

MCCC News



The Official Publication of the *Massachusetts Community College Council* / Vol. 23, Issue No. 6 / May 2023

Delegate Assembly Raises Dues



MCCC President Claudine Barnes presided over the April 22 MCCC Delegate Assembly by Zoom.

The Annual MCCC Delegate Assembly was held over Zoom on Saturday, April 22, 2023 with over 100 members attending. It is the union's highest deliberative body, and is the only body that can approve the annual budget and make bylaw changes. It's also an opportunity for the leadership to dialog with a larger contingent of members than usual.

President Claudine Barnes called the meeting to order just after the appointed 10:30 start time when a quorum of 80 members was reached. In her opening remarks Barnes thanked all the delegates for giving up a Saturday to perform this essential function of the union. She reviewed the challenges that have been confronted over the past year including protracted contract negotiations, distance education changes and now contract funding issues. (See her full report on page 2.)

This is the first year that changes were

implemented in the MCCC leadership structure that eliminated the position of elected treasurer. Similar to the MTA structure, the Vice President takes on the oversight of finances, but the day-to-day fiscal operations have been delegated to the newly filled Office Manager position. As the first Vice President serving under the new structure, VP Joe Nardoni had an outsized role at this year's DA.

Annual Budget

Being the major function of the DA, presentation of the FY 2023-2024 Budget for approval was the first business item. Nardoni went over a summary of the budget highlighting the changes the Finance Committee approved. One of the important aspects was the need to dip into reserves because expenses exceed income.

He pointed out that full-time members contribute 77 percent of the Union's income, and that the percentage of full-time unit members who choose not to belong to the Union has increased significantly. Before the *Janus* Supreme Court decision there were only between 10-15 members who did not join. We currently have 465 non-members who pay nothing to get all the benefits that the union spends its resources to win for members. They represent \$172,000 in lost dues.

Most of these nonmembers are newly hired employees who see the chance to save money by not joining the Union. In response, Nardoni said they are working on a pilot plan for recruiting new members to be tried at the three community college campuses with the highest rates of non-membership.

The motion to approve the budget was placed before the Delegate Assembly for discussion and a vote.

MOVED to adopt the proposed FY 2024 MCCC operating budget of \$953,529 in income and \$1,006,822 in expenses, with deficit spending of \$53,293. This FY 2024 budget represents a FY 2024 MCCC dues rate of \$372 for DAY unit members based on approximately 1790 DAY unit members

Continued on page 3

Presidents Support Union: A Report from Joint Study

By Joe Nardoni

The Joint Study Committee is comprised of several College Presidents and a variable number of their attorneys and their Executive Director and members of the MCCC Board selected by the MCCC President, supported by one or more of our MTA Consultants. Its general purpose is to function as a Statewide MACER Committee in practice, where we can discuss important issues with the Presidents and devise helpful solutions that can, at times, forestall grievances or other actions. Over the past year, the MCCC team has been pursuing a policy of trying to work with the Presidents when and where we can identify shared interests, with both sides understanding that there exists a shared level of distrust between our groups.

A recent meeting is a case in point. On April 26, Joint Study met to discuss, among other things, Management's recent

proposed MOA that would have required the MCCC to agree to not take any actions in support of our members in order to get management to start implementing the parts of our ratified contract that weren't dependent on funding from the State, something that has been done in the past and which the MCCC asserts could and should have already been done.

As of this writing, we have not been able to confirm whether this is the law or past practice. Still, in conversations with President Barnes before we met, I wondered how it was that the Presidents did not understand how the offer of such a bad MOA could damage our ability to work together going forward.

Nonetheless, our team met with management, where MCCC President Claudine Barnes and Executive Committee Member Candace Shivers expressed

the MCCC Board's displeasure at the disrespectful manner in which the MOA addressed the MCCC, pointed out the flaws in management's extreme and unnecessary demand and, informed them of the Board's decision to recommend the Bargaining Team reject the MOA. As the conversation progressed, I felt that the Presidents didn't quite understand the level of outrage expressed by our Board when we discussed the proposed MOA, so I told them that I felt that their attorney had written the MOA with their middle finger, and that I believed this impression was largely shared by our Board.

At this, the Presidents were taken aback and they all said they did not intend that. As the discussion ended, it was my belief that the Presidents didn't mean to commit a misdeed against us,

Continued on page 3

President's Report to The Delegate Assembly

MCCC President Claudine Barnes



Greetings MCCC Members,

I would like to start by thanking everyone who put their time and energy into union work. Many of you go above and beyond for our union and our union members. We may have a bare bones budget, but we are managing to do our work and do it well. We work tirelessly on your behalf. Could it be easier? Yes.

We, as MCCC members, are overworked and underpaid. I doubt anyone will disagree. But our union is only as strong as we are. The more unified we are, the more numerous we are, the stronger we are. I encourage all members to take actions small and large, from attending chapter meetings, sending emails to legislators, serving on committees and local chapter executive committees, to joining Contract Action Teams and negotiations teams, and so on.

Our membership is lower than it should be. This is in large part due to the *Janus* decision, but it is also that we at both the state and chapter level are not doing a good enough job showing our unit members our success and explaining to potential members the value and benefits of belonging to the MCCC.

So here are some of our big successes and challenges over the last year.

The reinvigoration of Strategic Action. For a few years, SAC (Strategic Action Committee) was diminished in its functions to bring an MCCC legislative agenda to the Board of Directors and to make ourselves known and heard on our campuses, at the State House, and even within the MTA. Thanks go to Vice President Joe Nardoni for leading this renewed effort. From communicating with legislators, MTA Governmental, the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges (MACC is run by the Council of Presidents of the fifteen community colleges), and to the multitude of emails and other communication with our members providing information and en-

couraging strategic outreach, the MCCC is in a much better place to represent our members.

We also had enormous success with the Day Contract. The Day Negotiations Team held off management's worst proposals, got some very good language on behalf of faculty and professional staff, and we will be getting salary increases for most Day unit members in excess of the parameters established by the governor including more and increased ways to move through the grid system. In addition, the team delivered the first part-time salary grid in the history of the MCCC guaranteeing salary increases based on years of service for part-time Day faculty and professional staff.

As you are aware, there is an unacceptable delay in funding the Day Contract. Although the monies, including the retroactivity, are there resting in an account controlled by Administration and Finance, the monies will not be released until the legislature passes a supplemental budget. This is infuriating for many reasons; the most obvious is that we deserve our money for this two-year agreement that was ratified on March 2 after almost 2 years at the table with management. It is also upsetting as the funding process is unnecessarily complicated thanks to MGL 150E. And we know that each college is experiencing failed searches because of our wages, and we have retention issues especially amongst professional staff. It is unfair. On this, we have agreement with the college presidents.

We do not have agreement on the implementation of the Day Contract with the presidents. Our position is that the contract is implemented upon ratification and that money not associated with the state paying the parameters should be paid now. The Presidents have attempted an MOA which would implement the language in the agreement and some of the payments not connected to state funding but tied to our promise not to engage in work actions, strikes, or grievances. We have bluntly refused to give up those rights. We are ramping up for a fight to implement our agreement through the various means available to us, but we still hope that management will implement without strings attached. We will keep members informed of any developments regarding implementation and payment.

The MCCC has also been notified of the intention of the Office of Employee Relations and by extension the BHE to hold the MCCC to 2% parameters in year one of our next Day agreement. This is outrageous and far from the equity that the state claims to promote. I sent an explanatory email last month to all

members that hopefully clarifies this. We have been working with the other state employee unions and have received support including letters to OER stating that some unions will not use their reopener clauses. The college presidents have also been supportive and have sent a letter to Governor Healey asking that we receive reasonable parameters. Also at least two other state employee unions have received a one-year contract extension offer for 8% plus \$500 per FTE (full-time equivalent) for 2023-2024. We do not yet know if this offer could be extended to the Day unit, nor do we know if it will be offered to the DCE unit whose contract expires at the end of August.

FYI, a call will go out shortly for applications to serve on the DCE Negotiations Team.

The Cherish Act is broad encompassing legislation that could bring many positive changes to community colleges. And around Cherish, a Higher Ed for All coalition has emerged. This is a potentially great opportunity to work in unison with other higher education unions as well as other unions supportive of higher ed. We have endorsed Cherish and generally support its language. However, we have a major problem with the debt-free portions of the bill which could end up severely and negatively impacting the enrollment at community colleges by making all of higher ed the same cost to students.

While we applaud the equity, our primary tasks as a labor union are to preserve our employment and improve our working conditions. As this bill moves

forward in the legislative process, we need to ensure the language is rewritten to protect the community colleges. The college presidents agree regarding this debt-free language, and we have both been reaching out to key legislators about necessary changes. But we are still struggling with MTA on mutually agreeable language changes, and this is straining our improved relationship with MTA. Please be on the lookout for more information on Cherish and any actions that may be needed.

Lastly, we have a near record number of arbitrations, many over the Distance Education Agreement. Our unit members, chapter and statewide leadership, our two Grievance Coordinators, three MTA Consultants, and numerous attorneys have worked tirelessly on these cases and will continue to do so in the multitude of upcoming arbitrations. Management continues to push their position on non-arbitrability including new arguments about the arbitrability of the DEA. Meanwhile, we have a new team to negotiate the Distance Education Agreement and we look forward to working with and supporting that team.

Always remember that we are stronger together and that we need to fight for what is fair, for what is right, and for what we deserve.

Thank you for your patience and your support. It is an honor to serve you as MCCC President. ■

This text closely mirrors the address given at the MCCC Delegate Assembly in April.

New Day Negotiating Team Appointed

At its April meeting the MCCC Board of Directors appointed a new team to negotiate the successor agreement for the recently settled, and expired 2021–2023 Collective Bargaining Agreement.

While there are still issues related to the old contract, especially funding, it is imperative that the union starts the process now. Normally MCCC teams start the process months before a contract expires, but these are not normal times.

This team is a combination of experienced and new members, they are:

Lisa Coole, *Massasoit CC*
Joanna DelMonaco, *Middlesex CC*
Mike Dubson, *Bunker Hill CC*
Renaë Gorman, *Springfield Technical CC*
Ted Intarabumrung, *Roxbury CC*
Trevor Kearns, *Greenfield CC*

The Board will also be soliciting members for the DCE Negotiating Team to negotiate a successor agreement for the current contract that expires August 1, 2023. The MCCC President and Vice President are ex officio members of both bargaining teams. ■

Vice President's Report to The Delegate Assembly

MCCC Vice President Joe Nardoni



It has been a busy year working for you in this newly-created position in our Bylaws of Vice-President that combines some of the duties formerly performed by our Treasurer with the well-established duties of the VP to run the Strategic Action Campaigns of our Union. As I adjusted to the workload and time constraints the performance of my duties put on my work on your behalf, I

realized that the Board and the Delegate Assembly needed to hear back from me on what I thought about the position—its strengths and weaknesses in terms of how the varied duties of presenting a Budget and running the Strategic Action Committee support and at times have conflicted with each other over the past year.

I want to thank Gail Guarino for asking the question that crystallized this for me, when we were at the MTA Winter Skills meeting and she asked me, “Is the job doable?”

She reminded me that this position, as it is now constructed, is an experiment borne out of the MCCC’s need as a union to cut costs while making sure we can do the job we need to do in order to make our union stronger and more effective in representing and achieving the goals of our members as set by the Delegate Assembly and the MCCC Board. My answer in the first-year interim is: the jury’s still out

on this, mostly because we are living through one of the strangest and most

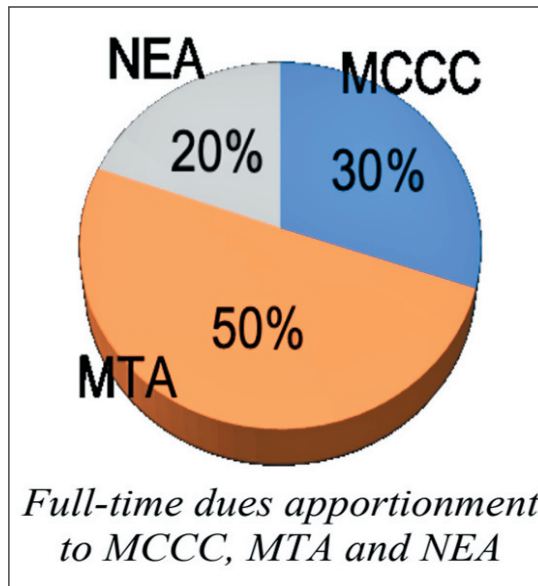
challenging periods in our Union’s history and find ourselves, at this moment, in a flux of hope and heartbreak, anger and acceptance, as the Legislature and the Governor make decisions that will affect us profoundly going forward.

While this moderate maelstrom swirls around us, I say to all of us here today that our best hope for the results we want relies on you, the members who have shown up in various ways throughout the year, whether serving on our CAT, (Contract Action Team) being Silent Observers at our negotiations, serving on our union’s various standing committees, attending actions at the State House, rising to speak in chapter meetings and elsewhere, writing emails and making phone calls when asked to do so; your efforts have helped us win a good contract that beats the Governor’s parameters for most of our members, gives all of our members some acceleration through our salary grid and addresses the salary stagnation for our part-time professional staff, as well as helped the coalition of public sector unions win a one-year offer from A&F (Office of Administration and Finance) and OER (Office of Employee Relations) of approximately 8.5% when you combine the straight 8% with an additional \$500 per unit member FTE to be distributed as bargained, going out to one of the public sector unions in the Commonwealth.

That deal is headed our way, although its timing is uncertain. Whenever and however that deal comes to us will be dependent in part on how effective we are in getting our members, especially the ones who are not here today, to engage when asked to by leadership. And delegates, you are an indispensable part of that leadership. I urge you to go back to your campuses and help your chapter’s strategic action Coordinators ensure every one of our members makes the phone calls we’ve asked them to make.

Our response to our current challenges going forward has to be: greater member engagement and participation in the life and activities of our Union, and that requires member-to-member communication and mutual encouragement. It has been an honor to work for you this year. I have been inspired by your engagement and uplifted by the many messages of support I have received from you for doing this work that lives in my heart. I thank you for all that you have done so far and what you will do in the future to raise one another up before the Governor, the Legislature and the people in our communities.

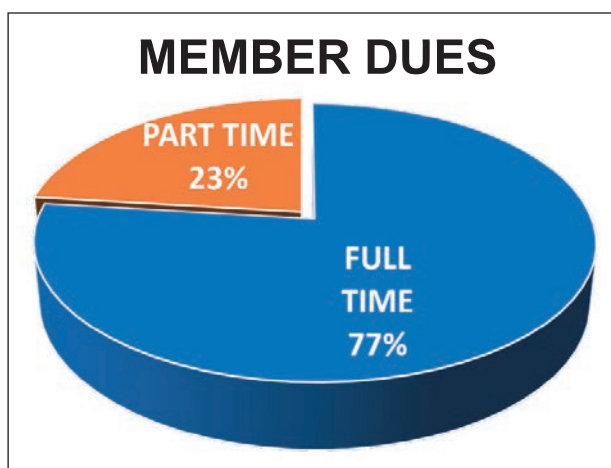
When we work together, we can and will achieve great things. ■



Delegate Assembly Raises Dues . . .

Continued from page 1

and a MCCC dues rate of \$112 for DCE and other part-time unit members, based on approximately 1800 DCE and other part-time unit members. These numbers represent a \$30 dues increase for FT members and \$9 increase for Part-Time members. The MCCC will be required to access \$53,293 from financial reserves to balance the FY 24 budget.



Discussion largely consisted of questions. The most debated issue was the MCCC newsletter. The finance committee budgeted \$3,000 for one mailed-to-homes issue of the MCCC News, as had been done—but not actually spent—for the last year. One member moved to eliminate the mailed issue, but there was little support. Former MCC President Margaret Wong said it was an important member outreach tool, and an issue to homes over next year’s union election would help with member engagement. That motion failed.

Former MCCC President Joe LeBlanc, who taught journalism for many years, made a motion to mail four issues to members’ homes in order to engage them more. This also failed.

Total dues will also be affected by what MTA and NEA do for dues which are approved at their respective meetings.

Bylaws

Approving Bylaw changes is another duty that must be done by the Delegate Assembly. In previous years there have been controversial proposals but this year that was not the case. The six Bylaw changes proposed all related to cleaning up references to the elected treasurer elimination and the shift of duties to either the Vice President or the Office Manager position. ■

Report from Joint Study . . .

Continued from page 1

and had instead miscommunicated with us, but I also believed that our members would not be convinced of this. So that’s when I told the Presidents that our members would need some proof of good faith from them in order to believe that the proposed MOA was a mistake, and suggested that the appropriate act would be to write to Governor Healey on our behalf, asking her to tell OER and A&F to offer the MCCC the 8% parameter for a one-year contract in FY 24 the other public sector unions will receive, starting July 1, 2023.

MWCC President James Vander

Hooven said that the Presidents’ team would bring this to the full Presidents Council recommending that they do so and instructed Nate Mackinnon, the Executive Director of MCCC, to draft the letter. On Monday, May 1st, the MCCC received a copy of the letter, signed by all 15 of the College Presidents, asking Governor Healey to give us the 8% offer. That letter has been distributed to our members.

This is a good result, and we must follow this up with concerted action focused on Governor Healey’s office. She can order OER and A&F to give us the 8% offer. It is time she did so. ■

Luke Cai –New MCCC Office Manager

After a few years of discussion and implementation the MCCC restructured and eliminated the elected Treasurer position a year ago, shifting some of the duties to the elected Vice President. Years ago the Union had a position of Office Manager. When that person retired, the then Treasurer Phil Mahler (also a former President and Vice President) stepped in and served the dual function until he stepped down from the Treasurer role when he retired from teaching and was no longer eligible for union membership. But the Union pressed Mahler into service and he continued to come in to the MCCC Office a few days a week to provide assistance to the office staff.

After a months' long search in this difficult employment market, the MCCC is happy to announce that Luke Cai has been hired as Office Manager. Luke recently received a graduate degree from



Worcester State, and while he is new to the MCCC, Mahler has agreed to be a resource as long as needed.

Luke is an art hobbyist and former teacher from Worcester MA. Having stumbled through several jobs due to the covid-19 pandemic ranging from retail to teaching to the federal government, Luke hopes to make roots and stay in the MCCC for a long time. Luke is overwhelmed but humbled to take over for Phillip Mahler and his over forty-year commitment to the MCCC. Luke comes from a background in accounting and labor politics and is hoping to commit much energy to the MCCC. ■



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

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

Know Your Day Contract May 2023

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).

June 2023

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

June 1 Written notice stating preferred work assignment submitted each year to supervisor (p. 56).

June 1 Develop E-7 Form with supervisor. E-7 Form serves as basis of evaluation for the year. E-7 includes job description items (goals), objectives (if mutually agreed), and activities/methods (Appendix p. 124).

June 2 Professional Staff unused vacation days in excess of 375 hours (50 days) converted to sick leave at end of last pay period in June 2022. After the last payroll period of June 2022 leave in excess of 375 hours (50 days) shall be forfeited at the end of the last pay period in December of each year. (MOA 4/28/2021))

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 printed 2018-2021 Agreement. ■

State Retirement COLA Bill

While retirement may be a long time away for many State Retirement System participants, and others are on the verge, there are pieces of pension legislation that should be of interest to everyone.

One of the issues that the lobbying group Mass Retirees is working on is raising the base level for calculating public employees' Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA). Massachusetts is unique in giving cost of living pension increases that go permanently to the recipient's base. However, the COLA is only applied to a limited base. For state and teachers' retirement systems that base is currently on the first \$13,000. So a 3 percent COLA (as Gov. Healey has proposed in her first budget) gives every eligible recipient the same \$390 increase, regardless of the size of their pensions. The base was raised from \$12,000 a twelve years ago.

The Mass Retirees had sponsored Amendment 808 that would increase the base for State and Teachers' Retirement Systems to \$16,000 that unfortunately was not adopted in the recent budget debate. Members of these two systems

received a 5 percent COLA last summer. The rejection was not surprising, as the House works out the tight budget. The organization estimated that raising the base to \$16,000 would cost the state an \$150 million per year above the current \$4.1 billion pension systems funding for FY24.

Meanwhile, municipal and county pension systems can set their own COLA base amounts above the old state minimums. All but six of those systems have set higher base levels. According to the Mass Retirees publication, *The Voice*, "Both Bristol County and the Town of Wellesley have proposed pushing beyond the \$18,000 ceiling for 2024." Many town meetings are considering raising their local pension bases this month.

You don't have to be retired to join the organization, but if you are currently, or soon to be retired, it is a valuable organization to look out for your post-employment rights. The official name is Retired State, County and Municipal Employees of Massachusetts. ■

MOVING?

Please make sure the MCCC has your correct mailing address.

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



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

or go online at
<http://mccc-union.org/ChangeMyAddress/>