

MCCC News



The Official Publication of the *Massachusetts Community College Council* / Vol. 24, Issue 4 / December 2023

Hard-Won Contract Funding at Last

After months of delays, the legislature finally found a way to pass the supplemental budget that contained, among other things, funding for collective bargaining agreements for thousands of state employees on Monday, December 4th.

But just the week before, there were no indications that any action was expected before the legislature returned to formal sessions after their year-end holiday break. Facing a raise-less holiday of their own, a coalition of affected state employees that included MCCC and other MTA higher ed. locals, organized protest at the State House to demand action on the funding.

The November 28th event had a full-house audience quietly packing the gallery of the House of Representatives to witness a handful of officials conduct minor business that could pass with “unanimous consent.” The session lasted about 30 minutes and then adjourned.

After leaving the gallery, the union activists gathered outside on the steps and not so quietly expressed their frustration with the inaction on contract funding that no legislator objected to. Besides signs with slogans like “Where are you Legislators” and “Do Your Jobs,” some union members from UMass Dartmouth got creative and dramatized the bleak holiday prospects with attention grabbing Grinch costumes.

MCCC President Claudine Barnes was among the union leaders who spoke to the press conference crowd about their members’ circumstances. She pointed out that the MCCC contract may be the most egregious case because her members have been without a raise for over two years.

State Auditor Diane DiZoglio, a former legislator herself, spoke about her on-going concerns with the opaqueness in the legislature’s processes. She said the delays in funding these contracts is a case in point of why she should have the power she’s been seeking to audit the House and Senate.

There were speakers from a variety of affected union, including senior AFL-



MCCC President Claudine Barnes spoke at the labor rally Nov. 28 on the State House steps. She said that the MCCC had one of the worst cases of delayed raises.

(Photo by Don Williams)

CIO leaders. MTA President Max Page and Vice President Deb McCarthy did not speak, MTA’s support was publicized by hiring a billboard van with a garish 15-foot display bearing the message “FUND OUR CONTRACTS NOW!” After parking by the State House for a few minutes, the van was going to spend hours driving to high-visibility areas around the city calling attention to the injustice.

Besides the State House demonstra-
Continued on page 2

**Bylaw Amendment
Proposals Due Feb. 1—
Form available on MCCC
Website
mccc-union.org**

NOMINATIONS CLOSING

MCCC Nominations close Feb. 1.

All offices are up for election in 2024 including President, Vice President, Secretary and one of the two Adjunct/Part-time Directors.

As in every year delegates are up for election to the NEA Representative Assembly, and the MTA Annual meeting.

- NEA RA
July 3-7, Philadelphia, PA
- MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates
April 26-27, Springfield, MA

Note that there are no write-in ballots allowed. It is vital that members participate in the MTA-RA so that we can have our voices fully heard. Don’t wait until February to nominate yourself.

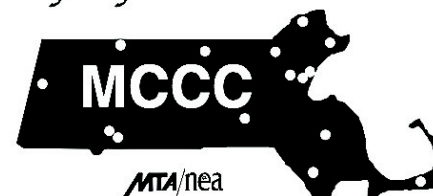
SCHEDULE

Nominations Open Wed. Nov. 1, ‘23
Nominations Close Thurs. Feb. 8, ‘24
(Candidate signatures and 250 word newsletter statements for officers are due on this date)

Balloting opens Mon. Mar. 11, 2024
Balloting closes Thurs. Mar. 28, 2024



Wishing our members and friends happy holidays and a prosperous New Year.



Massachusetts Community College Council



Don Williams,
MCCC Communications
Coordinator

Congeniality – Gone Missing?

In presenting the FY 2024 budget to the Delegate Assembly, MCCC Vice President Joe Nardoni pointed out that in 2015 there were only a few dozen non-union members (agency fee) across the whole full-time faculty and staff unit. While we lost a little revenue from them, they still paid something. Now there are over 500 non-members in the unit who pay nothing.

The obvious cause is the Janus decision that allowed people to be part of the collective bargaining unit without being required to pay anything. With our recognized low pay, it is very tempting for a new unit member to save money on dues while getting almost all the benefits of a dues-paying member.

Everyone knew that Janus would be a problem. But as we waited to see the depth and the nature of the impact, COVID hit and completely changed the situation. Organizing was going to be a challenge anyways because of the structure of the community college system and the ways we work. But after COVID it got really tough.

K-12 unions in the state did not see the same level of membership loss that we have. While we're all educators and share a lot of values, their situations are very different. They are in their buildings more than we are traditionally, and now they are not likely to be working remotely. Their unions are city/town based, so they are close together not only during school hours but after hours at the supermarket or hardware store. There's a lot more inter-personal contact.

Nardoni said, "research has shown that it takes eight personal contacts to convert a non-member to a member." In this era of online classes and zoom meetings we see a lot less of our colleagues in person. With these limitations it becomes really difficult to make eight contacts to recruit a newly hired colleague. It is a serious challenge.

In this post-COVID era, unions have been rising in esteem by the general public. The success of the auto strikes had a lot of support, and this redounds to all unions. We can hope that new hires have already recognized the benefits of having a union and are pre-disposed to join.

But costs aren't the sole consideration. Although there are financial savings on

insurance, mortgages, event admissions, etc. through the MTAB program—savings that can equal the amount of dues—this didn't prove to be an incentive in past membership drives.

What may be a better recruitment incentive is belonging. By that I mean having a sense of belonging to a group, a sense of interdependence and support for one another. And that needs to be fostered in person-to-person contact. There is nothing like the small, but significant, connections we make with each other.

It's the kind of informal, side conversations over lunch about things like our families, hobbies, or shared travel experiences that make connections different than our shared professional situations. Zoom doesn't foster those kinds of conversations. And those kinds of conversations create a social glue that binds us to each other more closely.

The loss of non-member revenue has forced the union into a cost-cutting mode that leads to holding most meet-

ings over Zoom. Before COVID there would be monthly in-person Board of Directors' meetings where the 17 directors and three officers would have travel expenses along with a lunch. The costs of 10 meetings a year added up. So, too, for the annual Delegate Assembly where about 100 members would travel to the Worcester area for the meeting and a formal lunch.

I don't think anyone minds not having to travel for these meetings both for the aggravation and the time, which can be especially daunting for those travelling from Cape Cod or Pittsfield. Recognizing their value, the union has made the commitment to hold some Board meetings in person. The June meeting where newly elected directors gather for the first time has been held at the MCCC Office in Worcester. It is an opportunity to do training in Roberts Rules and other procedural issues as well as to make human contact.

The November Board meeting for the last couple of years has been tentatively

planned to be in person. Traditionally this meeting included a Thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings. It had the feeling of a family gathering and was the highlight of many members' year. Unfortunately, this event has not happened largely because of cost concerns.

Although the recent contract problems have been stressful, one positive outcome (besides the eventual funding) was the bringing of people from various campuses together in a shared endeavor. A lot of side conversations happened while standing on picket lines that solidify personal connections.

We need to get those non-members into the fold and make belonging to the Union more appealing. Making belonging look like fun from a social angle may be a more compelling reason to join than savings on things like car insurance.

Getting the non-members to join the Union would increase revenue by thousands of dollars. That could certainly help to support more in-person events. ■

Contract Funding At Last...

Continued from front page

tion, on Friday, Nov. 30, most MCCC chapters did a brief walkout from classes and offices to dramatize and call attention to the problem. This got attention from a number of local newspapers that are read by their district legislators.

Along with these physical actions, the union explored social media to reach out to other audiences

In the end, the intensified actions by unions brought a lot of attention to the supplemental budget. The sticking point of the budget was never the contracts. The disagreement was between the parties over housing for migrant families. Unfortunately, they don't have a voice in the political process.

It was the actions of organized labor that caused a sufficient number of representatives to break their vacations, come to Boston to meet and to do their job on Dec. 4.

While MCCC members were fortunate to have all 15 community college presidents agree to pay the overdue raises before Thanksgiving, the other unions covered by the supplemental budget were facing, at best, receiving their raises in the Dec. 22 payroll. Those that miss that date won't see their raises until the new year. ■



AFT members from UMass Dartmouth put the delayed pay raises into appropriate holiday political theater at the State House. (Photo by Don Williams)



MCCC members who attended the Nov. 28 State House labor rally had a chance to confer with MCC President Claudine Barnes (left). The members from Bunker Hill are Jennifer Valdez, Marcela Rodriguez, Lindsay Naggie, and Deborah Schwartz. (photo by Don Williams)

MCCC Chapters Across the State Demonstrated on Nov. 30 Walkout



Participating in the Nov. 30 walkout were MCCC members at the following chapters, clockwise from the top, Berkshire, Massasoit, North Shore, Springfield Technical and Northern Essex.

Free Community Colleges Get Closer

The prospect of free community college in Massachusetts is looking more likely as the state has formed a Free Community College Task Force that has been meeting for a few months. MCCC President Claudine Barnes has been appointed to the group, and she reported on the progress made so far at the November MCCC Board of Directors meeting.

She started off saying that the initiative looks like it is serious just by the fact that she was included in the group

from the beginning. Often in the past, union representation was not included in groups like this. The rest of the task force includes representatives of the college presidents, the Department of Higher Ed. and business leaders.

Barnes said that at first people thought that they could come up with a plan to be implemented in a year, and experienced participants like herself, who have dealt with government in the past pointed out that a two-year target was much more realistic.

One of the issues there was general agreement that a student's funding would come from "middle dollars," unlike Gov. Healey's MassReconnect initiative that does its funding with "last dollars." This means that students must first avail themselves of all possible other funding (Pell and other grants, scholarships, etc.) before the state would cover the remaining gap for the full expense.

Last dollar funding requires a lot of work on the part of not only the student,

but also the college staff in identifying all the possible funding sources for each individual, and then assisting them in filling out application forms like the FAFSA.

Along with the middle dollar provision for this new initiative, some other ideas had general agreement as well. Free community college would be available for all Massachusetts residents unlike the MassReconnect's age and other restrictions. Students would be

Continued on page 4



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

MCCC Awards Nominations

The MCCC has four awards created to recognize the contributions of individual members who have made significant contributions to the Union in different areas. Awards are presented at the annual MCCC Delegate Assembly.

Nominations are due by March 1, 2024. Nomination forms and the candidate requirements are available on the MCCC website mccc-union.org.

<u>Raymond C. Lemieux Memorial Award</u>	<u>Jon G. Butler Memorial Award</u>	<u>John A. Palmer III Memorial Award</u>	<u>Donnie McGee Strategic Action</u>
The purpose of the award is to recognize an individual whose service, leadership, and dedication have contributed significantly to the Massachusetts Community College Council.	The purpose of the award is to recognize the Chapter President(s) whose leadership, acts, or support have made a significant impact on MCCC unit members.	This award recognizes an adjunct MCCC member whose service, leadership, and dedication have contributed significantly to MCCC adjunct faculty, as exemplified by the life of John A. Palmer III.	Recognize a member (s) who has shown exemplary service in the area of political and strategic action that has made a significant impact on MCCC unit members.
Any MCCC Board of Director or Chapter President may nominate by completing a nomination form	Any MCCC member may nominate a candidate with a petition of five or more of that chapter's members	Any MCCC member may nominate a candidate by completing a nomination form	Any MCCC Member may be nominated by petition of 10 or more members.

Free Community Colleges . . .

Continued from page 3

required to take at least six credits and to maintain satisfactory progress.

Some task force members, she said, wanted to tie the initiative to workforce development. While the union could argue that everything we do is workforce development, this will probably continue to be discussed. But Barnes and other educators on the panel urged that non-credit remedial courses also be included in the funding.

Finally, she emphasized to the task force that the colleges will need to have additional funding to cover the increased staffing required. And urged that additional funding be included for more intensive placement and orientations to foster student success.

The task force continues to work. It looks like there is strong support for moving in this direction. And it is sure to make significant changes to the colleges. ■

Know Your Day Contract

January 2024

Jan. 15 Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday (p. 21).

Jan. 29 Course materials (Form XIII-E2) for Spring semester must be distributed to students and submitted to supervisor before end of drop/add period. (p. 61).

February 2024

Feb. 1 Summary Evaluation returned (p. 62).

Feb. 1 First Year Professional staff evaluations completed. (p. 63).

Feb. 10 Summary evaluation rebuttals due (p. 66).

Feb. 15 First year professional staff evaluation conference (p. 61).

Feb. 15 Sabbatical applicants notified (p. 28).

Feb. 18 Presidents Day Holiday (p. 27).

Feb. 20 Course materials returned (p. 61).

Feb. 28 Preferred schedules and courses submitted (p. 51).

Feb. 28 *New full and part-time hire list due MCCC.*

NOTE: Cited page numbers in parentheses are from the 2021-2023 contract that is available on the MCCC website. 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.