

NEWSLETTER

Volume VIII

May, 1991



Number Ten

Before you go

As this semester draws to a close, the fiscal 1992 budget debate will begin. The myriad of proposed cuts which transverses our basic value system presents a challenge to which we must rise. Not only does higher education get restructured, it gets privatized. Not only do the state employees get inequitably taxed, their health insurance costs get stratified. Not only does the administration hope to get a large percent of the work force early-retired, only ten percent are replaceable and the state pension system gets attacked. And this is only part of life for the next two months.

You cannot walk away this summer. You must be willing to put your name on the telephone tree, make calls when asked, lobby if needed, write your representative and senator, and write your local newspaper. Legislative positions will change hourly necessitating short-notice calls for help. The proposed cuts and changes are so massive, that it will become necessary to funnel energy and lobbying based on a priority. Higher education cannot be lulled into a false sense of security because of the potential of 100 percent tuition retention; the state appropriated budget will be reduced accordingly. The Governor and his administration want people out of their jobs. Their early retirement incentive proposal is straightforward; get the state employee numbers down and do not replace 90 percent of them.

Keep in touch with your campus coordinators and consider attending one of the many regional TEAM meetings (call 617-426-1228 for schedule). Step into this coalition with human services and building trades; it is an invigorating experience.

A penny for the future

On Thursday, May 9, 1991, the MTA officially announced its Penny for the Future campaign. Citing results from the poll conducted for the MTA by Martilla & Kiley, "whose polling is considered top-notch" [lead editorial in *The Boston Globe* 5/10/91], the one-cent increase in the sales tax dedicated to education enjoys considerable public support. Even the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education promised that if changes similar to its recommendation occurred, it will push for a tax increase earmarked for education.

As people speak to their neighbors and legislators about the fiscal problems in Massachusetts and how to get through this morass, refer to some highlights of the Martilla and Kiley poll:

- 63% of the voters support raising sales tax from 5 to 6 cents. This jumps to 73% when the sales tax increase is earmarked for education.
- 58% believe even though money is not the only answer to educational problems, major improvements cannot be made unless we are willing to spend more money than we do now.
- Though a majority of voters rate K-12 public education as average or below average statewide, 55% say that the public higher education system is either good or excellent.
- 55% of the voters believe the best way to balance the budget is through a combination of spending cutbacks and a tax increase. This figure jumps to 62% when voters are informed the lower-than-predicted revenues may result in a \$2.5-\$3 billion budget deficit.
- 59% of the voters think Weld has gone too far with his education cuts; 63% believe if his cuts are implemented, the quality of education will be seriously hurt; and 57% oppose closing some state colleges.

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Penny for the Future
 - Health insurance increase
 - DCE resolutions
-

- By a better than a two-to-one margin (64% to 29%), voters say that teachers in their local school system are hardworking and dedicated. However, 60% think that children in Europe and Asia receive a better education than children in this country.
- 86% of the voters say that improving our educational system is either the single most important step or one of the most important steps we could take to strengthen our economic competitiveness.
- Even with only the no-increase-in-tax arguments presented, 64% of the voters remain in favor of a dedicated sales tax for education.

The results of this poll, though encouraging, do not dismiss the formidable opposition—Governor Weld. It does, however, provide a stronger-than-expected foundation for the campaign. The legislators cannot ignore the poll.

Weld proposes big insurance hikes

In a legislative bulletin to all members of the legislature, the MTA outlined the devastating effect Governor Weld's proposed group health insurance recommendations would have on state employees. The governor's plan could increase the Hancock family plan to \$3,753.48 per year and an HMO (Harvard Community) plan to \$2,501.22, increases of \$2806.92 and \$2,043.42, respectively. The individual family plan could go to \$1,666.32 for the Hancock plan and \$986.88 for Kaiser Permanente, for example, or an increase of \$1,246.20 and \$799.80, respectively. The projected savings for the state, depending on which percentage is enacted (25% or 50%), is between \$66 million and \$134 million.

Now that Governor Weld has managed to get rid of the anti-rollback legislation, it is expected that his next move, after he gets his increases, will be to increase deductibles and put in co-payments. By July 1, 1992, Governor Weld would also like to have a cafeteria plan in place which would be controlled solely by management—no union participation as presently exists.

Yes to
cost containment;
No to
cost shift

Cost containment is not the objective of this administration; rather, cost shifting for short-term, immediate cash is the goal. With the escalating cost of insurance, the commonwealth will be back to square one next year. A coalition of state employee unions suggests a cap or freeze on hospital rates and a cap on physicians' fees for the coming year. A ban on balanced billing is also an agenda item. This benefit was lost when the state went from Blue Cross to John Hancock and is the basis of the MTA lawsuit.

If you have not already spoken to your representative and senator, don't wait. This budget process and debate is expected to move quickly, so time is limited. **You must not remain silent on this issue.** If you have not received the list of the proposed increases for all the health insurance plans across the state, contact your chapter president.

Nota Bene

- Governor Weld has submitted a proposal to just get people out of state government. His plan to eliminate people is called an Early Retirement Proposal. Without doing any kind of actuarial study, the governor has estimated that of the 11,987 eligible to retire in the Group 1 employee category (higher education is Group 1), 7,271 could participate in his early retirement incentive. The frightening part of the proposal is the restriction that only 10 percent of all these retirees can be replaced. The ramifications of the drop in the work force with these kinds of numbers not only puts academic programs in jeopardy, it could put the state retirement system at risk. Because the plan is complex and will no doubt be changed, it has not been reviewed in this **Newsletter**. The MTA is in the process of preparing an actuarial study to give to the legislature and another plan is coming out of the Senate.
- Copies of the full time/part time 1990-1993 contract will be mailed to the chapter president by the end of May.

Retirement workshops

- The DCE dues year begins at the first summer session at each college. For those unit members teaching in the first session, their dues will cover their membership through the end of the Spring, 1992 semester. Salary increases for the second contract year come into effect in the Fall, 1991 semester. The minimum rate moves from \$425 per credit to \$470 per credit or \$1410 per three-credit course; the maximum rate moves from \$500 per credit to \$545 per credit or \$1635 per three-credit course.

For those unit members planning to retire this year, the MTA conducts workshops throughout the state to assist members. The following locations and consultants will be available through June, 1991. In case of inclement weather, it is advisable to call consultants.

Auburn—George J. Black; first and second Saturdays of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. MTA Central Office, 48 Sword St., Auburn 508-791-2121; or, at home 508-632-0442.

Boston—Dacre W. Kent; Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.; MTA, 20 Ashburton Place, Boston, 617-742-7950 Ext. 240; or at home 617-631-3579.

Cape Cod—John C. Linehan; second Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Barnstable High School, 744 West Main St., Hyannis 508-775-2600 on Saturday only; or at home 508-428-6545.

Gardner—George J. Black; third Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Gardner Jr. High School 508-632-1603; or at home 508-632-0442.

Northampton—Reta P. Watson; second Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., 53 Dragonhill Rd., Shelburne 413-584-8313; or at home 413-625-2102.

Peabody—Dacre W. Kent; second, third, and fourth Saturdays of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Northeast Office, Peabody Office Building, rear of Holiday Inn, on Route 1 near Route 128, Peabody 508-535-5660; or at home 617-631-3579.

Pittsfield—Edward F. Johnson; second Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; MTA Berkshire Office, 100 Wendell Ave., Pittsfield 413-499-0257; or at home 413-443-2776.

Braintree—Louise Gaskins; second Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Metro Region Office, 100 Grandview Rd., Suite 320, Braintree 617-380-1410.

Raynham—John C. Linehan; third Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Southeast Office, 534 New State Highway (Rte 44), Raynham 508-822-5371; or, at home 508-428-6545.

West Springfield—Reta P. Watson; third Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Western Office, 1111 Elm St., West Springfield 413-733-2284; or, at home 413-625-2102.

DCE work area and seniority

- After the DCE contract was ratified, unit members began having problems with seniority and splitting of work areas on some campuses. These colleges began to retroactively subdivide long standing work areas into narrow disciplines resulting in faculty being deprived of seniority rights as well as diminished reappointment rights. Dennis Fitzgerald and Tim Fitzgerald from **Massasoit Community College** each filed three grievances concerning these issues, and prior to arbitration they were resolved. The settlement gives all affected faculty their full seniority in these new work areas. In addition, a number of other seniority-related issues were also reconciled as a result of this resolution. Unit members have only a few days left to correct their seniority.

- In a related case at **No. Shore Community College**, the DCE administration also retroactively altered existing DCE work areas into narrow disciplines. After the chapter filed a grievance, the college instituted a "one-college concept" which eliminated these new work area distinctions. The college returned to the traditional pattern of the day school.

- **Holyoke Community College** also altered the DCE structure after contract ratification. This grievance was filed and when it was resolved, the college returned to its previous DCE organizational structure.

DCE preferences to be requested

Another change from past practice which was instituted by some colleges after the DCE contract was ratified was the refusal to solicit course preferences. Faculty members were being assigned courses because the "DCE administration knew best what the faculty wanted." **Quinsigamond Community College** working with the **MCCC** has reached a settlement on faculty preferences. The college will solicit course and time availability from unit members as it relates to course assignments.

Though agreements have been reached at other campuses in attempting to resolve this issue, unfortunately there are still colleges which refuse to acknowledge their colleges' long standing collegial process which is advantageous to both unit members and administration. The MCCC continues to pursue this issue at the recalcitrant colleges so that the rights of privileges enjoyed by most unit members will be applied to all.

One college concept

The ever-worsening state budget crisis of the past two years has brought an expansion of DCE profits and course offerings into the day school. This commingling of courses has impacted the conditions of employment in both day and DCE units. As a result, a demand to bargain has been issued to management. The one-college concept poses a potential for great benefits as well as severe pitfalls for our members, day, part time, and DCE. Updates will follow as negotiations proceed.

If anyone has any questions concerning DCE, they should contact the MCCC DCE Grievance Coordinator Joseph Rizzo, 603-898-6309 or 508-374-5885.

Know Your Contract

May 21	President provides notice of tenure or one-year appointment
May 24	Notice of tentative class schedule for Fall, 1991
May 30	Professional staff submit Student Advisement and College Service forms
Jun 1	Work Performance Evaluations sent to professional staff
Jun 3	Notice of sabbaticals for Fall, 1991
Jun 10	Student Advisement and College Service evaluations sent to professional staff
Jun 15	Summary evaluations due to professional staff

N.B. Dates vary depending on first day of classes. Also, most of these dates are "last date" standards. In many instances, the action can be accomplished before the date indicated.

MCCC Newsletter

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The MCCC Newsletter 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. The material in this publication may be reprinted with the acknowledgement of its source. For further information on issues discussed in this publication, contact Catherine Boudreau, Massasoit Community College, Brockton, MA 02402.

MCCC/MTA Newsletter

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