

Six members of the WCCFT Executive Board attended the **NYSUT Community College Conference** in early November 2013. Here are their separate reports on sessions they attended.

Mel Bienenfeld

Session on Succession Planning –

Practical ideas for developing a practices and plans for succession within union leadership, involving deliberate, open discussion about succession planning, grooming new leaders, and working to make union service a valuable type of overall college service.

Session on Hostile Work Environment

Understanding distinctions between the employer's and union's responsibilities to deal with a hostile work environment. For example, it is the employer's legal responsibility to investigate claims, not the union's. The union's role is to help the complainant navigate the process. Also, the union should follow particular procedures if one of its members is charged with harassment.

From ED 39 Meeting

Do we want a campus security plan that includes "active shooter" in-person training? Active shooter drills?

Rowan Lindley

MOOCs: Research dealing with the impact of online education on students, much of it negative, demonstrating that online education is not the answer to all of higher Ed's problems as some would wish.

Affordable Care Act: An overview of the employer mandate part of the ACA, the implications for adjunct hours and two examples of grievances already in progress. Information about how the college can get reimbursement for providing prescription drug coverage to Medicare eligible faculty that I will follow up with with HR.

Basic negotiations: Contract language: Negotiation best practices and how to frame your proposals.

ED 39 Updates on Seamless Transfer and Open SUNY, the new edition of Negotiating the Distance.

Budget session: How administrations can distort numbers to make it look as if they have no money; and much other useful information for negotiations.

The best thing about the conference is that the NYSUT people are so well-informed. You can ask them anything: usually they know the answer but if not they will follow up and find it for you.

Scott Zaluda

- Cynthia Eaton of the Faculty Association of Suffolk CC presented information (along with a strong viewpoint) about why online instructional delivery systems, namely MOOC's, are a "major union issue." We should keep ourselves informed about the SUNY chancellor's efforts to reshape instruction university-wide via an increased dependence upon MOOC's. We should also take advantage of whatever resources Prof. Eaton, NYSUT, AFT, NEA and others can offer us for developing contract language pertaining to online instruction.
- Anne Friedman of Borough of Manhattan CC and Frank Frisenda of Nassau CC, presented case studies of successful mobilization and coalition building by their respective unions' (PSC and NCCFT) in response to threats to faculty governance. Community College faculty may not be able to strike, but they can put pressure on administrations, boards of trustees, and local officials to achieve important goals. Nassau's union used the Freedom of Information law to obtain information on decisions made within administrative offices; a chairs' council autonomous from administration voted no confidence in the president as did an autonomous faculty senate; faculty mobilized to speak at BOT meetings and met privately with BOT members; they also met with political leaders.
- Alison Doughtie of Mohawk Valley Community College and Cynthia DeMichele from the staff of NYSUT Publications gave an excellent presentation called "What Do You Stand For?" Branding and Local Identity." I took so many good ideas away from this session, several of which the WCCFT will work on developing. Prof. Doughtie and others among the participants were emphatic in their belief that branding improved their position at the bargaining table.

Alex Zemcov

- MOOCS are not effective as teaching tools for poor students; MOOCS may be effective as continuing education tools for educators; there is public confusion as to what constitutes MOOCS vs online courses and hybrid courses; there is ongoing research as to MOOC effectiveness but no definitive results have been obtained yet; MOOCS are a means for large educational material publishers to broaden the market.

- The struggles of CUNY community colleges with the Pathway program and Nassau CC with threats to faculty governance proved the power of the faculty to pursue an effective course when an institution's educational integrity is threatened.
- Fundamentally administrative decisions are typically based on financial considerations. Successful negotiations are seriously hampered when financial information is not available to all parties.
- The single most important thing about a union branding itself is the connection of quality of the product with the brand.

Gwen Roundtree-Evans

“Leadership Development: Understanding Conflict”

- Conflict is inevitable.
- We move in and out of conflict all the time.
- Conflicts and disagreements are not the same. (Conflicts are generally more serious.)
- A helpful strategy in dealing with conflict is to build relationships. The more one build relationships, the more power one has.
- If you are willing to give your power away, you are thereby empowering others and that makes you more powerful.
- Unionism is based on relationship building.

“Basic Negotiations: Principles and Theory”

- Various terms were defined and contract language was explained

“The Union’s Role in Addressing Sexual Harassment and Hostile Work Environment”

- One must always uphold DFR-Duty of Fair Representation.
- As a Union Member we must always be willing to represent and ensure fairness.
- It is the Union Representative’s duty to investigate all claims. Evidence must be gathered and one must make certain that the process is equitable.

“Advanced Negotiations: Issues for Everyone BUT Full-Time Classroom Faculty”

- If the adjunct situation is to be changed, it will require the converging of all stakeholders.
- It will also require permanent faculty and staff to make sacrifices.
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Judy Langer

I attended every session of Advanced Negotiations. Some of them dealt with actual negotiation proposals but there was more focus than ever on having a union presence on and off campus.

This presence will certainly boost our level of negotiations. My suggestions are organized into topics:

A PRESENCE OFF CAMPUS

- An information sheet on our Board of Trustees: Name, Picture, Date of Appointment, Date of Term Expiration, Appointed by...
- Get organized by legislative district and send representatives to their elected legislator
- Legislator lunch...plan ahead

A PRESENCE ON CAMPUS

- **Get organized asap in the event that we need to protest our interim president**
- **Red shirts for unity**
- New faculty lunch (in student dining room?)

STUDENT EVALUATIONS

- Change the word “evaluation” since the students are not in a position to evaluate us. Send issue to the Senate to change document.
- Evaluations should not be available until after withdrawal date

BUDGET ANALYSIS

- We need a faculty liason to connect with NYSUT. They will analyze it for us but we need someone here to explain it.
- How do we find the salaries for faculty, staff, administrators?
- Capital improvements are 50% state, 50% county and not an operating expense

OTHERS

- In order to check out anti-union press, check out UnionFacts.com, US News and World Report, WSJ
- Ideas re Adjuncts: It makes more sense to change the criteria to courses taught rather than semesters taught. Or a combination of both for senior status?