

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, December 7, 2007

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

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

The Order of Business was adopted, by consensus.

The minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting of November 9, 2007, were approved, by consensus.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

President LeBlanc reported that he is encouraged by the progress being made by the Classification Task Force, whose members include Board of Higher Education Chair Fred Clark and Chancellor Pat Plummer. There will be a follow-up meeting with Chair Clark before the holidays to plan and begin to implement a classification strategy. President LeBlanc thanked Research Coordinator Hilaire Jean-Gilles and Presidents' Counsel Haidee Morris for gathering statistical and anecdotal evidence illustrating the difficulty the colleges are having hiring new faculty and professional staff under the current salary structure.

President LeBlanc also attended the recent meeting of the Presidents' Labor Relations Committee, where the Classification Task Force, the practice of hiring off the grid, CAS petitions, licenses and certifications which have yet to be assigned point values, and various legislative issues were all discussed. President LeBlanc has also participated in meetings of the PHENOM Steering Committee, to plan for continued advocacy for public higher education, and of the Governor's Readiness Project, to discuss collaboration between public and private higher education. President LeBlanc has also recently been named to the Ad Hoc Chancellor Search Task Force. He continues as temporary chair of the MCCC's Adjunct Ad Hoc Committee. In addition, he attended the Under Age Student Summit and the recent meeting of the Professional Staff Committee.

Regarding the situation at Mass Bay, the president reported that a Board of Trustees-appointed "independent commission" will be charged with exploring the chapter's list of particulars and related issues. In addition, an appeal is pending at the Secretary of State's office concerning the college administration's failure to respond to some of the MCCC's information requests. President LeBlanc, BHE Chair Clark, and Chancellor Plummer met with college president Carole M. Berotte-Joseph recently concerning the nursing department issues. President LeBlanc also reported that several chapter leaders and other members received disturbing, anonymous email messages this week; the police in several local communities have been contacted.

President LeBlanc has visited several chapters this semester—including North Shore, Cape Cod, Northern Essex, Massasoit, and Berkshire—in addition to his frequent trips to the troubled Mass Bay campus. He continues to work with the Greenfield chapter on contract enforcement issues and gave kudos to chapter president Rosemarie Freeland for her efforts. President LeBlanc and Vice President McGee will be visiting Quinsigamond soon, and they welcome invitations to other chapters for the spring semester. The president also announced that a solicitation letter on behalf of the MCCC-PAC will be going out in early 2008.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Vice President McGee highlighted the issue of libertarian ballot initiatives aimed at eliminating the state income tax. MCCC/MTA volunteers will be needed to fight legislation that would result in severe cuts to already meager revenues for public education, police and fire, environmental protections, and human services programs. The MCCC Strategic Action Committee's goal is to have two volunteers from each chapter participating in the effort.

In her legislative update, Vice President McGee reported that she met with Sarah Nolan, research director for Rep. Patricia Walrath, to discuss the adjunct faculty health insurance bill, which is awaiting review by the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing; she will contact her again in January. The Peace Corps Creditable Service legislation is currently awaiting review in Senate Ways and Means; there is a possibility that it may be amended to include only the addition of higher education faculty to the previous Peace Corps law. Concerning the Amendment to Chapter 150E, Vice President McGee is awaiting research out of Rep. Jay Kaufmann's office on the contract funding process. She recently spoke to the college presidents' lobbyist, Michael Muse, who indicated a willingness to work with the MCCC to support this legislation; she has meetings with Muse and with David Sullivan from Administration and Finance next week on this issue. Vice President McGee will also be meeting with Public Service House Chair Jay Kaufman next week regarding scheduling an oversight hearing and drafting appropriate legislation on the Optional Retirement Plan issue. And on the GPO/WEP issue, the vice president met with Sarah Nathan at MTA Communications to explain how these policies impact MCCC members in particular.

Vice President McGee also announced that the deadline for applications for MCCC Legislative Internships for the spring semester is February 8 and urged members to recruit potential interns before this semester ends. She also noted that there is a very active summer internship program available for students who are too busy to participate during the academic year.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Treasurer Phil Mahler reported that the Finance Committee will meet again this week to continue to work on next year's budget. President LeBlanc will attend and present a proposal concerning additional reassigned time for chapters. The committee will also discuss a possible increase in the mileage rate reimbursement. They have reviewed the Strategic Action budget and decided that the return on investment in that area warrants the admittedly high expense. Treasurer Mahler noted that the MCCC has not yet developed the Whistle Blower and Conflict of Interest policies recommended by the auditors; President LeBlanc will contact the committee charged with developing these policies. All payments authorized by the Board at the November meeting—in support of the Teaching, Learning, and Student Development Conference; the MCCC PAC; and chapter support for STCC—have been made. Once the exact figure is determined for the donation to the Quincy Education Association—i.e. whatever will bring the total of chapter and local contributions to a total of \$4617, a dollar per member—President LeBlanc will write a letter to accompany the check.

Regarding the recent receipt of the NEA grant for \$10,000, Treasurer Mahler asked that expenditures related to the grant be designated as such to ensure appropriate record keeping. Treasurer Mahler and

President LeBlanc will go to Boston this week to continue the dialogue about the appropriateness of more MTA support for the MCCC. Noting that MTA did produce DCE membership materials this year, a real cost savings, Treasurer Mahler cited the need for their support for the expense of maintaining the DCE database, the new credit card dues payment option, and generally high personnel costs.

Treasurer Mahler also reminded committee members that the Day contract calls for the establishment of a joint committee to determine the ground rules for electronic communication. It was suggested that he consider making a brief written proposal to management with his recommendations on the issue in the hope of simplifying and expediting this matter.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

Secretary Phyllis Barrett reported that she had received clarification on an item mentioned in the “Campus Roundup” section of the November Board minutes. According to Massasoit chapter president Kenn Anania, negotiations on an agreement on nursing salaries there have been placed in abeyance.

REPORT OF THE MTA CONSULTANTS

President LeBlanc noted that Consultant Katie D’Urso is on sick leave until January 2. Consultant Miles Stern is attending a mandatory staff meeting at MTA today to prepare for a possible ballot challenge to the Small Government Act Initiative discussed by the vice president earlier. This legislation would have dire implications for the state budget and for public higher education specifically. Consultant Stern submitted a written report outlining recent developments at Mass Bay as well as bargaining issues at Greenfield and Holyoke. President LeBlanc expressed his thanks to Consultant Stern for his support in the continuing crisis at Mass Bay and for the extra work he has taken on while Consultant D’Urso is sidelined.

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Coordinator Don Williams reported that the November issue is out. In December, he plans a feature article on new Board of Higher Education Chair Fred Clark’s visit to the MCCC Board meeting last month. Another possibility is an article on the ongoing project of revising the MCCC Mission Statement. Claudine Barnes also suggested coverage of the issue of problems in transferring credits between the colleges in the state system: For example, students in Early Childhood curricula at the community colleges are having their course credits rejected at the state colleges.

In his capacity as a higher education representative on the MTA Candidate Evaluation Team, Coordinator Williams will be interviewing candidates vying for the vacant state representative seat in the Swampscott/Lynn area. Coordinator Williams also reported that he has prepared the mailing list for the holiday cards.

NEW BUSINESS

A. NEA Higher Education Conference

MOTION: The President is authorized to award a total of \$3200 for up to five members to attend the NEA Higher Education Conference in Washington, D.C. in late March (Mahler/Martin). **PASSED.**

B. DCE Bargaining Team Formation

There was a discussion of the appropriate make-up of the committee. The bylaws stipulate a minimum of five DCE members. Some applicants are being interviewed today.

DISCUSSION/ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Mission Statement Revision Process

Claudine Barnes distributed a draft of a couple of possible revisions to the “Purpose” section of the Mission Statement based on the exercise conducted at last month’s Board of Directors Meeting. She has more notes which she will share soon, and the conversation will continue.

B. Bargaining Summit

President LeBlanc thanked Day Team members Kathleen McDonough and Gail Stuart for attending the recent MTA Bargaining Summit. Kathleen submitted a written report summarizing the day’s discussions. She noted that most of the participants were members of UMass affiliates with somewhat different bargaining priorities from those of the relatively few community college and state college participants.

C. Budget Priorities

President LeBlanc asked committee members to think about any budget priorities which may not yet have been shared with the treasurer and the Finance Committee. Vice President McGee noted a possible need for funding to address the tax initiative threats. Another topic that came to mind was the possible need for funds to participate in 50th Anniversary events for the community colleges in light of BHE Chair Clark’s remarks last month. It was agreed that both would be one-time rather than ongoing items and would therefore properly come from reserves if needed.

D. Online Forum(s)

President LeBlanc reported that the chapter presidents’ online forum is now up and running. Other fairly small group forums will be launched in early 2008. Once the technology has been tested and ground rules developed, forums with larger memberships are planned.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for January 4, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,



Phyllis Barrett, Secretary