

President's Report

March 2011

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This month's President's Report includes the following topics.

1. DE Student Evaluations
2. DCE Availability Forms
3. Unemployment for Adjunct Faculty
4. March Board of Trustees meeting
5. Robert's Rules and technology

1. DE Student Evaluations

Since we have last met, a number of things have come to light regarding student evaluations for online (aka Distance Education, DE) courses. Firstly, I must start off this conversation by thanking and complimenting Vice President of Academic Affairs, Pat Toney, for not only her cooperation in resolving the union's concerns, but her proactive attitude and dedication to getting to the bottom of the situation so that both sides can not only honor the contract, but best serve our students.

In early February it came to my attention that a number of faculty members who teach online had not seen copies of the summaries of the student evaluations for Fall 2010. When I looked up the procedures for giving these summaries to both full-time and adjunct faculty, I also discovered that for full-time faculty according to the contract these summaries are not supposed to be compared to the summaries for on-ground courses. I brought both of these concerns to Pat Toney, and she and Steve Marini very quickly got the links out to DE faculty and launched an investigation into how the student evaluations are administered and used at QCC.

Through this process, a few separate categories of errors have come to light and Pat and her team are working diligently to resolve them.

- a. For Day faculty on their yearly Summary Evaluation from their deans, the scores for online and on-ground courses should not be averaged – since the survey questions used on-ground (developed by the University of Washington) are not the same as those used online (developed by the MA Board of Higher Ed), the numerical results are not comparable. A few individuals did have this error made on their summary evaluations. These have now all been corrected and the incorrect ones removed from their personnel files and shredded.

b. Some Day faculty improperly received student evaluations in Spring semesters for Day courses just because these courses happened to be online. No deans actually saw these evaluations. Still pending on this item are confirmation that no Day faculty will receive student evaluations this semester for Day classes, and purging of the records. If you are a Day faculty member who received student evaluations for a Day course in a Spring semester, **please let me know** so I can keep track of who is affected. I also recommend that if you want to keep those student evaluations, that you print them out or save them now, since they will be expunged from the system.

c. Pat pointed out to me that all DE faculty should be receiving student evaluations on paper, and this will happen going forward.

d. And lastly, all student evaluations should be placed in personnel files, and this is in the process of being remedied for past semester and should happen automatically going forward.

If you have any questions about this issue, or if you think that one of your classes was inappropriately evaluated in a Spring semester, please contact me.

2. Online DCE Availability Forms

The availability forms for DCE classes moved to an online format in the Fall as per the current DCE contract. Unfortunately, there were some snags in the implementation in the Fall, so that some individuals found themselves filling out 10 copies of the form where in the past (on paper) they only needed to fill out one copy of the form and indicate a range. DCE MACER has agreed to a temporary workaround for the forms that will be coming out soon. Full details will be communicated soon by the DCE Rep, Mark Bashour, but in short there are two parts: the field asking for “Sec” (section) can actually allow up to 4 characters, so you should be able to type in “Any” or “All”, and you will be able to enter further details elsewhere on the form should you need to do so.

3. Unemployment for Adjunct Faculty

Adjunct faculty and part-time professional staff do not always receive a paycheck for every week out of the year. Therefore, they commonly apply for unemployment benefits for the times when they are not actually employed by the college. QCC has been routinely denying unemployment benefits using the phrase “reasonable expectation of employment.”

If this happens to you, I urge you to fight back for your benefits. Every single adjunct who disputes the denial of benefits wins. The key is that you don't actually have “reasonable expectation of employment” – the contract or appointment letter that you sign every semester has a line in it saying that the college can rescind the offer or terminate your employment at any time. That line means that you do NOT have “reasonable expectation of employment” and therefore you ARE eligible for unemployment benefits. If you have questions about this process, please contact Joe Rizzo, MCCC DCE grievance coordinator, at grievance-dce@mccc-union.org or 603-898-6309.

I have also put in an inquiry with President Gail Carberry as to why it is that adjuncts are always denied unemployment benefits. Since they always receive the benefits in the end, it is a pointless time wasting hoop to make the adjuncts jump through.

4. March Board of Trustees meeting

The college's Board of Trustees meets approximately every other month. The January meeting was cancelled due to snow, so the only one this Spring is Wednesday March 23, 5:30pm in room 107A. These meetings are open to the college community, so if you are interested in attending feel free to do so. If you want the agenda and materials, please let Susan Laprade know (susanl@qcc.mass.edu, 508-854-4368). The meetings can last between 1 hour in length, and 3 hours.

If you are not planning to attend the March meeting, keep your eyes peeled for the minutes. President Carberry should be seeking approval for raises for the non-unit professionals (NUPs), item 6 in my January 2011 President's Report, so we will learn there if she truly is sticking to her intent of fairness. I will be in attendance and there are usually a couple other QCCPA members attending as well, so we will report back what happens.

5. Robert's Rules and technology

The Tenth Edition of Robert's Rules assumes that meetings are to take place face-to-face, but allows synchronous "electronic meetings" (including phone conferencing) under specific circumstances (<http://www.robertsrules.com/changes.html>). The practice within the MTA and MCCC is that (as long as not expressly discussed in the ByLaws) if a electronic option is going to be made available to one member, it must be made available to all members. In addition, any voting taking place through this electronic medium must be by role call (meaning, any individuals participating remotely must identify themselves by name when voting). Asynchronous electronic participation is acknowledged in the 10th edition as being useful to notify members of upcoming votes, or for the conduct of mail voting. The QCCPA uses a hybrid form of mail voting for offices and ByLaws amendments, in that we send out ballots electronically and return them on paper. Some of the governance bodies at QCC use electronic voting for approving minutes, for example Academic Affairs which needs a quick turnaround in curriculum changes.