

MCCC News

MCCC

MTA/nea

208

The Official Publication of the *Massachusetts Community College Council* / Vol. 23, Issue 5 / March–April 2023

Distance Ed. Negotiations Begin

One shake-out from the Day contract negotiations was the reopening of the Distance Education Agreement (DEA) that bridges both Day and DCE contracts, which management had long wanted to do. Despite language that said the agreement could be reopened at the request of either party, the MCCC had been able to forestall changes for twenty years. But the rapid increase in varieties of distance modalities and numbers of distance courses offered during COVID brought forward many issues that motivated management to push hard to reopen the agreement.

Management originally wanted a very aggressive time-frame of early fall for completion of the agreement that the union pushed back on, but it

is still targeted for the end of the year. The sides agreed to have six members on each team. Because the DEA governs both the Day and DCE contracts, the MCCC team has members from both units.

The Distance Ed. Team members are:

Gail Guarino (CCCC)

co-chair

DeAnna Putnam (BHCC)

co-chair

Joanna DelMonaco (MiCC)

secretary

Jennifer Baker (NSCC)

Candace Shivers (MWCC)

Tom Schaefer (CCCC)

Both co-chairs are currently part-time faculty, but Gail Guarino was formerly full-time and has been a

member of both Day and DCE negotiating teams. DeAnna Putnam is chair of the current DCE bargaining team. The other members all have distance education experience.

The MCCC team has begun meeting among themselves.

In the background of these negotiations are the facts that the just settled Day contract expires this coming June, and the DCE contract expires in August. So the MCCC will be juggling three interrelated negotiations simultaneously.

The coming year promises to bring many changes. With both collective bargaining agreements being negotiated at the same time, some MCCC members see this as an opportunity to put all members on one contract.

Bringing all part-time faculty under one contract is seen as potentially bringing more equitable treatment for adjuncts. ■

Mark Your Calendar

MCCC Delegate

Assembly

Via Zoom

Saturday

April 22, 2023

Chapters need to elect their delegates and report them by April 10. See chart on page 3 for chapter entitlements and target goals. Other related data is also included.

Union Recruits Two New Contract Bargaining Teams

As the 2021-2023 MCCC Negotiating team winds up its work after the landslide ratification vote, the union is already looking ahead to the next set of double-header negotiations.

The just ratified Day contract expires at the end of June. And to address this a call has already gone out to recruit members for the 2023-2026 contract. The posting has been widely distributed, but if anyone is interested, applications close April 1.

Once the new Day team has been appointed, a posting will go out to recruit members for the team to negotiate the DCE contract that expires at the end of August. Members who are interested in serving should look for the posting in about a month.

This will be the first time in memory when both contracts were being negotiated at the same time. It promises to be a very interesting few months. ■



Members of the MCCC Day contract negotiating team celebrate the ratification at the MCCC office in Worcester. From left MCCC VP Joe Nardoni, team chair Lisa Coole, Ellen Pratt, Joanna DelMonaco, MCCC President Claudine Barnes, MTA consultant Colleen Fitzpatrick and Candace Shivers. (Photo by Margaret Wong)

Death of the Liberal Arts Major



Don Williams,
MCCC Communications
Coordinator

I was stunned, but not shocked, when I saw the news that Marymount University's Board of Trustees voted unanimously to cut 10 liberal arts majors that included English, math and history. It makes sense when the combined enrollments of all the programs is 74 students.

At community colleges we don't have separate majors in those liberal arts disciplines, but we have seen mandated curriculum changes that reduced the requirements in English and history for an associate of arts degree. With the general decline in students, and

them opting for more job-related programs, liberal arts faculty are stressed.

After seeing the Marymount news, I found a lengthy article by Nathan Heller on this same topic in the February 27, issue of *The New Yorker* magazine that explains how deep the problem is.

Heller points out that for many decades the average percentage of humanities students in each class hovered around 15 percent, which fluctuated with the economy. But in recent years, even with a strong economy, humanities enrollments have continued to fall while the number of degrees awarded in science and engineering have soared.

The tumbling humanities enrollments have affected even the most liberal arts focused, ivy league institutions like Columbia and Harvard. English majors dropped from ten percent to five percent between 2002 and 2022. A 2022 survey of Harvard freshmen found that only seven percent intended to major in English, down

from twenty percent in 2012, and far down from thirty percent in the 1970's.

According to Robert Townsend, the co-director of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences' Humanities Indicators project, which collects data uniformly but not always identically to internal enrollment figures, from 2012 to 2020 the number of graduated humanities majors at Ohio State's main campus fell by forty-six percent. Tufts lost nearly fifty per cent of its humanities majors, and Boston University lost forty-two. Notre Dame ended up with half as many as it started with, while *SUNY* Albany lost almost three-quarters. Vassar and Bates—standard-bearing liberal-arts colleges—saw their numbers of humanities majors fall by nearly half. In 2018, the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point briefly considered eliminating thirteen majors, including English, history, and philosophy, for want of pupils.

Two primary causes cited for the decline were both about money. One is the "fire hose" of grant funding that the government has provided to support for the sciences that began with the Sputnik space race of the 1960's continuing to the present, and the drying up of support for the humanities. On a personal note, in the 1970s I had a federal government sponsored fellowship for graduate school in English that remitted my tuition and paid a monthly stipend. These don't exist anymore. It was noted that while funding for the National Science Foundation soars, the total budget for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) is the same as the Vienna State Opera's.

Another cause is the forty-year decline in state funding for higher ed. and the resulting rise in tuition and student debt. Heller noted that in 1980 the average of state support accounted for seventy-nine percent of public universities revenue. By 2019 the support had fallen to fifty-five percent. In Massachusetts the support has hovered at the bottom of all the states. Potential students look at the cost and the debt they will carry post-graduation when they are deciding on a major. They see direct employment at a solid salary with a medical science or engineering degree, but don't see the same in the humanities.

Maybe the humanities haven't marketed themselves well. The Harvard English department has given out tote bags with slogans like "CURRENTLY READING" printed on them, and made changes to make the curriculum more relevant to today's media age. A faculty member at Arizona State University created a course titled Making a Career with a Humanities Degree and points to successful people with them like musician John Legend with them.

Interestingly, English majors leave college with less debt than their STEM peers, but they take longer to pay it off. This reflects lower starting salaries for their fields. But they don't necessarily stay low.

Heller says that the disinvestment in the humanities by states may have backfired. "That's partly because fields like literature and history teach close, fact-based study and critical analysis with the goal of pulling up the rug to understand what's going on underneath." He added that, "Career studies have shown that humanities majors, with their communication and analytical skills, often end up in leadership jobs." ■

Community College Cyber Attacks

On March 1, Northern Essex became the third Massachusetts community college to detect a cyberattack within the past six months. When the college became aware of unauthorized access to its networks, it called in both cybersecurity and law enforcement experts to investigate and closed the college.

As reported in the award-winning student paper *The NECC Observer*, "On Thursday March 2, students received an email saying that NECC would be closed March 3, at 6 a.m. through Sunday, March 5, due to proposed electrical work being done in the area that they were just made aware of." Because of this, the email said, there would be no access to the email system or to the Blackboard learning management system.

Ultimately, the college had to close for two more days leading to its announcement of the breach on March 7 – an announcement that received national notice on *Inside Higher Ed* and other publications.

Students and staff wondered why there was a lack of transparency over what had happened. NECC spokesperson Melissa Bouse said the college was just being safe, adding, "Whenever there is an on-going criminal investigation, they have to be careful of what kind of information is revealed and what protections have been put in place."

The college is conducting a full audit to determine what systems may have been affected and what if any impact there has been on students and staff. At this point there is no evidence of unauthorized access to personal information. If the investigation finds evidence of their personal information being compromised, the college will contact them directly and work with them.

Bristol Community College discovered unauthorized access to its network on or around

December 23, 2022. The college says that they immediately launched an investigation, in consultation with cybersecurity professionals who regularly investigate and analyze these types of incidents around the country, to determine the extent of any compromise to the information on its network. The incident involved ransomware encryption.

Holyoke suffered a malware attack in March of 2022, where hackers attempted to install malicious software into its systems. Fortunately the college was on Spring Break when it happened making it easier for the IT team to clear the problem.

The community colleges were not alone in being attacked. K-12 systems in their service areas were also targeted around the same times. Schools in Haverhill, Holyoke and more than one system in Bristol county were also attacked.

Ransomware is often the focus of for-profit criminal hackers where they infect a system and shut down user access to their data until a ransom is paid—typically using cyber currency. The problem is becoming so prevalent that insurance companies offer insurance against data ransom. According to NBC10 television, "at least one in six Massachusetts communities had been infected by ransomware in the past, and at least 10 had paid hackers taxpayer money to unlock their files, the NBC10 Boston Investigators found at the time."

It is no surprise, then, that community colleges are taking measures like two-factor log-ins and pushing cybersecurity training to help prevent this on-going threat. The colleges are taking different approaches to ensure that employees complete the training: North Shore is paying part-time faculty \$40 to complete training while Holyoke has threatened locking people out of the college's systems if training is not completed. The problem is not going away, so we will be dealing with these issues for the foreseeable future. ■

Legislative Agenda - Cherish Act

The MTA has proposed a bill to the state legislature called the “Cherish Act” which refers to language in the state constitution that calls for the commonwealth to cherish education. The bill calls for tapping into the billion dollar plus revenue generated by the Fair Share Amendment or “millionaires’ tax” that was passed last year, and to direct significant funding to public colleges and universities. The community college presidents had flagged one aspect that they felt disadvantaged our students. Language to amend the bill and remove their objections is being crafted with the hope of gaining their influential support of this otherwise tremendously beneficial bill.

The bill is on its way to legislative committee for review, and member action to urge its advancement will be needed. In this effort, MCCC Vice President and Strategic Action Coordinator Joe Nardoni has prepared the talking points below that members can use in talking with their legislators.

MCCC TALKING POINTS IN SUPPORT OF THE CHERISH ACT

The MCCC supports passage of the Cherish Act, and urges our legislators to sign on as sponsors to the

act, and be on the lookout for a forthcoming amendment to the debt-free college scholarship program that we will be asking you to support.

We are asking you to lend your support to the Bill, currently identified as H. 1260 and S. 816, because it will establish funding streams for public higher education that:

- Can help adjunct faculty and part-time professional staff at the Community Colleges who are working half-time or more achieve wage equity, gain access to benefits like health insurance and state pension plans, as well as get a fair shot at obtaining FT, tenure-track positions.
- Provide a path for the recruitment and retention of a high quality, diversified workforce by creating a wage equity commission that will raise our salaries up in comparison to our colleagues at the four-year institutions in Massachusetts, as well as those in other comparable states.
- Provides additional funding per student at the Community Colleges to establish and maintain the wraparound support services

our most vulnerable students need.

- Provides that fully funding our contracts will be part of the budget each year, and that this appropriation will be separate from any appropriation for the maintenance of our individual campuses.
- Ensures that our students will not bear the cost through tuition and fees to build new buildings; modernizes existing ones for educational needs and the health and safety of our members, students and the public; and meets our Commonwealth’s commitment to ensuring our buildings are non-polluting and energy efficient.
- **Once the bill is amended**, provides a debt-free pathway for students to earn degrees and certificates at the Community Colleges and four-year public colleges and universities that not only takes into account tuition and fees, but also includes living, transportation, and child care expenses, and mandates that this plan apply to our students at the Community Colleges first. ■

Delegate Assembly Numbers

The chart below shows the chapter entitlements for the MCCC Delegate Assembly and the chapter goals that would assure that a quorum is met.

Entitlements are based on the chapter union membership, which the chart shows in breakdowns for full-time, Day part-time and DCE members. Non-member numbers are also shown, and this is an increasing concern that the union is working on a plan to address.

Chapter	MBR FT	MBR PT	MBR DCE	non MBR			Member Total	Non Member Total	Delegate Entitlement	Chapter Support	Chapter Goal*
				FT	PT	DCE					
Berkshire	65	2	33	26	1	50	100	77	7	1,376	3
Bristol	147	16	178	41	29	101	341	171	24	1,951	10
Bunker Hill	171	28	219	64	57	182	418	303	29	2,237	12
Cape Cod	81	1	65	19	0	51	147	70	10	1,459	4
Greenfield	73	2	45	9	0	44	120	53	8	1,412	3
Holyoke	140	40	76	34	82	72	256	188	18	1,801	7
MassBay	70	17	84	50	26	49	171	125	12	1,501	5
Massasoit	127	33	119	25	73	72	279	170	19	1,842	8
Middlesex	154	14	174	5	50	133	342	188	24	1,953	10
Mt Wachusett	125	17	90	13	60	63	232	136	16	1,609	6
North Shore	138	14	122	48	59	98	274	205	19	1,833	8
Northern Essex	121	6	98	60	10	48	225	118	16	1,597	6
Quinsigamond	176	30	179	23	31	154	385	208	27	2,029	11
Roxbury	58	2	41	19	0	37	101	56	7	1,378	3
Springfield Technical	146	11	71	29	41	62	228	132	16	1,602	6
TOTALS	1,792	233	1,594	465	519	1,216	3,619	2,200	252	25,580	102

Visit The MCCC Online at 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.



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:

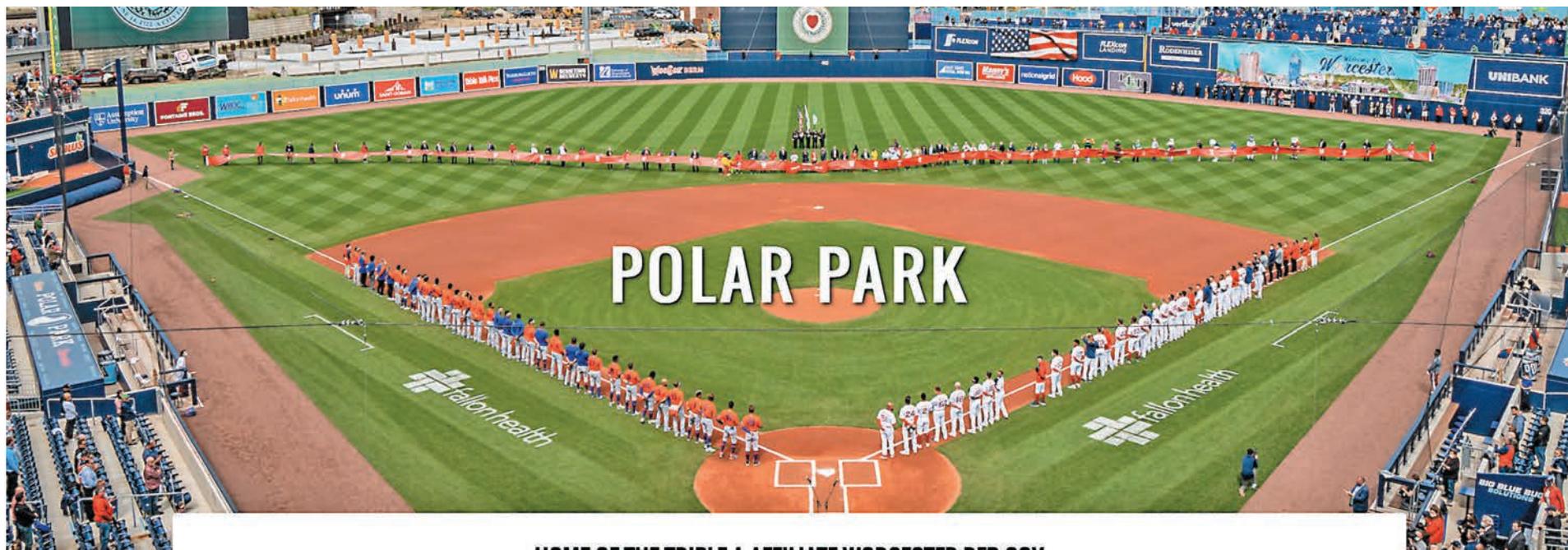
Donald Williams
North Shore Community College
1 Ferncroft Road, Danvers, MA 01923

Or email:

Communications@mccc-union.org



Like us at
mccc.union



HOME OF THE TRIPLE-A AFFILIATE WORCESTER RED SOX

Woosox Tickets: It's Almost Opening Day!



MCCC News

<http://mccc-union.org>

Editor:

Donald R. Williams, Jr.

President:

Claudine Barnes

Vice President:

Joe Nardoni

Secretary:

Colleen Avedikian

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

For the third year in a row, Margaret Wong has generously donated two (2) season tickets to see the WooSox play at Polar Park in Worcester! The seats are right next to the tunnel where the players walk out (Section 12, Row 9, Seats 10 & 11).

The ballpark, which opened in 2021, is just a mile from the MCCC office. If you would like to attend one or more games, please indicate your preferences below; tickets will be assigned on a first-come-first-served basis, with



preference given to people who have not yet been given tickets. Please choose more than one game, as your first choice might no longer be available; any game listed as "TAKEN" is unavailable. Your only requirement is to discuss an education-related topic at some point during the game. You can select games here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WooSox2023>.

Paul Johansen from Berkshire CC will email your tickets in advance of the game. For more

information, go to <https://www.milb.com/worcester>. If you have questions, please contact Paul Johansen (Berkshire)/ iguanaphoto@gmail.com / 413-212-6132.

The 2023 promotion schedule is:

- Tuesdays: Taco/Tequila (3 tacos & a margarita for \$12)
 - Wednesdays: Woof Woof (bring your furry pets)
 - Thursdays: Throwback (meet sports legends)
 - Fridays: Fireworks
 - Saturdays: Sunset catch (on the field after the game)
 - Sundays: Kids run the bases (on the field after the game).
- Play ball! ■



MCCC Vice President Joe Nardoni is also the Strategic Action Coordinator, leading the Union's legislative actions. (photo by Don Williams)

Know Your Day Contract

April 2023

- April 6 Dean's leave of absence recommendations due (p. 30).
- April 15 Dean's tenure recommendations due (p. 46).
- April 15 Title changes announced (p. 68).
- April 17 Patriots Day holiday (p. 25).

May 2023

- 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 29 Memorial Day observed (p. 25)
- May 30 Professional staff College service and student advisement forms (p. 61).

NOTE: 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. ■