

Five candidates are running to fill the three vacancies on the WCCFT Executive Board. They are, in reverse alphabetical order,

Eugene Zilempe (adjunct)

Stephen Sewell (adjunct)

Stephen Nardozzi (full-time)

Donna DeCosa (adjunct)

Richard Courage (full-time)

The election will be held at our first membership meeting this fall (September 7, 2016). You must be present to vote.

Because of the timing the candidates have very little ability to campaign, so each was asked to submit a statement early enough so that it could be read by as many members as possible. Each was asked to choose two or three union goals from a list provided to them and discuss how they might address those goals. The responses varied in length. Rather than edit them now, they are posted as they were submitted. At the membership meeting, the longer statements will be edited down and printed on the ballots that will be distributed.

Candidacy Statements

Eugene Zilempe

I was born into a union household. In the early 60's my father was the Treasurer/ Secretary of his Local Letter Carriers bargaining unit, that was during a time when union strikes by government employees was against the law; my father was almost arrested for his union activity during the first organized National Strike by American Postal Workers.

My uncle Edward Lotz was also a unionist and served as President of a local pharmaceutical union in Yonkers, NY for many years.

I started my union involvement as a young man in the mid – 70's, I was elected to the executive board of local 453 Teamsters/Machinists Union and I was also the local's Compensation Chairperson for a good number of years protecting the rights of those workers who had been injured on the job.

In 1999 I became the alternate union representative for Saunders Trades and Technical High School. In 2000 I took over the union representative role and I served in that position for 4 years.

In 2001 I was elected to the Yonkers Federation of Teachers Executive Board in a position on the Yonkers Federation of Teachers (YFT) Executive Board I was re-elected two more holding that position for until 2005. During that time I also served as the YFT Membership Chairperson.

I ran for and won the Executive Vice President's position in 2005. I served in that position until 2011 at which time I retired. The following is a short list of some of my responsibilities while serving as the Executive Vice President:

- Staff Director
- YFT Welfare Fund Co-Chair
- NYSUT Career And Technical Education
- Health and Safety Committee Co-Chairman
- Delegate on the NYSTRS board
- NYSUT Representative Delegate

Upon retirement I was asked to once again fill the role of Membership Chairperson, I also took on the responsibility of Webmaster of the YFT Website, I still serve in those positions.

My vast, past union experience will prove to be helpful to the WCCFT leadership and its members as we continue to negotiate a fair contract. I will dedicate the needed time and effort, which is required by those seeking office, to strengthen the WCCFT's position in all present and future endeavors.

Stephen Sewell

Adjunct Faculty
Art Department
Summer 2015-present

The problems faced by full-time and adjunct faculty are not exclusive to WCCFT members, but representative of systemic problems in higher education. Similar struggles at other institutions have shown that we are not alone and that one of the best methods for improving our circumstances is by publicizing our issues and working in solidarity with other organizations. As an Executive Board member, I will work to strengthen our internal and external communications through the WCCFT website and social media in order to maintain current, and establish new, relationships with neighboring locals, the press, and community, student, and alumni organizations. By encouraging and supporting an active and transparent level of communication we can present an informed and unified faculty. A faculty that understands that the need for changes that acknowledge and respect the value of our faculty also supports the needs of the students.

Stephen J. Nardozzi

Assistant Professor and Past Chairperson
Department of Prehospital EMS
Full time at WCC since January 1989

My election to the Executive Board of our union again would be to strengthen our unity as a union of professional educators. I have previous Executive Board experience from approximately 5-7 years ago.

How we can help members feel that union activity is rewarding and to increase our visibility beyond the College.

With participation of the membership there are several community projects that can highlight the WCCFT in the community, and show how rewarding union participation can be to the membership.

- WCCFT provides in-service opportunities for Westchester County foster parents. (Previous experience) I believe that this plan would surely be rewarding and increase the visibility of the WCCFT in our community.

Building on the alliances we have made with groups of students

- A thoughtful plan to provide brief seminars for students based upon membership expertise. Ideas like investing, proper use of credit, simple banking, etc.

I look forward to joining the Executive Board once again.

Donna DeCosa

Adjunct, Math Department
2007 (18 semesters)

I am honored to be selected as a nominee to the Executive Board.

For close to half my life, Westchester Community College has been a part of me and I have been part of it.

I am a Viking; a proud graduate of WCC. I attended as an “adult returning student” and graduated with honors in 1994. It seems like I was always returning to the college for one thing or another. I would take a class, enjoy the Philharmonic, attend an art show or other interesting event(s) of many that the college offers free to the community.

In 2006, I was blessed by meeting up with my favorite Math professor, Dr. Sinforosa Tan, on a trip to Sicily! She recommended I apply to the college for a tutor position because she remembered how I would help my fellow students in our class. Thrilled, I was in Sicily and had a possible job when I returned home.

I started tutoring Math in the Fall of 2007. The following year, I was given my first class to teach; I was ecstatic! I have taught 18 incredible semesters to date.

Thank you for considering me for a position on the Executive Board.

I’ve been an adjunct in the Math department since 2007.

I am unafraid to speak truthfully. I co-created a survey of working conditions and was chosen as one of two adjuncts to present these issues to Dr. Miles in an open conversation.

I lead as I assist and support adjuncts to apply for, collect and retain benefits from the Department of Labor; A nationwide movement gaining momentum.

I motivate by convincing adjuncts to become members of our union. In these tumultuous times, I emphasize the necessity of a strong union.

I understand our diverse student population. I’ve enlightened students to the meaning of our “ENOUGH ALREADY” buttons. Many of our students may become union members themselves. WE teachers, as mentors, must be solid powers of example.

“UNITED WE BARGAIN; DIVIDED WE BEG”

Richard A. Courage

Professor of English, fulltime faculty since 1990, member WCCFT Executive Board 2004-2006, Co-chair WCCFT Transparency Committee 2012-2013

Written communication is the area where, if elected, I could have the greatest impact and specifically contribute to: *improving internal communications and engaging members to become more active*. I would like to work closely with the officers on the content and format of all communications sent to members or posted on the website. One thing we lack is a group of overarching themes to more effectively focus our message. Initially I would propose Fairness, Respect, Security, and Transparency. These speak in various ways to contract demands and the needs of both fulltime and adjunct members.

