

# MCCC News



The Official Publication of the *Massachusetts Community College Council* / Vol. 24, Issue 7 / April 2024

## Salary Study Reinforces Perception

Years of delayed and low percentage raises have made MCCC members feel like their standard of living has eroded, but without statistics that feeling doesn't motivate the powers that be to address the perception.

But now there is clear data that shows how far below we are because MTA contracted ASA Research to take a deep dive into the economic situations of faculty across the Massachusetts Higher Education System (*see graphs on page 4*).

This study compared salaries from each of the three levels of higher ed; Universities (like UMass), Comprehensive Institutions (like the state universities), and community colleges and comparing them with peer institu-

Several of these states were in the Classification Study that was done 25 years ago, which ended up awarding over \$50 million in equity raises to community college faculty and staff. The current list is a more accurate reflection of similarity than the "10 similarly situated states" of the earlier study, which included some states like Texas.

One key aspect in the ASA research is the factoring in of relative cost of living differences. Massachusetts is one of the top three states for cost of living, with housing being a significant contributor. It is one thing to see that community college faculty in Michigan are paid much more than we are in Mass, but the 2023 median home price in Michigan was \$232,511 and in Massachusetts



MCCC VP Joe Nardoni testified at a joint Ways and Means Committee hearing that the legislature should raise the pay of every full-time MCCC member by \$15,000.

(photo by Don Williams)

*MCCC VP Joe Nardoni told legislators that to address community college salary inequities they should immediately give every full-time member a raise of \$15,000.*

tions. The 4-year schools had comparisons with in-state private institutions for which there are no 2-year peers for community colleges. All three sectors were compared to national peers. It specifically focused on faculty for the comparisons, but did deal with staff impact briefly.

Taking salary data from U.S. Department of Education for the 2021-2022 academic year from both the five other New England states as well as from nine peer states with similar situations. They were CA, IL, MD, MI, MN, OH, PA, WA.

it was \$596,410 —more than double.

And this raises the cost of everything else. Another factor the study takes into account is the "living wage estimate," which is what it takes for one adult and one child to meet their basic needs without relying on government assistance or private informal help (like family). It is a figure that NEA has been using to argue improvements over just "minimum wage" improvements for lower paid educational workers.

Across the board, with one exception, Massachusetts

college and university faculty are paid significantly less than neighbor or peer states. And of the three sectors of higher ed., community colleges are the most underpaid.

The study said, "Illinois' and Michigan's community college cost-of-living adjusted salaries were \$67,000-69,000 higher than Massachusetts' faculty." Independent of the cost-of-living adjustment, in a period of 16 percent inflation, actual salaries, "Massachusetts' community college faculty experienced only a 3 percent increase in current dollar salaries, which is about one-fifth of the increase in nearby and peer states."

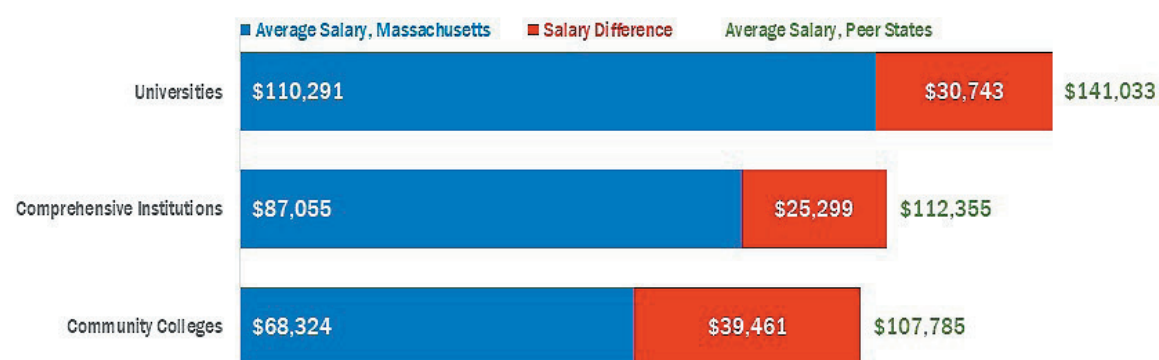
Using the MIT living wage estimate, which considers a variety of living wage child care, housing, food, transportation, clothing, taxes, etc., the study also looked into county differences. For faculty the smallest difference between cost of living and average salary was \$8,000 at Springfield Tech, and the greatest difference was \$39,000 at Bunker Hill. But it noted that this was average salary. For faculty in the lower ranks of assistant professor the gap was \$45,000 less than the living wage for the county.

While the study primarily focused on faculty, it did look at the non-instructional staff, excluding managerial positions, and found that the below living wage deficit

Continued on page 2

**Figure 3. Cost-of-Living-Adjusted Faculty Salaries in Nearby and Peer States are \$25,000 to \$40,000 Higher than MA Faculty Salaries**

Cost-of-living-adjusted Faculty Salaries, Public Institutions, MA and Nearby and Peer States, 2021-22



This graph from the Salary Study shows how far behind faculty in Massachusetts higher ed. system are relative to comparator states.



## Member Spotlight: Dr. Angelina Avedano

By Colleen Avedikian

Dr. Angelina Avedano is not only starting her second year as the new Chapter President at Massasoit Community College, she is also the chair of the English Department, as well as a published author (*Living Grief: A Mother's Odyssey of Surrender, Renewal, and Mad Joy*, 2021)

Initially unfamiliar with union environments, Angelina's career path led her to this pivotal role. Motivated by the realization that despite her academic accomplishments (a Doctorate and two Master's Degrees), she was unable to earn a living wage, she embarked on a mission to address the systemic challenges facing higher education.

At the core of Angelina's leadership philosophy lies a commitment to collaboration and attentive listening. Recognizing the importance of comprehending her colleagues' concerns and the institutional landscape, she underscores genuine engagement. Together with her team, Angelina focuses on establishing clear communication channels, enhancing member involvement, and nurturing future leaders.

Under her guidance, systems of communication have been developed, which allow her to hold herself accountable to the chapter members. Initiatives like the MPA (Massasoit Professional Association) Landing Page and dedicated Gmail and Google Drive facilitate access to crucial information for members. Efforts are underway to create a filing system that ensures continuity across leadership transitions. Angelina values input from seasoned members with institutional knowledge as well as fresh perspectives from new recruits.

Angelina's leadership style champions inclusivity

and empowerment for her colleagues. Despite facing doubts from some chapter members over her lack of union experience, she embraces a learning-oriented approach, emphasizing the importance of willingness over perfection. Encouraging continuous learning and embracing challenges, Angelina motivates her team to step out of their comfort zones as union leaders.

Efforts have been made to ensure representation across different demographics within the union, including Professional Staff, Faculty, Part-Time Staff, and DCE members. Measures such as providing accessible information, regular updates, and streamlined processes aim to advance equity. Following the Bristol Chapter's model, grievance officers have been appointed to address concerns specific to various constituents.

To mobilize union members for collective action, Angelina emphasizes collaboration and solidarity. Discussions are underway to work with AFSCME counterparts to address organizational restructuring proposals. Feedback sessions encourage a sense of belonging and a shared sense of purpose. By advocating collectively and participating in Board of Trustees meetings, members are empowered to voice their concerns amidst organizational changes.

Angelina identifies a number of challenges facing education workers today. Despite the critical role of human connection in education, faculty and professional staff continue to be undervalued and their voices unheard. There is a pervasive lack of respect for their work. She also raises caution about how educators respond to this situation:

*Currently, we are in a period of uncertainty. It's a challenge to avoid becoming reactive, because uncertainty is scary. And it's tempting to give ourselves over to powerlessness or cynicism. Too often we get caught in a loop of grinding away at the same old dilemmas. When that happens, frustration sets in and we often believe there's no hope, or we become bitter... Lashing out and/or shutting down are ineffective forms of "resistance." They are roadblocks to solidarity, which work against a collaborative and life-giving "resistance" that helps organizations thrive, in my view. We undercut our collective power when we turn on one another rather than toward one another. This doesn't mean we become doormats, or that we don't need to use righteous anger as a source of strength, but if apathy or rage become our baseline, then I believe we are shortchanging ourselves.*

Looking ahead, Angelina envisions a future where member-driven goals steer their collective journey. By maintaining authenticity and a commitment to communication, she aims to create spaces where members can voice their aspirations for the union chapter and the College.

Angelina's leadership epitomizes the transformative potential of empathy, collaboration, and resilience. By prioritizing inclusivity and transparency, she empowers colleagues to confront challenges and drive positive change. As she continues to advocate for education workers' rights and dignity, Angelina inspires others to join in shaping a more just and equitable future. ■

## Salary Study...

Continued from front page  
was worst for those in service occupations at \$43,000, while those in healthcare, finance and computer positions were slightly closer to a livable wage.

In testimony about the salary survey to a March 26 Ways and Means Committee budget hearing, MCCC VP Joe Nardoni told legislators that to address community college salary inequities they should immediately give every full-time member a raise of \$15,000.

This would only be a start because, as Nardoni explained, at his Middlesex chapter the cost of living for a single-child, single parent household is \$124,000 while faculty salaries average \$474,000. Noting that there have been many failed searches, he said, "We can't attract good candidates from other states once the see the salary and the cost of living." ■



Massasoit Chapter President Angelina Avedano (left) and Chapter Director Lisa Coole.



# Fitzgerald Delivers Day Grievance Report

Day grievance coordinator Dennis Fitzgerald gave his annual report to the MCCC Board of Directors at its April meeting. In a presentation that lasted an hour and a half, he went through over 50 slides that explained significant situations in grievances, mediations and arbitrations.

Grievance timelines were the first topic Fitzgerald addressed. There is a 30 calendar day limit from the day the grievant knows or should have known of the act or conditions on which the grievance is based.

The process does expect that the issue be addressed informally before a formal grievance is filed. It may be difficult for parties to meet for “good faith” discussions before the 30 days expire, and extensions

can be agreed upon, but this must be done in writing. Not meeting the 30 day limit can waive the right to grieve

He cited several cases where grievants thought that they had verbal extension agreements that were denied at the arbitration step. He quoted four arbitrators’ comments on strict time limits. Notably Arbitrator Mark Irvings said, “Any oral agreement to extend time limits had to be confirmed in writing. Unusually strong contract language prevents an arbitrator from taking a ‘harmless error’ approach.”

An important part of Fitzgerald’s job is to monitor the specifics of the M002 and M004 forms that came in with the Classification Study and colleges are required to use in setting a new hire’s salary level

in a fair and equitable manner. He makes sure that the colleges are following the parameters, especially when it comes to the ability to pay above the classification in cases of diversity concerns or market demand.

He also investigates the salaries of existing employees in the work area, to see if a new hire’s classification exceeds the salary of any existing members in the work area. There is a contract provision that can adjust the pay of existing members, and he presented confidential details of a number of cases that were won. He said that 15 out of 19 received competitive adjustments.

Being paid correctly for work outside the academic year was another issue addressed. Eleven colleges have programs that require specific numbers of instructional hours during the summer such as LPN programs, the MassBay automotive and Cape Cod aviation programs. The contractual rate for such work is 1/160th of the member’s annual salary per day. And that goes to base for retirement purposes. Faculty work for two 80-day semesters, and that’s where the number comes from.

Arbitrations was another topic addressed. This is the last step in the grievance process and the decisions have been considered precedent-setting and have



MCCC Day Grievance Coordinator Dennis Fitzgerald.

influence on future, similar issue grievances. Fitzgerald discussed one arbitration where the management side presented false information that influenced a decision in their favor. Another, later arbitration was dismissed based on that falsely decided arbitration.

Fitzgerald cautioned that cases need to be thoroughly researched because “They are not going to give you all the information and they’re not going to tell the truth.”

He finished the presentation with a run down on a variety cases which he asked that the Board members keep confidential. ■

### Time Limits on Filing a Grievance

► Timeliness is of the essence in grievance processing.

- A grievance must be filed **within thirty (30) calendar days** after the grievant knows or should have known of the act or conditions on which the grievance is based. To meet this deadline, it is imperative that all grievances be investigated expeditiously.
- Failure to comply with the specified time limits can result in a **waiver** of the right to file a grievance.
- If additional time is required, make a written request for an extension of time limits and **confirm in writing that there is mutual agreement** to extend timelines.

Grievance timeline slide from Dennis Fitzgerald’s Grievance report.

## Positive Steps Being Taken As NSCC Provost Resigns

The provost at North Shore Community College who was the target of a unanimous no-confidence vote in February has resigned as of June. Chapter director Brian Falter told the Board that she has been working remotely for weeks. College president Heinemann has been working with the union to address the problems the union cited in the vote. A long process is expected but positive steps have been made. ■

### VISIT THE MCCC ONLINE!

[www.mccc-union.org](http://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.

## DCE & Day Contracts’ Status

The DCE contract was ratified on April 24 by a vote of 658 to 5 and, unlike the Day contract, funding comes from the colleges which means that they could come almost immediately. There is a 4 percent retroactive to last September and another 4 percent retroactive to January.

The Day contract funding is still held up in the legislature. It is in a supplemental budget that covers expenses from the last fiscal year, and may not be acted upon until June. There is still some negotiating going on over the distribution of the \$500 per FTE that was allotted to address some salary inequities.

With these contracts done, plans are already being made to start the process of negotiating successor agreements by putting together teams to develop

bargaining surveys for first the Day and then the DCE agreements. The intent is to have contracts resolved before the old ones have expired.

Negotiations on the Distance Education Agreement had been progressing despite management team not being fully engaged. DeAnna Putnam, MCCC team chair, reported to the Board of Directors that management has suddenly reverted to some positions that our team thought were settled. Among those issues were whether teaching a distance class was voluntary (it has long been) and on definitions of the various distance modalities. Team member Candace Shivers said, “Shame on them because we thought the process was working, but now we’re in negotiation mode.” ■

### 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/](http://mccc-union.org/ChangeMyAddress/)

# FREE! 2024

# WooSox



## Tickets Still Available

For the fourth year in a row, Margaret Wong has generously donated two (2) season tickets to see the WooSox play at Polar Park in Worcester! This year the seats are closer to home plate (Section 11, Row 15, Seats 1 & 2, on the aisle).

To reserve a game go to: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2024WooSox>

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.

I will email your tickets in advance of the game. For more information, go to <https://www.milb.com/worcester>. If you have any questions, please contact Paul Johansen (Berkshire) / [iguanaphoto@gmail.com](mailto:iguanaphoto@gmail.com)/413-212-6132.

The 2023 promotion schedule was:

- 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 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](mailto: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](mailto:Communications@mccc-union.org)

# Know Your Day Contract

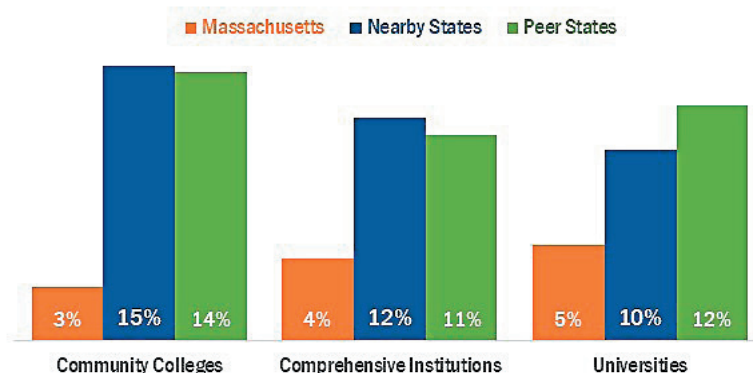
## May 2024

- May 1** President's tenure recommendations due to the employer (p. 50).
- May 15** Recommendations of the Sabbatical Leave Committee in rank order shall be concurrently submitted to the Dean(s) and the applicants Spring semester or January 1 (p. 30).
- May 21** Tenure decisions due to unit member (p. 49).
- May 27** Memorial Day observed (p. 27).
- May 30** Professional staff College service and student advisement forms (p. 65).
- May** Last Day of classes Faculty submit college service and student advisement form (p. 62).

**NOTE:** Page numbers are from the 2018–2021 contract. Most of these dates are "last date" standards and vary with the first day of classes. In many cases the action can be accomplished before the date indicated. ■

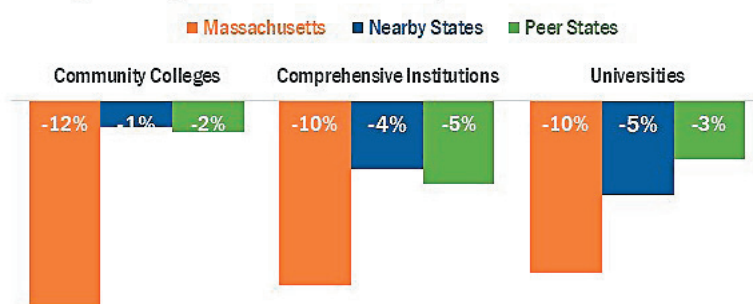
**Figure 5. MA Faculty Salaries Increased at One-fifth to One-half the Rate of Nearby and Peer States**

Change in Faculty Salaries in Current Dollars, 2016-17 to 2021-22



**Figure 6. MA Faculty Inflation-Adjusted Salaries Declined Sharply Compared to Nearby and Peer States**

Change in Faculty Salaries in Constant Dollars, 2016-17 to 2021-22



These two graphs from the ASA Research show how much Massachusetts Community College faculty pay has fallen relative to other segments of the state's higher ed. system and against our peer and nearby states. Figure 5 shows the paltry raises in our state compared to the other states. Figure 6 shows how poorly our salaries compare when adjusted for inflation. ■