

# Massachusetts Community College Council

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Joseph LeBlanc, President  
Diana (Donnie) McGee, Vice President  
Philip Mahler, Treasurer  
Phyllis Barrett, Secretary



Don Williams, Communications  
Dennis Fitzgerald, Grievance  
Joseph Rizzo, Grievance  
Hilaire Jean-Gilles, Research

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Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting  
Mechanics Place/Worcester  
Friday, January 4, 2008

**Present:** President Joe LeBlanc, Vice President Donnie McGee, Treasurer Philip Mahler, Secretary Phyllis Barrett; At-Large Members Claudine Barnes, Geri Curley, Lois Martin; MTA Consultants Katie D'Urso, Miles Stern; Communications Coordinator Don Williams; Operations Manager Phil Kennedy.

President Joe LeBlanc called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

The minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting of December 7, 2007, were approved by consensus.

## REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

President LeBlanc reported that his recent activities included meeting with PHENOM to discuss plans for the spring semester and, along with Treasurer Mahler, meeting with MTA Executive Director Ed Sullivan and Vice President Paul Toner to request additional funding for the MCCC. In addition, he and Vice President McGee met with Administration and Finance Chief Counsel David Sullivan to discuss the proposed Chapter 150E legislation. The president attended a HELC meeting devoted to the discussion of the need for coalition bargaining and also met with chapter leaders from Mass Bay at MTA to discuss strategies for addressing the situation there; follow up meetings are planned. The president also presented budget suggestions at the recent Finance Committee meeting.

Some of President LeBlanc's current priorities are reviewing the MCCC *Policy Manual*, publicizing the Lemieux and Butler Awards, and identifying candidates for the NEA Emerging Leaders Program. He would also like to assist in the training of the DCE Negotiating Team and to address the continuing controversy over the adjunct vote as well as issues that appear in the Summit Task Force Reports. And, of course, Mass Bay will continue to be a major focus of his attention. In addition, President LeBlanc will continue to push the Classification Task Force initiative, to serve on the governor's Readiness Task Force and on the New Chancellor Search Committee, and to participate in PHENOM and the in-state tuition coalition.

President LeBlanc is planning several trips to the chapters this spring and will also host a dinner for chapter presidents and hold cluster meetings for adjuncts and for new hires. He hopes to expand the MCCC online forums to include adjuncts and other groups, and he will continue to chair the Adjunct Ad Hoc Committee.

## REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Vice President Donnie McGee reported that the huge structural budget gap remains, despite the state's having improved its national ranking in job growth from 48<sup>th</sup> or 49<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> in 2007. Capital funding requests soar, but there is no indication that any funding is currently available for capital improvements at the state and community colleges. The vice president also reported that a state commission has endorsed Governor Patrick's plan to close corporate loopholes and raise revenues by about \$400 million. Regarding the libertarian ballot initiative to eliminate the income tax, the vice president reported that

MTA has conceded that sufficient legitimate signatures have been gathered, so new approaches will be launched to fight this dangerous initiative. Vice President McGee thanked the nearly thirty MCCC volunteers who were willing to review signatures over the holidays had that proved a fruitful endeavor.

In her legislative update, Vice President McGee discussed the legislation geared towards amending Chapter 150E, the contract funding process (H 2697). As a follow up to the recent meeting with Attorney Sullivan at Administration and Finance, the vice president has sent him a letter expressing her concern that the current bill does little to resolve the MCCC's specific contract funding concerns. She would like to meet with other higher education union leaders to discuss the matter, and Consultants D'Urso and Stern pointed out that HELC is a forum for this discussion.

Vice President McGee has been asked to attend another House Ways and Means hearing on the GPO/WEP issue in January. On the Optional Retirement Plan issue, she participated in a conference call with Public Service House Chair Jay Kaufman and MTA's Jack Flannagan regarding an oversight hearing and the drafting of appropriate legislation. MCCC members will testify at this hearing; others from Human Resources and the State Retirement Board will be among the presenters as well. Rep. Kaufman's office will decide which committee will be most appropriate to handle the hearing. Vice President McGee noted that she has been asked to join the PHENOM group, which next meets on January 14. She also reported that she and President LeBlanc visited the Berkshire Chapter recently. Finally, the vice president expressed her hope that more higher ed members would volunteer for the MTA's Candidate Evaluation Teams, given the number of upcoming elections.

#### **REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

Treasurer Phil Mahler reported that financial comparisons indicate that net income is up modestly over last year. He also reported that he and the office staff believe they have created a system that will allow for more frequent reminder letters to past-due accounts and the generation of ineligible lists on a more frequent and regular basis. The treasurer has also spent a lot of time generating reports for Alexander, Aronson and Finney, the auditors, concerning membership reconciliation with MTA. This is a problematic area given the fact that the two unions use disparate systems for membership. The auditors are expected in the office this coming Monday.

Treasurer Mahler also reported that he has done extensive work on a new look for the MCCC Web Site, based on a design and methodology by Gail Guarino and her web design class at Cape Cod. The new design needs some review still before going live. Vice President Donnie McGee complimented the treasurer and web master for his work on this project, and Lois Martin argued that the position of web master should be a separate, stipended position, given the size of the job. President LeBlanc suggested that it may well be time to review all of the current positions with an eye to possible reconfigurations and assignments of duties in the future.

Finally, Treasurer Mahler proposed that the three office staff members attend an Excel training in Worcester on March 25 at a cost of \$128/per individual. The committee supported the idea.

#### **REPORT OF THE MTA CONSULTANTS**

Consultant Katie D'Urso shared the news that the college presidents' counsel, Haidee Morris, is leaving in order to become the general counsel for the Massachusetts Federation of Teachers. She also announced that Tim Fitzgerald, the first president of the MCCC, will serve as the Interim Executive Director of MTA, replacing retiring Ed Sullivan, until a permanent successor is chosen. On the '03 Buyback issue, Consultant D'Urso reported that, unfortunately, litigation will be needed to insist on counting full years, rather than number of days of service, towards retirement; the campuses have handled

this tallying inconsistently. Consultant D’Urso also reported that there are a number of new arbitrations, though several at Holyoke have been consolidated at least; more requests for arbitrations are anticipated out of Mass Bay as well. Various current grievance issues were discussed, and Vice President McGee presented Consultant D’Urso, who is just back from sick leave, with a fruit basket.

Consultant Miles Stern reported that he has been devoting much of his time to the situation at Mass Bay. There was a strategy meeting at the MTA on December 19, involving chapter leaders, members of the MCCC leadership, and representatives from MTA. The chapter is looking for support from the other chapters, but it was agreed that a strategy needs to be developed. Consultant Stern also reported that the Division of Labor Relations—formerly the Massachusetts Labor Relations Commission—looks to be more efficient at processing prohibited practice charges. Regarding the unit determination/CAS petitions, Consultant Stern reported that he recently received a list of 23 new disputed positions from Day Grievance Coordinator Dennis Fitzgerald. Coordinator Fitzgerald has expressed support for the recent decision of the mediator on the backlog of old CAS cases. With Haidee Morris’s departure, it will be necessary to identify the players and the process going forward.

## **COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

Coordinator Don Williams shared a copy of the current edition of the newsletter. For the next issue, he’s planning an article based on Research Coordinator Hilaire Jean-Gilles’s recent report. There will also be a piece on DCE negotiations as well as a letter to the editor from Betsy Smith, an adjunct instructor at Cape Cod. Coordinator Williams asked Consultant Stern to submit a brief article on the recent changes to the names and functions of the various labor-related entities in the Commonwealth, like the former Massachusetts Labor Relations Commission (MLRC). Claudine Barnes reminded the coordinator to include an announcement regarding the NEA Emerging Leaders program, and a piece on the MCCC-PAC was suggested as another possibility. In a future issue, Coordinator Williams plans to report on the changes to the MCCC Web Site.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. DCE Bargaining Team**

Several candidates have been interviewed so far, including two during the day today.

**MOTION:** Each DCE team member will be awarded a stipend equivalent to one section of reassigned time during the spring semester, funded at Step 2 of the DCE pay scale (Curley/Barnes). **PASSED.**

## **DISCUSSION/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **A. Mission Statement Revision Process**

Claudine Barnes reported that a draft of a proposed revision to the current MCCC mission statement, based on the various discussions and exercises held in recent months, will be presented to the Board at the January meeting. The next step will be to develop a plan for sharing the draft with the chapters and soliciting further feedback. Claudine agreed to write a piece on the issue and the process for the newsletter.

### **B. Adjunct Vote**

The Executive Committee continued its ongoing exploration of the implications of changes to the value of the adjunct vote and of more general ways in which to better serve the interests of adjunct members.

**MOTION:** Recommend that the MCCC Bylaws be amended to include two at-large adjunct members on the Board of Directors, to be elected each spring (Curley/Barnes). **PASSED.**

**C. Graduation Retention Rates Summit Report**

Claudine Barnes reported that she is currently working on the conclusion of the report. The draft should go out later this week for feedback.

**D. Under Age Student Summit Report**

Consultant Stern reported that he is working on a written report based on discussions at the summit, which he hopes to complete later this month.

**E. Higher Education Bond Bill**

President LeBlanc suggested that the MCCC consider preparing a press release on the bond bill in order to insure that the union is part of the conversation. He will also be bringing a motion to the Board this month.

**F. Income Tax Ballot Questions**

The consultants reported that the MTA continues to strategize about how to fight the initiatives proposing the elimination of the state income tax, something which would devastate public K-12 and higher ed, among many other essential services.

**G. The State Budget**

Vice President McGee noted both the alarming structural deficit in the state budget and the controversy surrounding the governor's proposal to license casino gambling in hopes of generating new sources of revenue. There was some discussion of the MTA position on casinos, and it was agreed that a discussion on the issue would be appropriate for an upcoming Board meeting.

**H. Folder Distribution List**

Treasurer Mahler shared the list of individuals currently receiving Executive Committee and Board of Directions folders/materials. After a review, the committee agreed that the list seemed accurate and complete.

On a point of personal privilege, Secretary Phyllis Barrett announced that she will not be running for reelection this spring. She apologized for the lateness of the announcement, noting that it had been a hard decision. She encouraged anyone who might be interested in the position to contact her with any questions about the job and said that she will be happy to help with the transition to her successor.

The meeting adjourned at 3:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Phyllis Barrett, Secretary