

# Massachusetts Community College Council

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Don Williams, Communications  
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November 13, 2009

Dear DCE Colleagues:

Your bargaining team, which began its work on February 8, 2008, has finally reached the point where a tentative agreement is being brought to you to ratify or reject.

In this ratification package, you will find a **ballot** and a *Memorandum of Agreement* that lists the changes to the DCE Collective Bargaining Agreement as a result of these negotiations. It is a three-year contract (June 1, 2009 – May 31, 2012) with an outside year through May 31, 2013. For your vote to count, your ballot must be at the MCCC office by **4 p.m. on December 10, 2009.**

The MCCC/DCE bargaining process began with a survey of all DCE unit members. Members, not surprisingly, were overwhelmingly in favor of pay raises. Also high on the list was job security in the form of a guaranteed second course for members with seniority and parity with the Day unit in lab ratio compensation. Health benefits and retirement benefits were also important to members surveyed.

By staying at the table for over a year and a half and rejecting several lower offers, we were able to negotiate a pay increase of 8.5 percent over four years with a payout in January (rather than September) of 2011, 2012, and 2013. The percentage increases over the four years would be 0 percent, 1.5 percent, 3.5 percent, and 3.5 percent.

Your team hung in there—even after the employer said “no” to almost everything—and firmly rejected several potentially harmful proposals from the employer and won several language changes in this tentative agreement. Changes include parity in class size with the day unit, i.e. maximum class size of 32 rather than 40 for didactic classes, etc.; an improved student evaluation form; the formation of two joint labor-management Electronic Communications Committees to address state-wide consistency in forms used, consistency in the delivery of those forms, and consistency in data collection; clear language allowing payment of multiple steps in the same semester; and formalizing the addition of a DCE MACER to discuss matters of mutual concern to the local DCE unit members and the local College.

Always keeping parity with the Day unit in terms of money and working conditions as our goal, your team fought hard for a larger pay increase, improvement in the lab ratio, and a guaranteed second course for members with seniority. With the state in serious financial crisis, we did not achieve these goals. It is time for the members to decide if what we did achieve warrants ratification of a new contract.

Well into the bargaining process, the team had established a “bottom line” for our negotiations that included a September payout and some improvement in the lab ratio compensation. Since we were not

able to achieve our bottom-line goal, we decided to send this tentative agreement to you **without a recommendation** from us on how you should vote.

Each DCE unit member needs to look at the facts and make his/her own decision on ratification. If the membership votes to accept the agreement, it will go into effect as of June 1, 2009. If the membership votes to reject the agreement, negotiations will begin again. Given the current state of our economy, the question becomes “*can we [the entire DCE membership] do better?*” if negotiations were reopened at this time. If the team thought we could do better, we would still be at the bargaining table.

However the membership decides to vote on ratification (*yes* or *no*), we urge you to become more involved in actively working for change on your campus(es) and in future contract negotiations recognizing that “*together we bargain; divided we beg.*”

Your bargaining team consisted of an awesome group of colleagues who demonstrated week after week their commitment, determination, and tenacity in bargaining on your behalf. These team members are:

Richard Devine (*Vice-Chair*), Quinsigamond  
Carole Dupont, Springfield Technical  
Gail Guarino (*Secretary*), Cape Cod  
Joe LeBlanc, President MCCC

Patrick Lochelt, Northern Essex  
Diana McGee, Vice-President MCCC  
Betsy Smith, Cape Cod  
Donald Williams (*Spokesperson*), North Shore

The team also recognizes the contributions made by Joe Rizzo, DCE Grievance Coordinator, and Miles Stern, MTA Consultant.

Area cluster meetings are being scheduled at Bristol, Bunker Hill, Holyoke, North Shore, and Quinsigamond to give you an opportunity to ask questions before you vote on this agreement. The team encourages you to attend one of these meetings; watch for announcements on dates and times.

Sincerely,

*Diana Yohe*

Diana Yohe, Chairperson  
DCE Negotiating Team  
Bristol Community College