

Massachusetts Community College Council

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

Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting
Mechanics Place/Worcester
Friday, February 1, 2008

Present: President Joe LeBlanc, Vice President Donnie McGee, Treasurer Philip Mahler, Secretary Phyllis Barrett; At-Large Members Claudine Barnes, Lois Martin; MTA Consultants Katie D'Urso, Miles Stern; Communications Coordinator Don Williams. **Not Present:** At-Large Member Geri Curley.

President Joe LeBlanc called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

The minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting of January 4, 2008, were approved, by consensus.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

President LeBlanc has been working with PHENOM on the Valentine's Day Spring Kickoff at the State House. Activities will include visits with Ways and Means Committee members and a brief speakers' program. There will be another, larger event on April 16; in addition, affordability hearings will be held on several college campuses this spring, and work will continue on establishing campus councils. President LeBlanc also reported that the Classification Task Force will present a proposal concerning a salary upgrade to the BHE Finance Committee on February 22. The president also met with a group of state leaders at the BHE recently to discuss a concern that the in-state tuition law is not being implemented uniformly for students who are legal residents. President LeBlanc also attended a hearing on the governor's education reform bill, and he continues to participate in the governor's Readiness Project, where he is advocating for the transfer credits issue and other issues. Both President LeBlanc and Vice President McGee, along with MTA Director of Higher Education Arthur Pippo, attended Governor Patrick's State of the State Address--an excellent speech except for the governor's proposal to raise our health contribution levels.

President LeBlanc reported that he met with Dana Leccese of the Middlesex County District Attorney's office to discuss the threatening emails sent to chapter leaders at Mass Bay in December. It has been determined that, while troubling, these messages do not meet the current threshold for investigation by a grand jury. To date, the college has not identified the person or persons responsible for the emails. The president thanked chapter leaders and members from Bristol, Bunker Hill, Holyoke, Mt. Wachusett, Northern Essex, North Shore, Quinsigamond, and, of course, Mass Bay for their participation in the picketing of the Mass Bay Board of Trustees meeting on January 29. Many members have also emailed trustees in support of the chapter, and the MTA leadership has also been very supportive.

President LeBlanc chaired the Adjunct Ad Hoc Committee meeting this week. He reported that the committee endorsed the Executive Committee/Board of Directors motion to create two new seats on the Board for part-time representatives. The committee also discussed negotiations priorities, the decline of tenure track positions, and campus communication issues. The push is on to enlist representatives for the committee from currently unrepresented chapters; in addition, President LeBlanc and the committee are also talking about starting to contact current DCE agency fee payers, in an effort to convert them to union membership. President LeBlanc also reported that the committee praised the adjuncts at Mass Bay for their courageous support of political action there. The Adjunct Ad Hoc Committee's next meeting is on March 5.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Vice President Donnie McGee pointed out that the recession is only exacerbating an already difficult financial situation in the state. The latest bad news is Governor Patrick's call for an increase in state workers' contribution to their health care coverage costs. This is a 10% increase in the rate, but a 67% increase in actual dollars--something the MCCC and the MTA have repeatedly fought during previous

administrations. The Strategic Action Committee will be working hard on a grass roots effort for constituents to lobby their legislators on this issue. In other news, the governor's budget, as widely reported in the media, counts on revenues from casino licenses and the closing of corporate tax loopholes to address the structural deficit. Meanwhile, libertarian ballot initiatives seek to eliminate the state income tax, a move that would surely increase the deficit.

In her legislative update, Vice President McGee reported that the Adjunct Health Insurance Bill (S 1587) has now moved from the Health Care Financing Committee to the Senate Ways and Means Committee. The Adjunct Pension Bill is at House Ways and Means; the vice president will be investigating whether or not it is likely to be moved forward. The bill amending Chapter 150E, the Contract Funding Bill (H 2697), is being discussed at both MTA and HELC. Meetings are planned with MCCC's lobbyist, Charlie Flaherty, and the presidents' lobbyist, Michael Muse, to discuss our concerns with the bill and to review models from Maine and Maryland. Vice President McGee was in Washington, D.C., again recently, attending a House Ways and Means Hearing on GPO/WEP. She reported that there are now 336 sponsors, but that it seems wise to wait for a change in the national administration before making a major push for this legislation. The grassroots effort will continue in order to be ready when the time comes.

Vice President McGee said that the next SAC meeting will be held on February 20 or 21. A meeting of the Optional Retirement Plan Committee is also planned for late February or early March. She summarized her numerous recent activities, including attending an NEA Leadership Conference in Brooklyn, which she described as a great networking opportunity and a source of information from other states and systems. Finally, Vice President McGee announced that a student from Massasoit has applied for an MCCC Legislative Internship this spring.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Treasurer Phil Mahler reported that the office is focusing on getting an audit this year. The treasurer also continues to try to mechanize various activities in the office, including entering data for teaching lists. If this kind of task can be expedited, weeks of the office staff members' time can be saved. The MCCC continues to be in a very healthy financial position.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

Secretary Barrett reported that the revised *MCCC Leadership Directory* will go out tomorrow morning.

REPORT OF THE MTA CONSULTANTS

Consultant Katie D'Urso reported that a recent court decision found that email sent at work which is not work related can be "discoverable" under the Freedom of Information Act. She counseled unit members to assume that the employer or others could be privy to these communications. Consultant D'Urso also noted that Roxbury Community College reports that the overpayment/underpayment issue there has been resolved; she is waiting for confirmation from Peter Tsaffaras at the Board of Higher Education.

Consultant Miles Stern reported that he is just back from eight days of Uniserv training at NEA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. He reported that NEA offers many organizing tools that could help the MCCC with membership issues and bargaining team and adjunct committee work, as well as resources about benefits of membership, and lots of human resources for any issue that might come up. More specifically, he got ideas for implementing the MCCC's NEA grant, and he learned about other grants, some of which are available to individual members. Information on Student Achievement and Learning and Leadership Grants can be found at <http://www.neafoundation.org/grants/htm>. Information on NEA's campaign for college affordability (an interest shared by Massachusetts' PHENOM) can be found at <http://www.collegeaffordabilityconcernsme.org/cac/> and <http://www.nea.org/collegeaffordability/index.html>. Consultant Stern was also pleased to learn that the NEA has pledged a million dollars to help build the Martin Luther King Jr. National Memorial Project; information about the project is available at <http://www.mlkmemorial.org/>. The conference also gave Consultant Stern an opportunity to talk to people from other states about the underage student issue, including the way home schoolers are taking advantage of the availability of community colleges.

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Coordinator Don Williams reported that the February issue of the newsletter has just gone to the printer. It includes an article on Research Coordinator Hilaire Jean-Gilles' recent report to the Board, including information about the growing number of adjunct hires and the growing phenomenon of colleges hiring above the Classification Study grid. Other articles introduce the new DCE Negotiating Team and promote this spring's Teaching, Learning, and Student Development Conference.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Proposed Bylaw Change: Executive Committee Composition

MOTION: Delete the following language from Article VII, Section 1. A, of the MCCC Bylaws:

“No director shall serve on the Executive Committee if an officer of the Council comes from his/her campus.”

Rationale: The well-being of the MCCC has always depended on leadership development. It is often the case that a promising, potential leader develops on a particular campus because there is already another MCCC leader there.

The policy in VII, 1. A is antithetical to the leadership development of this potential leader, because it prevents this MCCC member from the important experience provided by service on the Executive Committee.

This policy was created when the union was new and experiencing growing pains. We have a mature organization today, with a long collegial tradition, even with the contention of electoral candidates and discussion of polarizing issues.

Further, neither the Executive Committee nor the Board ever places one chapter above another, and in fact no substantive action can be done by the Executive Committee in any case, except on grievance matters. It only recommends actions to the full Board of Directors.

The three Executive Committee at-large members are elected from 15 chapter directors by the entire Board of Directors. The Board has the wisdom and experience to make the best selections unfettered by this dated and counter-productive policy (Mahler/Martin). **PASSED.**

DISCUSSION/ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Mass Bay

President LeBlanc reported that Mass Bay chapter leaders have the support of the MTA leadership and have been to Ashburton Place recently for consultation. The picketing of the Mass Bay Board of Trustees Meeting by MCCC members from across the state on January 29 also demonstrated support for the chapter. Consultant Stern is gathering information about the community college budgets in light of the findings concerning the use of consultants at Mass Bay.

B. Adjunct Health Insurance Initiatives

President LeBlanc reported that MTA Director of Higher Ed Arthur Pippo and others met with the Health Care Financing Committee earlier this week, and it appears that adjuncts in our system should be eligible for state contributions towards their participation in the new universal health care system. MTA Attorney Matthew Jones will talk to officials at GIC concerning their interpretation of the law.

C. Chapter 150E

Vice President McGee reiterated her concerns about the wording of the current proposal to amend language in the collective bargaining law. She shared models from other states which allow for earlier bargaining and earlier funding. As noted earlier, the shortcomings of the legislation are being discussed at HELC and elsewhere

D. DCE Demand to Bargain

Consultant Stern has sent a Demand to Bargain the next DCE Contract to Mount Wachusett Community College President Dan Asquino, who represents the college presidents. There has not yet been a reply.

E. NEA Higher Education Conference

It was noted that this year's NEA Higher Education Conference begins on March 28, which happens to be an MCCC Board meeting date. Several Executive Committee and Board members are planning to attend. Unfortunately, no easy solution to the scheduling conflict presented itself. There may be another discussion of the problem.

F. MCCC Early Contact Program

President LeBlanc clarified that the Early Contact meetings for new full and/or part-time unit members should be conducted primarily by the chapters with support from statewide officers, the coordinators, and the consultants. The proposal form may need some editing.

G. NEA Emerging Leaders Academy

President LeBlanc urged participation in the Emerging Leaders Academy. The deadline for applications is February 20.

H. Board Room Audio Visual Needs

President LeBlanc will appoint an *ad hoc* committee from the Board to make recommendations regarding upgrading the technological capabilities of the Board Room.

I. HELC Coalition Letter to Governor Patrick

President LeBlanc reported that HELC has invited Governor Patrick to talk to higher education union leaders before the next rounds of bargaining commence.

J. Graduation and Retention Rates Summit Report

Claudine Barnes reported that she has sent a draft of a written report on the Graduation and Retention Rates Summit to Vice President McGee and Consultant Stern for their review.

K. MCCC Mission Statement

President LeBlanc will be including the draft of proposed changes to the language of the MCCC Mission Statement in one of his weekly updates to members.

L. Press Wrap Up

President LeBlanc referred to articles in the folders concerning the demonstration at Mass Bay, labor union support for the governor's casino plans, and the need for community college funding.

M. Nursing Salaries Negotiations Issue

At-Large Member Lois Martin shared the concerns of the Massasoit Chapter's Executive Committee about the negotiation of nursing salaries on the campuses. President LeBlanc said that he will reconvene the Day Negotiating Team to discuss this and other problematic issues. He asked that specific concerns about possible violations of MTA or NEA resolutions be put in writing so that the team can review these and respond.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Phyllis Barrett, Secretary