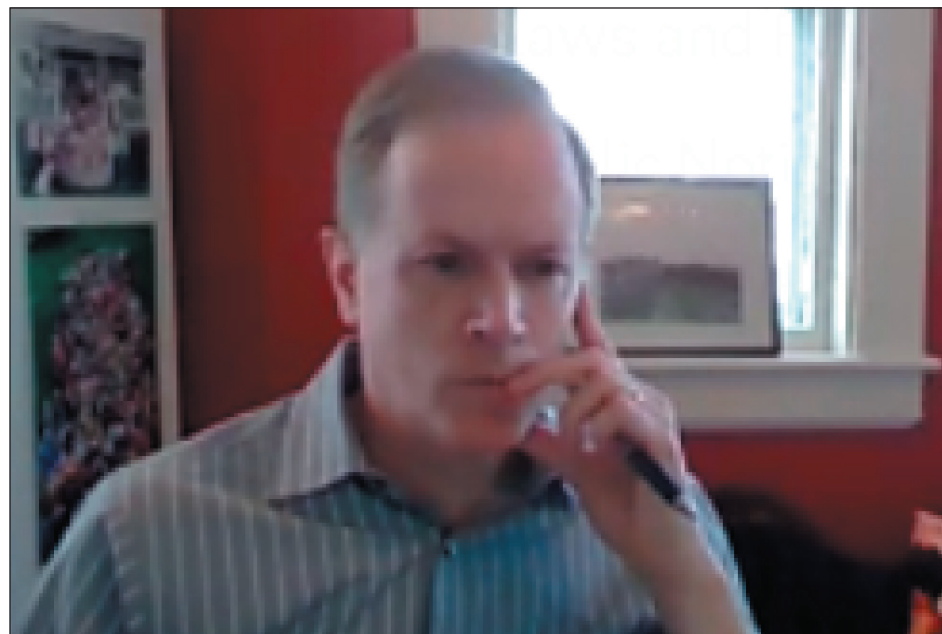
UPCOMING EVENTS

MCCC Delegate Assembly
Saturday April 24

MTA Annual Meeting
April 30-May 1.
(Delegates already elected)



Middlesex Community College President James Mabry explained to the Board of Higher Ed. the challenges community colleges face as they schedule classes for the fall and offering various learning styles with student input.



Secretary of Education James Peyser advocated for significant increase in face-to-face classes at community colleges in September.

progress on vaccinations and new variants of the virus. "It's still a moving target, so we have to do a little bit of wait-and-see."

"We weren't advocating 100 percent in-person," Board member Patty Epinger was quoted in the Boston Globe. "We didn't want to lose sight of the need and value of in-person education."

In the end, the Board passed a resolution guiding the fall reopening that said, "all students who want or need an in-person learning experience, either full-time or part-time, will have a robust set of affordable and accessible options across all degree programs at all community colleges, especially first-year students."

In the public comments period of the Board of Higher Education meeting, MCCC Vice President and SAC Coordinator spoke supporting the \$7 million that was included in the budget for a new SUCCESS Fund (Supporting Urgent Community College Equity through Student Services) created specifically for community college students. She explained the importance of the wraparound support SUCCESS provides students like scholarships, food assistance, child care housing, etc.

Our students, who are generally older, face many more impediments than traditional students and this kind of support is vital. ■

Know Your Rights



Don Williams,
MCCC Communications Coordinator

With all the concerns about how to offer accessible higher education under COVID-19 restrictions, the community colleges have been getting creative with course offerings. In the haste to find the right mix of offerings, sometimes faculty rights can get lost.

As planning continues for the fall semester one idea going around is “HyFlex” courses where there is a face-to-face component combined with on line content where students choose which they engage in. While HyFlex on the surface looks like a face-to-face class, since the instructor must prepare a fully in-person. But such courses also fall under the Distance Education agreement, and faculty should be fully compensated for the distance component preparation.

Community colleges are facing extraordinary challenges. On the one hand the state would like us to come back as we were before that pandemic, but on the other hand our students are far more likely to be working, and working

in jobs that are at higher risk of virus exposure. And they are more likely to be living in family circumstances where other members are also at greater risk of exposure.

We are in a very different situation from the four-year private colleges like Northeastern and Boston Universities that are requiring all students to have been vaccinated for COVID to attend in the fall. UMass may not be at that point (yet), but students will be on campus where they will be carefully monitored—and quarantined if they violate the rules. Something that happened often this semester.

Planning the fall semester must be a nightmare for the community college presidents. Enrollments were already crashing before the pandemic, and our students are far more likely to be affected by it than those attending residential colleges. What mix of face-to-face, on line, and hybrid learning-styles to offer has to be a serious challenge.

Despite urging to resume in-person instruction, guidance from the state as to how to do this is non-existent. As Education Secretary said at the Board of Higher Education meeting, they are taking a “wait-and-see” position. The community colleges, with fewer resources than the state, can only bide their time to see what regulations come down.

But this scramble to figure out what mix of course modalities leaves a lot of faculty in limbo. Given the requirement to assign full-time faculty to courses first, adjunct faculty will be squeezed into what remains and may face pressure to accept unusual offerings. It’s important whether full-time or adjunct to ensure that your contractual rights are honored. If you’re not sure about the propriety of something you’re being asked to do, check with your chapter president. ■

MTA Bargaining Support

The establishment of a Bargaining Support team one of the changes in MTA’s restructuring that will be assisting local associations (like the MCCC) as they engage in contract negotiations.

In a brief presentation to the MCCC Board at its March meeting, MTA staff member Courtney Derwinski, explained what the group will be offering as support for bargaining and campaigns.

She was a familiar face to the MCCC having formerly been our field representative. Similar divisions can be found at other NEA state affiliates such as in Wisconsin and Minnesota where she had previously worked.

A perfect example of what this new MTA group can do, she said, was the MCCC salary grid negotiations that brought us a fair, predictable salary system. Because of experience gained in those other states, we had a much greater evidence to support our case to management.

The new group will be able to do research in support of various initiatives for all MTA locals. ■

NEWS BRIEFS

Juneteenth Holiday Added

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has established a new state holiday designated for June 19 of each year known as Juneteenth Independence Day, the traditional celebration of the end of slavery in the United States. The holiday was established after collective bargaining agreements had been ratified, so the union will bargain over adding the day to the list of holidays on page 25 of the MCCC Day contract. For 2021, June 19 is a Saturday, and according to the contract employees would have the previous Friday as the day off.

RCC Recognized

The college ranking site [AcademicInfluence.com](https://academicinfluence.com) has named Roxbury Community College the second most influential community college in the country. The ranking highlights significant contributions that RCC personnel have made in the fields of mathematics, criminal justice, education, nursing, biology, and computer science.

The rankings came from analysis of 839 fully-accredited community colleges with over 1000 students. And the final ranking is based on the overall impact of the faculty, alumni, and administrators associated with RCC. According to [AcademicInfluence.com](https://academicinfluence.com): “The people affiliated with a school are ultimately what make it great.”

Massachusetts community colleges were well represented in the top 20 with Springfield Tech (# 4), Northern Essex (#14), MassBay (# 16), Bunker Hill (# 18), and Holyoke (#20). Ann Arundel Community College in Maryland came in first.

MCCC Deemed “Best of Worcester”

The Worcester Awards Program recognizes various businesses in the city for excellence, and this year the Massachusetts Community College Council topped the category of **2021 Best of Worcester Awards —Labor Unions**. President Margaret Wong, who lives in the city, said that these awards are a big deal in Worcester.

NSCC Selects New President from NECC

The North Shore Community College Board of Trustees has selected William Heineman, currently Provost at Northern Essex Community College, to be the fourth president of NSCC. He will take office July 1, after the expected approval by the Board of Higher Education. Heineman was the preferred candidate by the faculty and staff. With the departure of NSCC’s Academic Vice President and two other senior vacancies he will be making significant changes immediately.

Massasoit Announces New President

Ray DiPasquale has been selected as the next president of Massasoit Community College, succeeding Charles Wall. He has served most recently as President of Clinton Community College and before that at the Community College of Rhode Island. Earlier experience in the Massachusetts Community College system first at Middlesex and later at Springfield Tech.

Part-time/Adjunct MCCC Directors Appointed

Because of the COVID restrictions, candidates for the two At-large, Part-time/Adjunct Directors were unable to gather the required nomination form signatures to appear on the election ballot, there were no candidates. As per the MCCC Bylaws, the Board of Directors solicited nominees for the positions and at the April meeting two people were selected; Mark Linde from Massasoit and Laura Schlagel from Holyoke.

WoSox Tickets

The MCCC Office, being located in Worcester, has been promoting the city and its attractions. Among those is the newly settled Worcester Red Sox minor league baseball team. If you’re interested in attending a game, contact Paul Johansen by email at jguanaphoto@gmail.com for WooSox Tickets.

Correction—In the last issue Roxbury Community College President Valerie Robertson was incorrectly identified as being at Bunker Hill Community College.

MCCC Employees Cited Among Qualifiers In Proposed COVID Early Retirement Bill

A bill has been filed in the state legislature called the “COVID-19 Essential Employee Retirement Credit Bonus” that would add three years of either age or years of service towards the calculation of retirement for people who worked in a workplace during the state of emergency declared by the Governor.

The bill co-sponsored by Rep. Jonathan D. Zlotnik (D Worcester) and Sen. John C. Velis (D Westfield), number 1794 in the House and 1686 in the Senate, has the endorsement of 71 legislators as of March 19, 2021.

It specifically mentions community

college employees among the segments that would qualify, and it calls for the secretary of administration to work with employers of employees who fit the requirements to identify those who fit the criteria of working on site during the shutdown. They would provide lists of eligible employees with contact information to the appropriate retirement boards who would then notify qualifying employees.

An interesting feature of the provision is that the 3-year credit can be used at any time after the effective date of the legislation. So, if retirement is still a few years down the road, employees can plan

on the additional benefit in their future retirement planning.

As with any proposed legislation, there will be modifications as it wends its way through the process. The current wording calls for the implementation commencing June 30, 2021, but that is likely to change. You can find the bill’s text on malegislature.gov. And you can also find your legislators’ contact information there if you want to express your support for the bill.

There is another, similar bill that focuses on K-12 personnel which does not include higher ed. employees. So be sure to specify the bill numbers above if you contact your legislators. ■

Salem State Faculty Face Furloughs

Salem State University has unilaterally imposed two, one-week payless furloughs on the faculty and librarians in that chapter of the Massachusetts State College Association (MSCA) union.

The union had filed Unfair Labor Practice charges against SSU, charging the union had recently concluded a one-year collective bargaining agreement that had COVID-19 considerations and the University could have negotiated over furloughs then. But the Massachusetts Department of Labor Relations dismissed the charges citing the Union’s refusal to bargain over the furloughs.

The first furlough week was during the university’s Spring Break from March 15 to 21, and the second is intended for the week after commencement in May.

MSCA chapter members voted for a “work-to-rule” action and conducted a demonstration at a major intersection near the North Campus on Monday, March 22, the first week after the furloughs. Signs decried university President John Keenan as “Bully-in-Chief.”

Salem State has suffered among the most serious enrollment declines of the nine institutions in the State University system, but it is the only one contemplating furloughs. President Keenan claimed that a projected \$20 million deficit over two years necessitated the reduction in pay for faculty and librarians to help stem the red ink.

But the union maintains that, based on the anticipated COVID-19 relief bill funds, the university could have as much as a \$25 million surplus and claims that the furloughs are no longer needed. The university says that the budget surplus is at \$14.5 million without counting future relief funds. It does count the \$1.5 million saved by the MSCA furloughs and another \$1.8 million from other personnel taking unpaid time off.

Furloughs were a tactic used in 1991 by then Gov. Bill Weld, who forced many state employees, including all in higher education to work without pay for a number of weeks. The amount lost was on a sliding scale depending on the employees’ earnings.

The unions sued Weld, and it was determined that the claimed fiscal crisis was a fiction. Ultimately, the courts awarded the furloughed workers full restitution with interest. ■

MTA Higher Ed. Legislation Explained

MTA Director of Government Relations Director Eric Nakajima gave a presentation at the MCCC Board of Directors’ April meeting to explain the legislation they have sponsored for this legislative session. As the budget process wraps up in July typically, this is the time for member action to show support.

He pointed out that information is available on the MTA website (Massteacher.org) under the Legislative Action in Current Initiatives. There is a separate section for higher education.

The Cherish Act for increasing higher

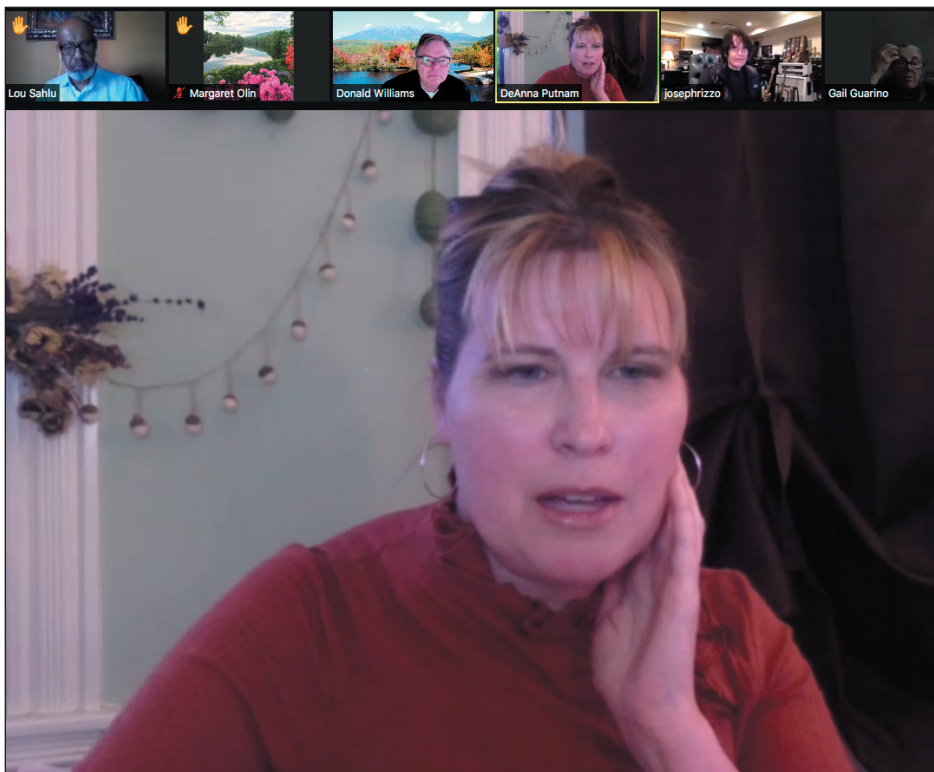
education funding that MTA has been pushing for a couple of years as part of the Fund Our Future campaign was the first initiative discussed. The Act would add an additional \$136 million in funding for the state’s colleges and universities. Fund Our Future had success for K-12, and Nakajima said this is still being pursued with the argument for fairness and a just distribution of funds.

Making college affordable is another initiative being supported. There are two thrusts to this. One is the MASSGrant Plus program that provides \$26 million to

provide financial support for a wide range of the needs that challenge low income students’ ability to succeed. Another program under *The Student Opportunity Act* would provide \$6 million in student debt relief for graduates of Massachusetts public colleges and universities who go to work in the state’s public schools.

Fair higher ed. workplaces was another topic. Adjunct faculty inequities were addressed with a call for \$13 million for part-time health insurance and another \$7 million for increasing equity with full-

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DCE Negotiating Team Chair DeAnna Putnam led an open discussion on progress in bargaining a new contract. Nearly 50 members participated to hear the status of negotiations and to voice their concerns over the DCE contract and issues they would like to be addressed.

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:

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North Shore Community College
1 Ferncroft Road, Danvers, MA 01923

Or email:

Communications@mccc-union.org



MTA Director of Government Relations, Eric Nakajima (top) gave a detailed presentation of the higher education legislative agenda to the MCCC Board of Directors at its April meeting. Earlier he had joined MTA lobbyist Sean King (below) at a meeting with the MCCC Executive Committee at its March 5 meeting to discuss MCCC's priorities for this legislative session.

MTA Higher Ed. Legislation . . .

Continued from page 3
time faculty in per-course pay. Nakajima said that in talking with legislators, the unfairness of adjunct treatment was an issue that got the greatest interest. Another aspect was removing the influence of the governor's Administration and Finance people in setting contract parameters.

Nakajima wrapped up his presentation saying, "I'm concerned that they don't put higher ed. as a priority." The current budget calls for level-funding, which is actually a cut with inflation. That the legislature passed a \$24 million student aid package last year says that they do recognize need.

His candid opinion is that the prospects are not good for these bills initially. But he is optimistic going forward because of the \$4.5 billion federal aid that the state will receive from the COVID Recovery Act. It is not clear what restrictions if any come with this money. So the legislature is proceeding with the budget

under the ordinary course of business which only counts on the normal sources of funding.

When the money is clear they will be developing means of spending for what will look like "excess." Some will certainly go into the state's "rainy day fund," but the bulk could be used for new initiatives.

It is important for MCCC members to lobby their legislators for these bills so that when there is free money, they may have earmarked it for us. MTA has set up a series of district legislative meetings where members can talk to their area representatives.

In speaking with legislators, Nakajima said, "Let them know how hard the pandemic has been for certain communities who are served by community colleges." Tell them we need more resources to provide quality educational services. "We need to surround them with positive statements about our needs," he said. ■

Know Your Day Contract

April 2021

- April 15** Dean's tenure recommendations due (p. 46).
- April 15** Title changes announced (p. 68).
- April 19** Patriots Day holiday (p. 25).
- April 25** Professional Staff unused vacation days in excess of 480 hours (64 days) converted to sick leave at end of last pay period in April (p. 24).

May 2021

- May 1** President's tenure recommendations and sabbatical notification due (pp. 28-46).
- May** **Last Day of classes.** Faculty submit college service and student advisement form (p. 60).
- May 21** Tenure decisions due (p. 46).
- May 30** Professional staff College service and student advisement forms (p. 61).
- May 31** Memorial Day observed (p. 25).

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 2018-2021 Agreement.



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

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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.



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