**MACER Notes for March 10, 2022 Meeting**



**Representing Management:** Paul Beaudin, Lane Glenn, Michael McCarthy, Jennifer Mezquita

**Representing NECCPA**: Janel D’Agata-Lynch, Michael Deldon, Linda Giampa, Tom Greene, Louise Michaud, Steve Russell

**This meeting was held via Zoom**

NECCPA President Linda Giampa called the meeting to order at about 3:00 PM, Thursday March 10, 2022

1. COVID-19 Mask Update - Lane Glenn discussed how circumstances with regard to COVID-19 have evolved. Local K-12 schools as well as U Mas Lowell, Salem State and other institutions are now mask optional. Therefore as of March 21, NECC will be mask optional. He stressed that anyone who wants to wear a mask should feel free to do so. NECC, he said, should mirror the community.

Janel D’Agata-Lynch expressed concern that those who work with the general public don’t know who is vaccinated and feel uncomfortable that visitors to the campus will no longer be required to wear masks. Also, students registered for classes with the understanding that masks would be required throughout the semester. The Union’s position is that masks should be mandatory until the end of the spring semester, only about 8 weeks away.

Lane said he understood the concerns, but with the rest of the world moving in a different direction, NECC has to do so as well.

Linda asked if the mandatory vaccination requirement will continue. Lane responded that it would, in the same way that vaccination is required for other diseases. Jennifer Mezquita indicted that a student registering for summer or fall classes will need to demonstrate proof of vaccination at the time they register. For now, everyone is required to have 2 doses.

1. Classroom Safety – Steve Russell asked if something could be done to alleviate crowding in classrooms that were filled with, for example, the 32 student maximum plus interpreters and aides. He said that this could present not just health problems, but also fire safety issues. He suggested that the student enrollments be decreased in such situations.

Paul Beaudin responded that there were only 4 classes in the spring semester with more than 30 students enrolled, so this is not a big problem right now. However, he would consider moving classes to rooms which had a larger capacity. Also air purifiers should help to address the health issues.

1. MCCC and Off-campus programs (Jails and MassHire) – Linda indicated that the Union needs help in communicating with members who are working in off-campus environments, such as the jails and with MassHire. The Union sometimes does not hear about problems until they get out of hand. Mike McCarthy agreed that communication needs to be improved, and it helps that he goes into the Middleton Jail occasionally.
2. Pre-requisite Checking – Tom Greene asked if there could be some automated solution to checking if a student has met a prerequisite in a course for which the student has already registered before completing the required pre-requisite. For example, a student registers for English Comp II before completing English Comp I and at the end of the semester fails the English Comp I. Currently this prerequisite check is done manually. If the problem is not caught, the student remains enrolled in English Comp II and in fact, can continue in the course all semester. Paul and Jennifer Mezquita agreed that an automated solution should be possible and will pursue that. Paul indicated that this issue points to another problem: that of a lack of consistent policy on Incompletes. Linda agreed that some attention needs to be directed toward the issue of incompletes. Students are often unable to complete the work, as they don’t have access to Blackboard.
3. Professional Staff On-boarding – Linda indicated that she has heard from new professional staff members that they have very little information when deadlines approach for enrolling in retirement or health insurance programs. They are often not even aware of the deadlines, or what the E-7 is all about. Linda expressed understanding that HR is presently short-staffed, but some decisions that a new employee must make required considerable information. She asked that the Union be included in a new on-boarding program. Mike agreed and said that this will be part of a study that a consultant will be doing for HR. Lane agreed and suggested that the consultant spend some time with Linda to get a handle of issues like the on-boarding one. Linda added that it is important for professional staff to have an orientation program such as the one that faculty have. She added that supervisors need to encourage and give staff the time to attend such sessions. Linda suggested that this may be one way to address high turnover.
4. Fall Schedule Classes – Tom indicated that many department chairs are concern that not enough classes are being offered on the fall schedule. He said scheduling is a nuanced activity that needs to consider many factors like pre-requisites, degree completion, etc. Chairs want to know how the decisions are made. Paul said that he has only heard from one chair who complained. He added that classes are not being randomly cut. Deans have also been told that classes will be added as needed, but will not appear on the schedule until needed. One reasons for not scheduling too many sections, Paul added, is that he does not want directed study courses to be a substitute for sections, when classes do not fill. Tom expressed the concern that students who cannot find the classes they want at NECC will take them elsewhere.
5. Faculty Retention – Tom indicated that some full time faculty members are looking at career options outside of NECC in order to meet their financial obligations. Full time faculty often look for DCE courses (summer, overload) to make extra money. Unless salaries increase, NECC will be facing a dearth of applicants. This can especially make it difficult to attract faculty of color. Lane agreed and indicated that the college presidents are concerned about this and express that concern whenever they can. Lane also said that he expressed the view that “salaries are awful” to the NECC Board of Trustees. Local adjustment of salaries is difficult, but possible.

The meeting adjourned at about 4:00 PM.

Next MACER meeting is scheduled for Thursday 21 April, 3:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Russell, Ph.D.

NECCPA Secretary