

Management Association Committee for Employee Relations (MACER) Meeting Notes – 18 June 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 2:00 PM on Thursday 18 June 2020

- 1. Shifting Responsibilities** – Linda Giampa asked about changes in reporting lines, especially with regard to Early College. Bill Heineman indicated that Early College and International studies have matured to the point where they will now be under Academic and Student Affairs. They are no longer innovations which is the area which Noemi Custodia-Lora handles. The change in reporting will not affect members status, though there could be some tweaking of work responsibilities.
- 2. On-Line Classes** – Linda asked how classes would be filled when there are different sections. Bill responded that not all potential sections will be displayed on the Master Schedule. Deans will watch the enrollments carefully and add sections. The question came up as to how full-time faculty workloads will be managed, given that many sections are not displayed or have low enrollments.

This led to a discussion of fall enrollments. Bill replied that fall numbers are not great, however, all other Massachusetts community colleges are in similar state, some even worse off than NECC. Summer numbers have been up from prior years. This is hopeful because it indicates that some students have in the summer given NECC a close look and might give NECC a look for fall. He added that now orientation is a prerequisite for registration, so that there will be a lag effect in fall registrations, compared to prior years. Continuing student numbers are not great, but most likely students are delaying making a decision on what to do.

Tom Greene returned to the topic of on-line classes. He expressed concern that seniority will determine who teaches on-line classes and who goes through i-Teach. New faculty may not have the opportunity in the future to take i-Teach and then teach on-line classes, as they will all be claimed by senior faculty. The opportunity to teach DCE especially in the summer has been a way to incent good full time people to come to NECC. Bill said he would share these observations with the deans.

Steve Russell asked what will happen, if for example, when fall classes start, section O1A of a course has 32 students and section O1B has 6. In the past the member would be paid on a per-capita basis for the 6 students. What if the member needs the O1B section to make a full time workload. Bill replied that what would happen is that the combined O1A and O1B students would be redistributed so that the sections were approximately even in numbers. Some of this is done in ESL already.

- 3. Early Retirement** – Linda asked if those members who chose early retirement would be advised about the process to follow once their application has been accepted. Mike

McCarthy replied that the acceptance e-mails went out that morning (June 18) and contained instructions, including how to contact the State Retirement Board.

- 4. Essex and Middlesex House of Corrections** – Linda indicated that members who work at those sites have concerns about returning to work on June 22. Mike indicated that there have been zero cases of COVID-19 reported there. Linda said that members have told her that health safety protocols like masks are not being observed and that bathrooms are not being cleaned. There are concerns about numbers of people in the classrooms. Mike replied that the jails have indicated that they have the situation under control and want faculty to come back. They have agreed that NECC employees would not be delivering course materials to the residential areas in the jail. Mike indicated that this is a \$1.5 million contract and NECC is prepared to make it work. He also said that while classrooms are of average size, each class does not have too many students.

Linda asked, “what should I tell members who have concerns about safety?” Mike replied that they should contact the NECC managers of the program, who can handle it with jail personnel. If members get no results there, they should contact Bill Heineman.

Tom indicated that staff in other programs in the same building are not wearing masks. Mike replied that the jails are good at screening people and they screen a lot of them entering the facilities and also they have lots of people doing clean-up.

Linda indicated that it is important to separate what is said from what is actually being done. Mike agreed but said, too, that working in a jail, even before COVID-19, means acceptance of a certain amount of risk.

- 5. Re-entry Program** – Linda expressed concerns that managers of professional staff who will begin working on site at NECC this summer are discussing guidelines and expectations, for example, what to do, if one has symptoms of COVID-19, or exposed to someone who has. Mike replied that NECC is working with Lawrence General Hospital for testing. Tape will be put down in hallways. Linda asked if there will be screening of people who enter NECC facilities. Mike replied that the state guidelines do not require that for commuter colleges. There will be e-mails to students specifying the requirement to wear masks and wash hands, etc. In the end, he admitted, much of this is voluntary as there will not be security personnel policing this. A discussion ensued about what happens when a student comes to campus for academic testing without a mask. Mike said masks for students will be available. If someone refuses, they can be refused entry to the test. There was a concern that this could escalate. Bill said that a student who refuses to wear a mask will be treated like anyone who poses a danger to those on campus; that person cannot be on campus. Those students will not be eligible for NECC services.
- 6. Doors at Testing Center in Haverhill** – A discussion ensued about keeping the doors at the Testing Center in the Tech Center open so people entering would not have to press the button each time. Mike agreed to that and added that this would create better air flow there, which is healthier.

7. **Sick Time** – Linda asked if a member is quarantined, are they required to take sick time. Mike replied no, if NECC says a member should not be on campus, the employee is not required to take sick time. The assumption, however, is that that person will be working remotely. If a members is seriously ill and cannot work, then sick time is appropriate.
8. **Contact Tracing** – A discussion ensued about what happens if an employee is diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19, how does contact tracing happen? Mike replied that in most cases this is handled by public health authorities.
9. **Enrollment and Budget** – Mike expressed gratitude to employees who took early retirement (7 people) and those who participated in the voluntary savings programs (90). This reduced the budget shortfall for FY 2021 considerably. The FY 2021 budget is firm and will be presented to the College Board of Directors on July 1. He added that there would be some retrenchments, occurring during the week of June 22. He stressed that positions, not people were being eliminated. Bill added that retrenchments are fewer than anticipated but the college has also decided not to fill positions that are vacant. That means extra work for the people already on board or we have to decide what we are not going to do.

Linda thanked Mike for improvements in recent Human Resource practices.

The meeting adjourned at about 3:00 PM.

Next meeting: Thursday 16 July, 2:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Russell
NECCPA Secretary