



Connect

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE FEDERATION OF TEACHERS / Nº 13 / MAY 2019

AN END AND A BEGINNING

Mel Bienenfeld



As we prepare for new leadership to take office on June 1, now is the best time to assess what WCCFT has recently achieved and to consider what we have yet to accomplish. In an election with perhaps the highest voter participation in our union's history (256 electronic ballots cast), we elected a team of capable, thoughtful, and dedicated individuals who understand the problems we face and are in a good position to work with the members to solve them.

Beyond the top leaders, though, we should recognize the following:

- The members of our elected Negotiating Team have all worked hard to prepare a strong and diverse package of proposals for the 2019 contract bargaining;
- Our Adjunct Committee continues to work on increasing adjunct involvement and to advocate for the particular needs and interests of part-time faculty; leaders of the committee have represented WCCFT in discussions with Provost Morest and other administrators;
- Department Chairs who have been in negotiations over job descriptions and release time have now taken leadership of a WCCFT Chairs Council, with strong interest and participation from other chairs and assistant chairs;
- Two Special Committees – Constitution/Bylaws and Solidarity – have gotten off to a good start on their respective vital missions;
- At a time when we need more careful financial planning and management, an expanded Budget Committee has begun a thoughtful review of our finances.

We can't be too self-congratulatory, however; none of these achievements constitutes a final answer to what are often troublesome questions and problems. But I personally feel pretty good that we have taken some solid steps towards those answers. I'm proud of those who have stepped up to become involved and have confidence that the newer generation of union officers will not let the members down.

In solidarity, Mel

**JOIN
WCCFT!**

SUPPORT YOUR FACULTY UNION!

ENROLL ONLINE AT [HTTP://WWW.SUNYWCCFT.ORG/MEMBERSHIP-FORM/](http://www.sunywccft.org/membership-form/)
UNSURE OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP STATUS? CONTACT ROWANLWCCFT@GMAIL.COM

A NEW GENERATION OF LEADERS.

Under terms of our constitution, the Westchester Community College Federation of Teachers just completed its biennial election to choose officers, Executive Committee members, delegates to the NY-SUT Representative Assembly, and Sick Bank trustees. For a general description of election procedures, see: <http://www.sunywccft.org/2004/09/constitution-09232004/>

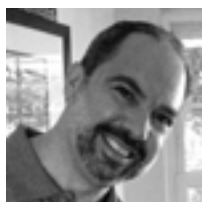
Nominations opened at the March 6 membership meeting and closed on March 27. Electronic ballots were sent to all members' college email boxes following the April 3 meeting, at which candidates were given an opportunity to present their views. Voting closed three weeks later.

The election proved to be vigorously contested. Here are some highlights:

- Sixteen candidates vied for the top offices and Executive Committee, a total of twelve positions.
- There was a two-way race for Vice President, and three candidates ran for Treasurer.
- Four of the candidates ran together as an Adjunct Solidarity Slate.
- 256 members cast ballots, about 30% more than in our last election and, we believe, the highest number of participating voters in WCCFT history.
- For the first time, more adjunct faculty voted than full-timers.

Election results were verified on April 25 by an independent Election Committee composed of Jodi Cotten-Konsur, Vida Gerst, and Christolyn Williams. After this lively demonstration of union democracy in action, we are pleased to introduce those colleagues who will lead WCCFT for the next two years.

FTConnect asked the new officers to comment on their election:



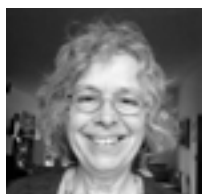
JIM WERNER, PRESIDENT

I'm deeply honored to serve as your union president for the next two years. With new leadership, an enthusiastic new Executive Committee, and a new contract to be negotiated, we're well positioned to bring about important and positive changes in our working conditions. Let's all pull together (part-timers and full-timers; teaching faculty, counselors and librarians) with renewed energy and make our College a model workplace in higher education.



DEIRDRE VERNE, VICE PRESIDENT

I'd like to thank Mel and Judy for encouraging me to participate in the WCCFT over the past few years. I've learned a lot from both of them, and I look forward to learning even more through my efforts to represent all our members.



ROWAN LINDLEY, SECRETARY

I am very happy to be part of the new Executive Committee of the WCCFT! I hope to help as we move forward with making the union stronger and our working conditions better. I look forward to working with all of the faculty in this endeavor. And I'm happy to continue working with Sheela and Janet on the Sick Bank also!



MATT SOKOL, TREASURER

Thank you for your support in the election. As your new union treasurer, I will work hard on behalf of the membership each and every day and work to keep us on a sound financial footing. I would also like to thank Don Shernoff for his help in bringing me up to speed, his willingness to work with me during the transition period, and his past service.

OTHER ELECTED LEADERS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Joyce McQuade Cassidy
Richard A. Courage
Robin Graff
Raji (Rajashree) Karve
Frank Maddalena
Craig Padawer
Gwen Roundtree Evans
Ellen Zendman

DELEGATES TO THE NYSUT REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

David Fritz
Enid Lotstein
Frank Maddalena
Kimberly Mallory

SICK BANK TRUSTEES

Rowan Lindley
Janet Ranucci
Sheela Whelan

WCCFT PETITION ON LIBRARY HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS

Dr. Miles and Vice President Murphy:

We, the undersigned members of the Westchester Community College Faculty, in view of the ongoing serious concerns and health issues caused by the air quality in the Harold Drimmer Library, present you with the following petition. As recently as March 15, 2019, employees brought to the attention of the WCC Federation of Teachers the fact that they continue to suffer serious negative health effects when working in the Library (but not elsewhere on campus), as detailed below.

We take note of the following information:

- The walk-through of the building conducted in September by Pro Safety Services failed to include interviews with any employees who work in the Library and recommended that no full mold testing be done;
- A more thorough inspection was conducted a few weeks later by an Industrial Hygienist from the New York Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH) who did recommend a full mold test;
- When informed that employees continued to suffer after the HVAC systems had been restored and cleanup after the events of last August was completed, the College failed to follow up with its own investigation into the ongoing complaints;
- Photos taken well after the cleanup reveal stains which employees believe may be evidence of mold growth;
- A librarian with mold allergies, who resigned from the College rather than return to her duties in the Library, applied for and was granted unemployment

insurance benefits on the grounds that hers was not a "voluntary quit";

- When the College appealed this determination, its appeal was denied by a judge who quoted the NYCOSH report and cited the College's failure to carry out the NYCOSH recommendations;
- An employee with asthma who sometimes works on the ground floor of the building requires two tablets of Benadryl to get through a day working in the Library, but not in other College locations;
- Another employee with a health condition has had to relocate her office out of the Library, not just during last September but to this day;
- Employees with no known allergic condition complain of itchy eyes and are unable to wear contact lenses when working in the building;
- Remaining carpeting in certain parts of the ground floor continues to get wet under certain weather conditions;
- Recently hired adjunct librarians were forced to terminate their employment after a few days because of their experiences with the air quality;
- Another adjunct librarian, with no known allergic condition, experiences bad coughing in the Library which continues for several hours (but then clears up) when she leaves the building.

The College must act in the face of these facts. We request that the College investigate these complaints – some of the individuals mentioned above will be willing to be interviewed – and that, in any case, a thorough mold test and full air quality testing be done. WCC's employees must not be allowed to suffer in order to do their jobs. Signed by over 100 WCC Faculty.

WE'VE LOST GROUND: TIME TO CATCH UP!

FARHAD AMEEN

One of the more engaging assignments my students do in introductory economics classes is to compare dollar amounts from different time periods by adjusting for the rising cost of living (inflation). For example, if you had \$100 eight years ago, how much would you need to have the same purchasing power today? Answer: \$113.75.

Using data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, I set out to analyze WCC faculty salaries to evaluate how we have fared over the eight-year period March 2011 to March 2019, from our previous to our current contract. I found that, in every faculty rank and category, "real salaries" have declined.

For example, in March 2011 a newly hired Instructor earned \$57,415 annually. To keep up with inflation, a new Instructor in March 2019 should have earned \$65,311 instead of the actual \$64,841. An Associate Professor at the top step should have increased from \$106,180 to \$120,783 in the same period instead of the actual \$117,099 – 3% lower than was needed to keep up with inflation. Likewise, the top adjunct hourly rate should have been \$98.06 rather than \$96.10.

These numbers underestimate our true drop in real wages for at least two reasons. Our health insurance contributions under the current contract further reduce real wages, so that for an Associate Professor the true decline in earnings is about 5%. And increased adjunct hourly compensation is more than offset by the reduction of a three-credit course to 45 hours per semester, so that adjunct pay per course is now about 6% lower than needed to keep up with inflation. (In many colleges, adjuncts are compensated by the course, not by the hour).

The above highlights the fact that, despite nominal salary increases, REAL faculty earnings have been declining, and this is something we should address in our next contract.

WCCFT SALARY DATA

- Source of all inflation data = Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), U.S. Dept. of Labor
- The Federal Government relies on BLS estimates for official purposes such as adjustments of social security payments for cost of living increases
- Cost of Living increase (March 2011 – March 2019) = 13.75%

COMPARING THE INCREASE IN SALARIES BETWEEN MARCH 2011 AND MARCH 2019

- For March 2011, the actual salaries were used
- For March 2019, the following steps were used:
(Tables calculations based on **March 2019**)
 - a) Calculate the amount needed to keep recipient at the same real income as in March 2011
Salary would have been (if adjusted for cost of living increase since 2011)
 - b) Subtract health insurance premiums (Family rate POMCO plan) from salary in March 2019
Actual salary (after deducting health insurance premium)
 - c) Compare (a) to (b) - absolute difference
Amount lower
 - d) Compare (a) to (b) - percentage difference
Percentage lower

INSTRUCTOR

Steps	1	2	3	4	5
a) \$	65,311	68,309	71,295	74,281	77,272
b) \$	63,577	66,402	69,214	72,027	74,845
c) \$	- 1,734	- 1,907	- 2,081	- 2,254	- 2,427
d) %	- 2.65 %	- 2.79 %	- 2.91 %	- 3.03 %	- 3.14 %

WE'VE LOST GROUND: TIME TO CATCH UP! CONT.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR & COORDINATOR OF STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

Steps	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
a) \$	75,333	81,527	87,743	93,989	100,262	106,439	109,527
b) \$	72,386	78,221	84,077	89,960	95,870	101,689	104,598
c) \$	- 2,947	- 3,306	- 3,666	- 4,029	- 4,392	- 4,750	- 4,929
d) %	- 3.91 %	- 4.05 %	- 4.17 %	- 4.28 %	- 4.38 %	- 4.46 %	- 4.50 %

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Steps	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
a) \$	86,265	92,766	99,335	105,847	112,360	118,901	120,783
b) \$	82,051	88,176	94,365	100,499	106,634	112,796	114,570
c) \$	- 4,214	-4,590	- 4,970	- 5,348	- 5,726	- 6,105	- 6,213
d) %	- 4.88 %	- 4.94 %	- 5.0 %	- 5.05 %	- 5.09 %	- 5.13 %	- 5.14 %

PROFESSOR

Steps	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
a) \$	96,793	104,738	112,775	120,783	128,797	136,777	138,057
b) \$	91,970	99,455	107,025	114,570	122,119	129,636	130,842
c) \$	- 4, 823	- 5,283	- 5,750	- 6, 213	- 6,678	- 7,141	- 7,215
d) %	- 4.98 %	- 5.04 %	- 5.09 %	- 5.14 %	- 5.18 %	- 5.22 %	- 5.23 %

ACADEMIC SUPPORT CENTER COORDINATORS

Steps	Rank I Step 5	Rank II Step 6	Rank III Step 6	Rank IV Step 6
a) \$	68,257	102,293	116,074	131,436
b) \$	66,353	97,783	110,133	124,606
c) \$	- 1,904	- 4,510	- 5,941	- 6,830
d) %	- 2.79 %	- 4.41 %	- 5.12 %	- 5.20 %

ADJUNCT FACULTY HOURLY RATES

Semesters	1-12	13-20	21+
a) \$	82.59	89.75	98.06
b) \$	80.95	87.96	96.10
c) \$	- 1.64	- 1.79	- 1.96
d) %	- 1.98 %	- 1.99 %	- 2.0 %

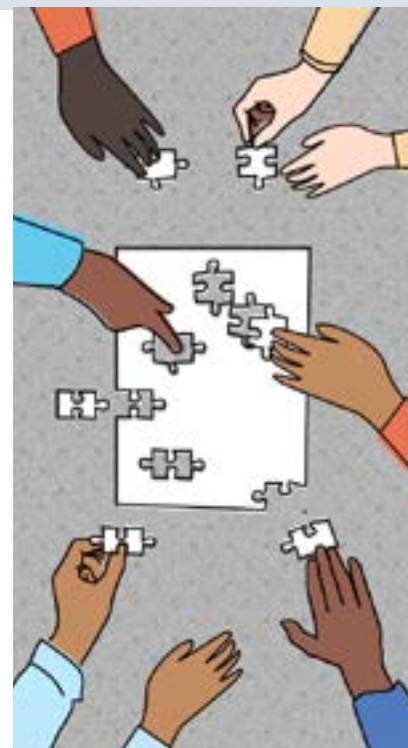
PART TIME LIBRARIAN, COUNSELOR, & ACADEMIC SUPPORT CENTER COORDINATOR RATES

Semesters	1-2	3-6	7+
a) \$	45.33	52.90	58.41
b) \$	44.43	51.85	57.25
c) \$	- 0.90	- 1.05	- 1.16
d) %	- 1.98 %	- 1.98 %	- 1.98 %

NEGOTIATING A NEW CONTRACT THE PRINCIPLES WE FIGHT FOR

Our current collective bargaining agreement expires August 31, 2019. Our elected Negotiating Team is responsible for bargaining the terms of a new contract with Administration representatives. Our team consists of Mel Bienenfeld, Claudia Jacques de Moraes Cardoso, Madalena Mansinho, Laura Millhaven, Sean Simpson, and Deirdre Verne. They have worked long and hard to develop a set of proposals that address the needs and interests of all segments of our bargaining unit: full-time and adjunct, teaching and non-teaching faculty. At the bargaining table, our representatives will be fighting for these general principles:

- Significant pay increases for all faculty; adjunct compensation on the principle of equal pay for equal work;
- Timeliness and transparency in personnel actions;
- Improvement of pilot programs on adjunct office hours, observations, and job security;
- Stronger limits on class sizes and improved processes for class cancellations;
- Improved leave for adjuncts;
- Negotiated goals for increasing the proportion of classes taught by full-time faculty;
- Negotiated goals for limiting counselor caseloads.



UPCOMING EVENTS

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS TEC 107

May 1

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS

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.

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