

Management Association Committee for Employee Relations (MACER) Meeting Notes – 21 May 2020

Present for Union: Linda Giampa, Louise Michaud, Tom Greene, Kathy Holmes, Steve Russell, Liliana Brand, Jennifer Levesque.

Present for Employer: Mike McCarthy, Bill Heineman

The meeting through ZOOM started shortly after 3:00 PM on Thursday 21 May 2020

- 1. Reopening Plan** – Mike McCarthy talked about some features of the reopening plan which were articulated at the college wide town meeting on 22 May. He said there would be impact bargaining with the unions where needed. He spoke of the Sheriff's training program still in effect at NECC as a useful model in determining how classes can be held on campus. They have had no cases of COVID-19.

Linda Giampa asked if we will be moving people from one campus to the other, if reopening is not the same on both campuses. Mike responded that El-Hefni on the Lawrence campus will be the one building where there will be classes and also perhaps Dimitry. He explained that if we can defer opening buildings like Spurr, that will cut down on cleaning expenses. He advised that we should not expect to be able to work in our offices in the near future. Bill Heineman added that there will be courses on both campuses, but the space that will be used will be very limited. Linda asked if the idea was to limit employee presence on both campuses. She added that she hoped that no one should be required to be on campus so that "it looks good." Mike and Bill agreed.

Bill said that an employee, especially professional staff, might be asked to be on campus to meet a student needed, but employees should expect to work from home as much as possible. Individual units will determine how to spread that work around among members.

Linda agreed that different jobs have different requirements. For example, MassHire members would need plexi-glass barriers when working with clients. Mike responded that the college is working on providing masks, hand sanitizers and whatever is needed.

Kathy Holmes suggested when it was necessary for staff to be on campus with students, times with students should be staggered and areas disinfected in between appointments.

Mike said that program areas need to determine what level of contact is needed with students and operational areas will provide the necessary support.

- 2. Early Retirement and Furlough Incentives** – Mike indicated that there are opportunities for employees to take advantage of voluntary cost saving measures. The details of these will be released after 26 May but employees will have to respond quickly to take advantage of them. The quick turnaround is needed so that Bill can plan staffing. Bill indicated that there will have to be personnel reductions and everyone who takes advantage of the voluntary measures, be it early retirement or furlough, diminishes the necessity for someone else to suffer an adverse action.

Linda indicated the last early retirement incentive did not go smoothly. Management made commitments that it did not keep. She said that this time, everyone must be clear about exactly what they agree to. We want to be sure that those who take temporary furloughs will be certain that they will be able to return to their jobs.

Mike said that he has not yet heard back from MCCC on the early retirement and furlough plans. Linda said that she would be in contact with MCCC leadership. She believed that the results of the arbitration on the previous plan were to be included in this plan.

3. **Faculty Evaluations** – Tom Greene asked how the move to more on-line courses in the fall would affect evaluations of untenured faculty. Bill said he would need to consider that and get back to us.
4. **Distance Education Agreement Issues** – Linda asked for clarification on “leasing” on-line courses, particularly with reference to a recent memo by the Acting Dean of Liberal Arts indicating that that option was available. Linda said that MCCC leadership has a different perspective than NECC management on the terms of this arrangement.

Bill indicated that he believes that the best vehicle for increasing on-line courses is the Distance Education Agreement and he said he was committed to adhering to that and working with the Distance Education Committee to effect any changes needed to the agreement. He indicated that putting courses on-line is expensive and if the costs can be alleviated by leasing, he would do so in accordance with the agreement. Tom asked if course reassignment can be used instead of the stipend for developing a course. Bill said yes, for the spring 2021 courses that are converted, but so far, not for the fall. Bill indicated that the review process for approving new courses would have to be compressed. The Agreement refers a 3 month timetable, but that will not be possible, given the need for courses for the fall 2020 semester. He would like work with the Distance Education Committee to modify this. Linda agreed that this could be modified.

Bill said that he would be releasing a letter to Academic and Student Affairs staff discussing all of these issues. He also indicated that we have had great success in taking care of current students remotely. The new challenge is how to take care of new students that way as well.

5. **Handling of Personnel Actions** – In reference to a discussion at the April MACER meeting Mike indicated that meetings with people being retrenched or other personnel actions will need to be done remotely. Retrenchment actions should occur by mid-June. Linda asked that she be notified about MCCC member actions ahead of time so that she could assist members through what is a painful process. Mike said that he is developing a script for HR to follow and make that available to Linda.

The meeting concluded at about 4:00 PM.

Next meeting: Thursday 18 June, 2:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Russell
NECCPA Secretary