



MCCC NEWS



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State Employees Ponder Social Security Inequities

By Carole Dupont, SAC Regional Coordinator and Sandy Cutler, SAC Co-chair

More than two hundred concerned state workers gathered at the STCC amphitheater on Wednesday, Nov. 20th to listen to the grim impact that the GPO/WEP Social Security amendments will have on their future retirement plans. The GPO/WEP will dramatically reduce or totally eliminate their social security and/or spousal benefits upon retirement.

The overflow audience listened attentively to Congressman Richard Neal and MTA retirement specialist JoAnn Fitzgerald as they presented a historical perspective on the GPO/WEP. The presentation ended with a portentous outlook confronting state workers who are planning to receive earned Social Security benefits.

Congressman Richard Neal, member of the powerful ways & means committee, momentarily buoyed up the gloomy atmosphere with his "I'm on your side in this issue & will try to steer the Social Security Fairness Act of 2001 to the floor for a vote".

Organizer Carole Dupont, SAC Regional Coordinator, along with the STCC Professional Association & GPO/WEP committee members provided informational handouts as well as a strategy planning guides. These guides provide information to assist all state employees, impacted by these discriminatory laws, to organize a massive grassroots campaign to eliminate these discriminatory laws.

Retirees and future retirees were invited to give testimony on how these laws have impacted their retirement.

Betty Cooley, a retired STCC word processor, was expecting \$468.00 a month in SS benefits, however, because of these laws she receives \$156.00 a month. Betty will be denied earned SS benefits of \$3744.00 each year. Professor Marie Greco will be deprived of all her husband's SS benefits once she retires & begins to collect her state pension. This denial of benefits, earned by her husband, amounts to more than \$150,000, in 20 years.

Unfortunately most folks have no idea how this unconscionable law and its implications, will affect their lives and their families until they retire. It is important for workers, vested in state pension plans, to be reminded that the Social Security benefits expected are not necessarily the true benefits due. Each employee, before retiring, should consult with the social security office and ask about the GPO/WEP and how these laws will affect their individual and spousal social security benefits. ■



Carole Dupont and Congressman Richard Neal



Attendees at GPO/WEP STCC conference



Professor Carol Mathison, President of STCC/MCCC Chapter

Spring '03 For Student Evaluation

The MCCC's Day Bargaining Team and the Board of Higher Education have agreed to pilot the new student evaluation forms next spring.

Under a Memorandum of Agreement (page 113) in the current Collective Bargaining Agreement, the MCCC and employer agreed to "establish a committee to recommend to the Board of Higher Education a new, nationally validated student evaluation form." The employer also agreed to bargain the impact of the implementation of the form after its approval by the Committee, the Chancellor and the BHE.

On Oct. 31, the parties agreed it was too late to fully implement the new instrument this semester. The forms, which were recommended by the Joint Labor/Management Committee, were developed by the University of Washington's Office of Educational Assessment (OEA).

The new system will use Form A for small lecture/discussion courses. The University of Washington's OEA says the form's "items emphasize the clarity and quality of the information transmitted (in the course), as well as the nature of the interaction between the instructor and student." Form A has 31 questions.

Form H is to be used for lab sections
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Rick Doud,
MCCC President

Unfortunately the reality of the November 5th election is starting to sink in. We need to move on, form new alliances while continuing to foster old ones, and confront the potential difficulties we are sure to face in the next

four years. The number of students and the needs of those students will continue to grow. We must be prepared to engage in the battles that await us, in order to insure the survival of our system of public higher education.

The immediate problem is twofold. First, the voters have spoken, and installed a governor who has vowed not to raise taxes. Second, the state is facing an estimated 1.5 billion dollar deficit for the next fiscal year. If the political reality is no tax increases, the only outcome is for the state to slash higher ed budgets even more drastically than we have already endured over the last couple of years. We must anticipate another round of attacks on our 85/15 health care contribution, as predictably the new governor will attempt to resolve the fiscal crisis by more indirect taxes on state workers, while refusing to raise revenues from private sector sources.

In addition to attacks on state workers, we must stop, or at least minimize,

the most predictable and yet most harmful "solution" to the state's budget woes – to make the students pay for the fiscal crisis by once again raising tuition and fees. This alternative has been and continues to be counterproductive. We need to continue to educate our elected officials to the fact that for long run economic growth, we must have a highly educated work force. If we continue on this path of ever increasing tuition and fees, we will continue to price students out of a college degree. Students who are most in need rely on the community colleges to give them a leg up in society. Placing these students' possible academic careers in jeopardy, while diminishing our state's ability to sustain long term economic growth is certainly shortsighted, counterproductive fiscal policy.

One hope is that the new governor becomes educated quickly. Perhaps he will come to understand that the community college system is the engine of growth for our state's economy. As this fiscal crisis unfolds on Beacon Hill, we will undoubtedly ask for your continued efforts to make phone calls, to write letters, and to talk to your local senators and representatives. We will need to pick our battles wisely, as there will be many to be fought. We have been on this roller coaster before (remember the Weld furloughs), but we have survived and at times even thrived through it all. We will again. With our united political effort and determination, we will get this roller coaster accelerating upward again, ensuring access to an affordable, high quality education that the citizens of our Commonwealth deserve.

In solidarity, Rick

In the spring of 1985, when I was a freshman in college, I was attending a community college in central Illinois. I was able to get a part-time job on campus as a janitor. It was pretty dreary work—washing chalkboards, picking up classrooms, cleaning toilets, but that didn't bother me. It was a joy to spend my whole day on campus, where, between classes, I was involved in student activities, where I could study, where I could socialize with other students and my teachers.

I worked late afternoons/early evenings four days a week, but on Fridays, I worked from 5 to 10. On Fridays, it was my job to vacuum the hallways of the school. This meant eight different divisions on two floors. It was boring but easy work. I could guide a self-propelled machine up and down corridors, reflecting upon the week that had passed, listening to music, thinking that though "this job sucked," I was, by going to college, on my way to a better life.

It was there, pushing the vacuum cleaner outside a closed faculty office door, that the feelings I had about my college experience coalesced into an ambition. I wanted to become a community college teacher—for all the reasons that made being a community college student so exciting. I never deviated once from that ambition over the next five years of graduate and undergraduate work. The vision of spending my workdays in a bright, exciting, intellectually stimulating environment stayed alive in my mind's eye.

As of this writing, this is a dream that has yet to materialize, and I find myself facing a picture I never could have imagined. If anyone had told me I'd still be an adjunct after all this time, I wouldn't have believed them. If anyone had told me I would have borne the false promises and taunts of future jobs, the endless praise for work well done, as well as an incomprehensible number of insults and injuries, I wouldn't have believed them. If anyone told me that doing good work, no matter how good, or how much, or for how long would simply not matter, I probably would have laughed.

When I was a student janitor, sweeping floors, I dreamed and believed that the days when I became a college graduate and, hence, a community college teacher, my life would be better. I would have achieved the better life that colleges promise students—again and again—when they register for classes.

The recent victories of the janitors in Boston hit a nerve with me. When I was a janitor, I had insurance through the college while I worked to become a teacher. Now as a teacher, I work harder and longer than any fully insured full-time faculty person, and I do not have insurance from the colleges where I work. Taking these two professions, a janitor and a college teacher, which requires more training? Which profession performs the more important work? Which profession has more status? Which profession should mandate, by nature of the training, status and work, decent pay and decent benefits?

This past summer, I heard that a long-term adjunct faced a severe medical crisis without any kind of health insurance. I heard the local chapter of the union sent, as a show of concern and support, a fruit basket. Recently I stepped into the elevator of a school with a long-term adjunct who was, this day at least, leaning on a cane.

This teacher had a reasonably serious back injury, no medical insurance, and a desperate hope that it would get better on its own.

I have since come to ask myself some questions about this system and all those who make it up. I have found my own answers, as all good teachers encourage us to, but I would like to pose the questions to all you fine people. Ready, boys and girls? It's time to put on our critical thinking caps

What kind of profession, and what kind of people, put forth such a system, accept it, tolerate it, promote it—when all the damage done is known by all—while at the same time preaching about justice, fairness, equality, opportunity? What is teaching really worth when the many teachers who do the bulk of the teaching can be (are) treated so poorly?

Well, all is not without hope for those of us out there who became teachers because we hoped for a "real" job someday. If you would like to have a job that gives raises, where you have a chance to get health insurance through your employer, where you will find hard work will be rewarded, cheer up.

The janitors are hiring.

Michael Dubson is an adjunct English instructor working at colleges in the Boston area. He is editor of **Ghosts in the Classroom, an anthology of writings by and about adjuncts. ■*

SAC REPORT

Romney Makes Nice With The 'Gang Of Two'

By Joe LeBlanc, MCCC Vice President

The campaign is over, and Mitt Romney is now speaking with the 'Gang of Two.' House Speaker Tom Finneran and Senate President Robert Travaglini, who were lampooned in one of Romney's most pointed campaign ads, are now pretending to play nicely with the incoming governor. Facing a deficit of more than \$1.5 billion in FY04, Romney is going to need all the help he can get in slashing state spending.

Finneran, who will probably be the most powerful man in the State House in 2003, continues to merit front page headlines. Speaking to an association of retailers, he said new taxes are off the table for next year. A few days later, he said the state must cut its MassHealth budget. Medicaid now costs the state \$6.1 billion and is increasing by more than 10 percent per year.

Meanwhile, public higher education may be cut by ten percent or more in FY04 continuing a multiyear decline in state aid. Since FY01 higher education programs have been cut by more than \$65 million. Reference material budget lines have been decimated and funding for salary increases promised to more than 20 higher ed. unions has been eliminated.

Michael Widmer, president of the Mass. Taxpayers Foundation, said, "The state is in deep, deep trouble," adding that government services will likely be hit the hardest. "The brunt of this budget-balancing exercise is going to have to fall on cutting programs and services." Source: State House News Service

Even the already tight and expensive housing market is going to get worse, as more than 16,000 inmates are due to complete sentences and leave state and county prisons over the next year, leaving the state in a worse housing crisis.

The Governor's budget will be filed by

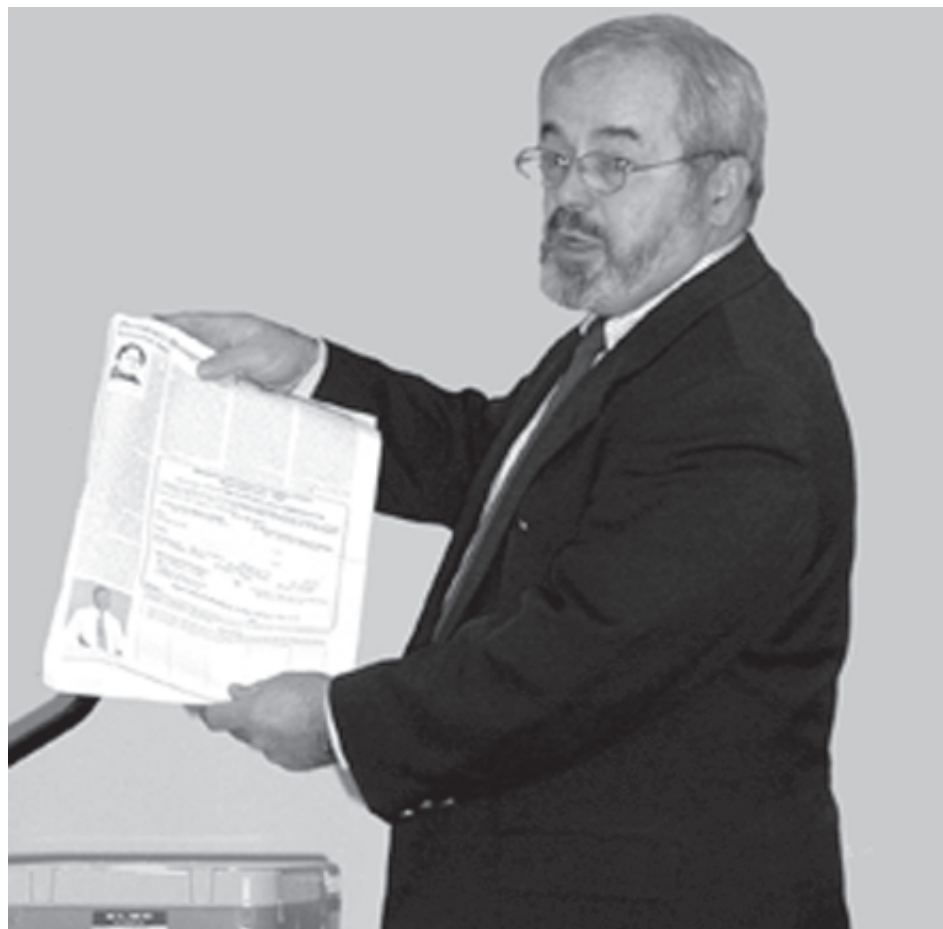
late February when the real work begins. Finneran says he hopes Romney's plan is gimmick free and does not rely on one time cost savings like selling state properties or raiding the tobacco settlement or lottery funds. We'll see as the new governor gets a crash course in Government and Politics 101 in coming months.

The MCCC and its Strategic Action Committee fought the good fight in the fall election. While Shannon O'Brien and Chris Gabrieli lost, our union members worked hard, giving our strongest political effort in many, many years.

An MCCC Political Action Committee-sponsored fundraiser raised more than \$2,000 for the O'Brien-Gabrieli ticket. We made hundreds of phone calls and held signs at visibilities and at the polls on Election Day. The PAC also contributed to 14 legislative races, and SAC provided volunteers for many of these candidates. We will stay in touch with these legislative friends as we meet with reps. and senators in coming months.

Our PAC is off to a great start, raising more than \$5,000 in a little more than a month and contributing to several close races. PAC chairs Priscilla Caira and Thelma Halberstadt and Treasurer Phil Kennedy will be planning a fundraiser with a high profile speaker for the spring. In the meantime, they will be using the PAC to promote our agenda and interests on Beacon Hill.

Our union continues to carve its own unique identity. Working with a great SAC team, our lobbyist Charlie Flaherty and the MTA's Arline Isaacson, we succeeded in holding the line on our health insurance contributions last summer. With your help in lobbying legislators in coming months, bigger challenges are yet to come. Stay tuned... ■



MCCC Communications Coordinator Peter Flynn, presenting at the November Board of Directors Meeting

Recruitment for DCE Bargaining Team

The current DCE contract expires December 31, 2003. Applications are now being accepted for the MCCC Negotiating Team for the 2003-2006 DCE contract.

Team Composition and Responsibilities

The team is composed of the President and Vice-President of the Council and a minimum of five members of the DCE unit, appointed by the Board of Directors. The team has the responsibility to negotiate with the employer on behalf of the Council and the unit on all matters relating to hours, wages, and conditions of work. The team's term of office ends upon the expiration date of an agreement or the formation of a new team.

Commitment

Applicants should understand that membership on a team constitutes a large time and energy commitment, a commitment to training, a commitment to serving the team as required as spokesperson, chair, vice chair, secretary or member at large, and in any other related way as required to serve MCCC members. Attendance at the Negotiations Track at the MTA Summer Leadership Conference at Williams College, August 2003 and/or other training may be required of team members.

To Apply

DCE unit members interested in applying should submit a cover letter and résumé to the MCCC office. The following information should be addressed in these materials.

1. Union experience at chapter level, statewide level, or in other systems
2. Academic background
3. Bargaining experience
4. Knowledge and understanding of labor relations
5. Reasons for wishing to serve

Applications must be postmarked no later than March 1, 2003, and mailed to DCE Negotiating Team Application MCCC
27 Mechanic Street Suite 104
Worcester, MA 01608

Interviews and selection will be conducted in March and April, and the team will be appointed by the June, 2003 Board of Directors meeting. ■

MCCC News

<http://www.mccc-union.org>

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DCE Pay Frequency Update

As has been reported previously, the frequency of pay issue continues to percolate for many DCE unit members. Although it is rare for DCE unit members who also have a full time job to find the frequency of pay in DCE to be a great imposition, these payroll practices create a tremendous hardship for those who have DCE teaching as their primary employment. This latter group may be as high as 40% of our DCE members and the sense of unfair treatment has grown along with the growing number individuals in these circumstances. For many of these individuals, this situation not only creates financial and practical difficulties, but also serves as a reminder as to how little they are regarded by the colleges and is a serious morale issue. While the Division of Continuing Education has always paid faculty twice in a regular semester and once for summer courses, it is worth noting that the day part time faculty was paid monthly until the time that the colleges converted this work to the DCE unit. This occurred at different campuses between 1991-1996. Since that time, the MCCC has been advocating more frequent salary payments to DCE faculty. Many colleges have agreed to provide more frequent payments while other will not vary from the collective bargaining agreement.

Last fall, the MCCC requested an MTA legal opinion seeking guidance as to whether these contractual provisions and practices are consistent with the federal and state laws that govern salary payments. The legal opinion found that state law requires salaried employees to be paid at least bi-weekly unless the employee elects to be paid monthly. There are some exemptions from this rule. An opinion was rendered finding that there is not much case law that parallels the particulars of DCE employment. Therefore, the applicability of the law may be subject to interpretation. The opinion recommended the MCCC take up this matter in contract negotiations. Although this is a likely topic in the next round of bargaining, the current contract will not expire until later next year.

Last spring, a unit member from Holyoke Community College filed a complaint with the state Attorney General's Office alleging that the college's actions do not comply with state law in regard to the payment of wages. Specifically, the paychecks, although frequent, were issued well after the date that the college set as a pay date. The unit member asked for legal assistance from the MTA on this specific case and the MCCC has joined this request asking for a legal challenge to these DCE payroll policies and practices. The MCCC elected leadership plans on pressing the matter further and hopes to secure legal action. ■



Season's Greetings
and Best Wishes
for a Happy, Healthy,
and Prosperous
New Year!

your MCCC leadership team

DCE NEWS

DCE Salary Increase

DCE faculty received a 3% salary increase effective for the fall 2002 semester thus keeping DCE unit members considerably ahead of inflation. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the rise in the cost of living in the last calendar year was 1.6%. This is the third salary increase since December 2000 totaling 13% to date for DCE unit members who were at Step 4 or became Step 4 in the last two years. A similar increase was received by those who rose a step during the same time period. Unit member who have not changed step during that two year period received a 7% increase in salary.

The current DCE salary rates are:

Step 1 - **\$736 per credit** - course 1-5 (\$2,208 for a three credit course)

Step 2 - **\$789 per credit** - course 6-10 (\$2,367 for a three credit course)

Step 3 - **\$848 per credit** - course 11 or more (\$2,544 for a three credit course)

Step 4 - **\$891 per credit** - 8 years seniority at the college (\$2,673 for a three credit course) ■

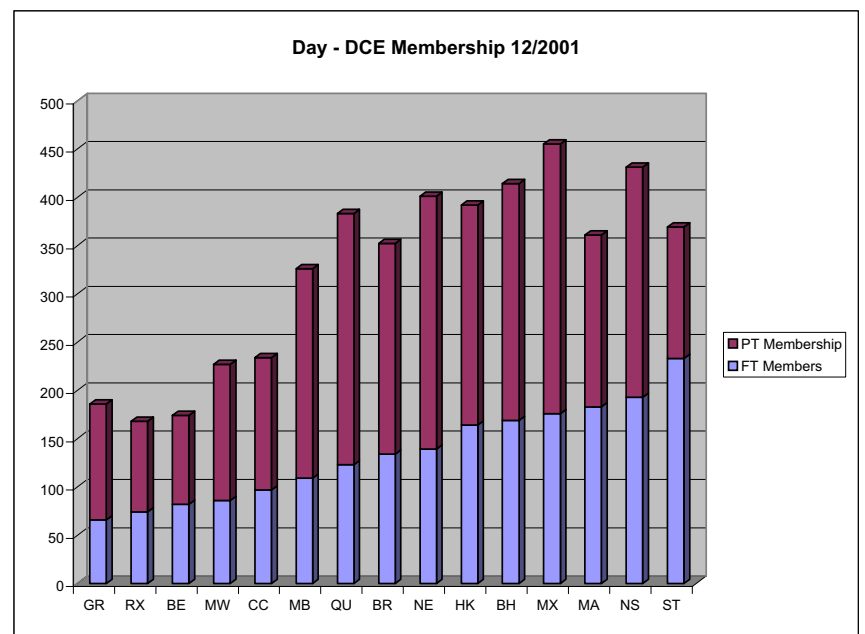


Joe Rizzo presenting at Nov BOD

The MCCC Treasurer has provided the following graph illustrating the number of Day and DCE unit members by each college in the system as of December 2001. In regard to the part timing of employment, it is interesting to note the degree of variation as well as consistency that appears from one college to another.

Membership 12/01

	GR	RX	BE	MW	CC	MB	QU	BR	NE	HK	BH	MX	MA	NS	ST
FT Members	66	74	82	86	97	109	123	134	139	164	169	176	183	193	233
PT Memberst	120	94	92	141	137	217	260	218	262	228	245	279	178	238	136



Know Your Day Contract

November 2002

Dec. 1 Deadline for applications for sabbaticals for Fall 2002 p.17

Dec. 6 Student evaluations p.40

Dec. 24 Last day fall semester can end p.34

Dec. 24 Part-time teaching assignments due

Dec. 25 Christmas p.16

January 2003

Jan. 15 Sabbatical recommendations from committee to president p.18

Jan. 18 Earliest date for professional day p.34

Jan. 20 Martin Luthor King Day p. 16

Jan. 21 Earliest classes can begin p.34

Jan. 23 Summary evaluations for part-time faculty due p.43

Jan. 28 Faculty schedule changes due to chapter president

N.B. 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. ■