



# Connect

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE FEDERATION OF TEACHERS / Nº 12 / APRIL 2019

## Message from the President

### Mel Bienenfeld

Transitions present both opportunities and pitfalls, and this is true for WCCFT's transition to new leadership as Judy Langer and I retire after seven years at the helm. There may be pitfalls related to an Administration that does not always respect or fairly compensate faculty, tensions and different priorities within the union, or financial challenges in the post-Janus era. But even as we soberly assess potential dangers, we can be heartened by what this current election tells us about our union and its members.

We are an actively engaged and democratically run organization. From the three-person Election Committee that oversees ballot tabulation to the twelve-person Executive Committee leading WCCFT on a day-to-day basis, our members are stepping up to assume responsibility for their union's future strength and success. We had more volunteers for the election committee than were needed. We have sixteen candidates for the Executive Committee with contested elections for Vice President, Treasurer, and EC members at large. They are

joined by four candidates for NYSUT Representative Assembly and three other candidates for Sick Bank Trustees. The election has drawn great interest and brought in new members.

This election issue of FTConnect presents the candidates' individual statements. They introduce themselves, their professional and union experience, and their vision for the coming years. You will see that the candidates are a lively and thoughtful group with impressive credentials on all fronts. Quite importantly, they represent the full diversity of our large bargaining unit: full-time and adjunct, teaching and non-teaching, junior and senior faculty. These statements will help you make informed decisions as you vote.

A special commendation goes to Jim Werner, who has quickly stepped up from Vice President to candidate for President. He is not only unopposed, but his declaration of candidacy drew widespread expressions of praise and gratitude across the entire membership.

In solidarity, Mel

### RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT

#### JIM WERNER:

I am deeply honored to serve as your Union president for the next two years.

The WCCFT, YOUR union, is the one organization dedicated to making WCC a better place for us to work and for our students to learn. We all have different individual circumstances: part-time and full-time faculty, counselors and librarians. But we ALL benefit when we make this workplace better for ANY of us. And we speak more forcefully, more effectively, as one-- with one voice.

With new leadership and a new contract to be negotiated, we are positioned to bring about important changes to our conditions. But WE need YOU—to tell us your hopes and needs for this workplace; to get more actively engaged in our collective Union efforts; and to get others to do likewise. I promise to listen carefully and respond to my best ability, as we work together in our common cause.

MEET THE CANDIDATES!

IT'S YOUR UNION  
VOTE!!!

# MEET THE CANDIDATES! CONT.

## RUNNING FOR VICE-PRESIDENT 1 POSITION | 2 CANDIDATES

### CLAUDIA JACQUES DE MORAES CARDOSO:

Our students' success and the future of our union depend on cooperation amongst ALL faculty!

I hold a PhD in Integrative Arts and am a senior adjunct in Art and Design. Over my WCC, WCCFT and Faculty Senate careers, I: supported and mediated the needs of faculty, staff and students in the Art Department; organized and co-chaired the Adjunct Committee (as E-board member); developed a membership outreach plan still utilized today; proposed and implemented a series of technological innovations for membership outreach; am actively serving on almost every committee offering faculty integration; am pushing for just proposals for ALL members, as elected Negotiation Team member (2nd term); am updating/editing WCCFT's contract under former VP Langer.

I offer thorough familiarity with WCC successes and issues, an open mind, passion for solidarity, a never-quit attitude, and deep respect for the entire College community.

### DEIRDRE VERNE:

I cannot think of a more important responsibility than representing my colleagues in our collective effort to improve working conditions at WCC. I am currently the Department Chair of Business, but during the past twenty years I have also been a faculty member and a Curriculum Chair. In these roles, I have worked successfully with adjuncts, counselors, teaching and non-teaching faculty and, of course, the administration. I am proud to be part of a department where over 60% of our full-time faculty started as adjuncts.

In my previous corporate experience at Time Inc., I gained invaluable experience in strategic planning, and executing and negotiating business contracts. I currently serve the Union on a three-person team, negotiating issues related to release time and job descriptions. I was fortunate enough to shadow Judy as her designee on the negotiating committee last year. I hope to utilize my expertise to best represent you.

## RUNNING FOR SECRETARY

### ROWAN LINDLEY:

As an experienced member of the executive committee, I want to help with the continuity and history as the WCCFT transitions to new leadership. The WCCFT is critically important in maintaining and improving our working conditions and I am proud to be part of this work. I have been a sick bank trustee since 2000 and in charge of benefits as an Executive Committee member since 2010. I served on the negotiations committee for two contracts and became aware of an injustice to the teaching adjuncts involving the under reporting of their time for their retirement benefits. I initiated and have chaired the TRS subcommittee to help right this wrong and will continue to do so if I am re-elected. I have made substantial and positive changes in the position of secretary since 2017 and hope to have the opportunity to continue.

## RUNNING FOR TREASURER 1 POSITION | 3 CANDIDATES

### DON SHERNOFF:

I have a BS in physics and math from MIT, an MS in physics from NYU, and an MBA in finance from Fordham University. I have been teaching physics and math as an adjunct at WCC since 2005 and have served as WCCFT treasurer for the past six years. I was on the negotiating team for our 2011-2018 contract. I have served as treasurer for Westbrook Tenants Association, where I live, and have been the treasurer of the Connecticut-Westchester Mycological Association for 30 years. During this period, I was also an adjunct instructor, teaching science at Fordham and math at the Pace Graduate School of Business.

Strong unions are vital to all workers. I first joined a union when I was 17, loading shelves in a supermarket. When the manager tried to steal some of my wages, the union stepped in to prevent it. The WCCFT works to ensure that all faculty are treated fairly by the WCC administration. I am anxious to continue the work.

### MATT SOKOL:

Colleagues, as a new eBoard member, I have quickly realized that I want to serve our union in an even greater capacity moving forward because I continue to believe in our ability to unite and seek positive change. But to reach a better future, we need to make sure we have stability in the present – especially regarding our finances. Recently, we have run deficits, spent down our cash reserve, and now face declining membership dues. I am running for the position of Treasurer because we need a fresh set of eyes to look at our finances and ensure our Union's financial well-being.

Prior to my teaching career, I was at Lockheed Martin, and then entered NYS Government, where I worked with the multi-billion-dollar State Transit Operating Assistance Fund in order to analyze the MTA's annual budget. I can assure you that I am the right person for the job.

### JOHN TORRIERI:

Over this past year I've worked hard for our union: on the Adjunct Committee striving to create a sense of community amongst a group who often feels underrepresented in our union; recently working with the Provost to resolve the issue of the two hours of lost exam pay; and serving on the TRS Committee to fix the long-standing reporting issue.

I worked in the corporate world, domestically and abroad, in treasury roles for nearly ten years. I have extensive cash management experience and negotiated Letters of Credit up to \$100 million. I handle all financial and tax responsibilities for my music and film businesses. I firmly believe my skills and experience can serve the union. I plan to get the financial information back into Quickbooks and strive to put us back on a path of fiscal responsibility. I know I can make a positive difference in the role of Treasurer.

**JOYCE MCQUADE CASSIDY:**

I am in my 29th year of service at the college, currently serving as Chair of the Mathematics Department. Before now, I have held positions ranging from Senior Tutor, Senior Adjunct, and moved through the ranks to Full Professor.

Some of my additional leadership roles have included Adjunct Coordinator and Off-campus Liaison. I have also had union engagement for nearly 10 years with activities that include faculty development, budget/treasury work, negotiations, MOUs, and grievance training.

I have seen and benefited from the numerous gains made by the WCCFT but there is still more work to be done. I am confident that having me on your team will ensure a high-quality workplace and I would be honored to have your vote.

**RICHARD A. COURAGE:**

As Communications Director for the last three years, I have studied our union closely. I have concluded that the message on these Solidarity buttons that we wear contains the key to our strength and success: "1 Faculty: Fulltime and Adjunct." This is not a new or revolutionary idea: In fact it has been the official WCCFT position for nearly twenty years. Our membership is large and diverse: fulltime teaching faculty; part-time teaching faculty; non-teaching faculty; Continuing Ed faculty.

Our challenge is to provide adequate representation to ALL constituencies and their diverse needs. As always, the litmus test of our success will be the outcomes in two crucial areas: grievance resolution and; our new bargaining agenda. Beyond that lies the task of creating an inclusive union leadership that fully embraces all segments of the faculty. This election provides an opportunity to do that. I hope we will all seize it!

**ROBIN GRAFF:**

For the past 28 years, Westchester Community College has been my second home. Thanks to those who have worked hard on our Union Eboard, I have been able to enjoy the security that goes along with being a member of a strong union. I served on the Eboard myself from 2012 to 2015 and have decided that the time has come to step up to the plate once again.

If elected, I would be committed to addressing and resolving the concerns of the membership alongside my fellow E-Board members.

**RAJI (RAJASHREE) KARVE:**

I have been a WCCFT member since 2009. I hold a PhD in biochemistry and have taught as a Senior Adjunct in both Biology and Mathematics. I received a Foundation Excellence in

Teaching Award in 2018 and am Co-Advisor to the Environmental Science Club. I am also on the advisory board of SAPA.

I often hear both full-timers and adjuncts voice frustration over schedules, course assignments, compensation, workplace conditions, etc. Adjuncts face greater challenges because of insecurity and lack of control over their positions, but I want to be part of the solution for everyone. I have advocated in Albany for adequate funding of our College. I have presented adjunct grievances to the WCC Trustees. I have personally recruited nearly twenty new WCCFT members and provided mentorship to new adjuncts. I appreciate the support of full-time and part-time colleagues and believe in representing both. We stand as one!

**FRANK MADDALENA**

Candidate statement available online at <http://sunywccft.org>

**CRAIG PADAWER:**

I've served as Department Chair, Curriculum Chair, DC Chair, a member of both the union's faculty accreditation committee and the ad hoc committee negotiating with the administration on release time allocations. As an adjunct for 8 years and a full-timer for 18, I know exactly how broken many of the systems are at the college. I also know it will require something more than a solidarity button to fix them—namely, dialogue.

It's time for an honest, perhaps uncomfortable, conversation between full-time and adjunct faculty members about where our common ground lies. If we don't have that conversation in public, numerous conversations will continue in private, and those private conversations will breed misunderstandings and divisions. Currently, misconceptions exist on both sides. Magical thinking won't save us. Talking to each other just might. We've been so busy negotiating with the administration that we've forgotten to negotiate with each other. It's time.

**GWEN ROUNDTREE EVANS:**

For almost 28 years, I have been a member of the Counseling Faculty and a Senior Adjunct in the Reading and Study Skills Department. I have been a member of the Executive Board for six years and have been diligent in getting the issues and concerns of the Adjunct Faculty heard as well as creating a platform for Adjuncts to receive the recognition they deserve.

Many members of the college community throughout the years have sought me out for assistance and advice. I consider myself to be a team player and will continue to do my best to represent the faculty as we strive to ensure fairness for all.



**JOE SGAMMATO:**

I've been here since 2008, but I still must introduce myself, since few of you know who I am. Such is the lot of adjuncts. We live and work largely alone. We see each other in faculty rooms, make cordial conversation, say we'll keep in touch but rarely do, and leave the room as isolated as when we came in. We who are proud of our intellectual achievements live in ignorance and uncertainty with regard to crucial professional issues. My candidacy is based on an unavoidable reality: Administration is not the enemy; the conflict is intramural. Much of what adjuncts lack is matched by the abundant perks of full-timers, whom we outnumber three to one. Full-timers are not to blame; the problem is that we have all settled into a system that now requires collegial reform. To help achieve that radical objective is why I'm running.

**ELLEN ZENDMAN:**

In a time of change, we need to continue to make our Union leadership a positive force providing stability while continuing to articulate our concerns. These are the ongoing challenges the WCCFT faces for today and for tomorrow.

I often speak about the halls of education, how important they are in enabling students and Professors to connect to one another even if the hall is a virtual one. The halls only exist because of our commitment to provide the space and the leadership that communicates the importance of our battle for equality, for fair pay, for medical coverage and so much more.

Our task is to continue to provide a structure that eliminates isolation and establishes a strong united force.

I ask for the opportunity to continue to help in our battle and to continue to represent you as a member of the WCCFT Executive Board.

# MEET THE CANDIDATES! CONT.

**CANDIDATES FOR NYSUT REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY DELEGATE** 6 POSITIONS | 4 CANDIDATES  
DAVID FRITZ, ENID LOTSTEIN, FRANK MADDALENA, KIMBERLY MALLORY

**CANDIDATES FOR SICK BANK TRUSTEE** 3 POSITIONS | 3 CANDIDATES  
ROWAN LINDLEY, JANET RANUCCI, SHEELA WHELAN

**LOOK FOR YOUR PRIVATE, SECURE ELECTRONIC BALLOT  
SENT BY WCCFT TO YOUR WCC EMAILBOX ON APRIL 3.**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS TEC 107

April 3, May 1

### EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS

April 4 and 17, May 15

### NYSUT REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

May 3-4, Albany, NY

FT Connect strives to keep you informed about significant events affecting you as a WCC faculty member, to advocate for your rights, and to provide a forum for your views. Please send your feedback, ideas for articles, or letters to [richardwccft@gmail.com](mailto:richardwccft@gmail.com).

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## 2018-2019

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