



Connect

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE FEDERATION OF TEACHERS / Nº 14 / SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2019

NEW YEAR NEW WCCFT LEADERSHIP NEW CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS



100 WCCFT members hear Jim Werner's first presidential report.

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT

JIM WERNER

It gives me great pleasure to write this—my first “Message” as President of the WCCFT. Let me thank you all for the support and encouragement you’ve given me during the election and ever since. I cannot begin to tell you how much that’s meant to me personally, how pleased I am with our energetic new Executive Committee, or how heartened I was by the terrific turnout-- 100 members (!!!)--at our September 19 meeting. It truly feels like a new beginning.

As you may know, our one-year rollover contract has expired. The Triborough Amendment to the NYS Taylor Law guarantees that all Collective Bargaining Agreement terms remain in effect. But your Negotiating Team has already been hard at work over the summer, and into the current semester! We’ve had nine bargaining sessions with Administration, and an equal number of team strategy meetings.

As part of our new emphasis on transparency and full engagement of our membership, if you provided us with a

home (non-WCC) email, you’ve been receiving periodic updates on the progress of these contract negotiations. If you have not been receiving the contract updates, please use this link to sign up: <http://www.sunywccft.org/wccft-news-sign-up/>

As stated in our most recent (August 19) update, all bargaining items are now on the table, both our “proposals” and Administration’s “demands.” Our proposals are far-reaching and ambitious, and can go a long way toward improving our working conditions here at the College. A close look at the original “bulleted” list demonstrates that there is something in our proposals for EVERYONE. Each one of our varied membership constituencies is well represented: full-time and adjunct faculty, librarians, counselors, and Academic Support Coordinators.

So, just to illustrate the point, here’s a breakdown by constituency. Among other things, we’re proposing:

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ADJUNCT COMMITTEE:

Raji Karve reports that the committee met twice in September and is planning to continue “First Friday” gatherings for adjunct faculty, an opportunity to meet colleagues informally over snacks, hear occasional guest speakers, and get more information about the union and related matters. The first gathering of the year will be Friday, Oct. 4, in the Foundation Board Room, Library 2nd Floor, Noon to 3. Other gatherings will be held Nov. 1, Dec. 6, Feb 7, March 6, April 3, and May 1.

On August 24, Raji and Jim Werner addressed the adjunct faculty orientation on behalf of WCCFT and, with support from Claudia Jacques, enrolled several dozen new members.

Committee members are exploring other forms of outreach to adjunct faculty, including social media platforms and compiling a book of recipes. They are also discussing and prioritizing issues of special concern, among them: the very limited representation of part-time faculty in WCCFT leadership bodies, adjunct rates of pay, compensation for training, assessment, and other non-classroom duties, uneven rollout of student success hours and total lack of adjunct observations as described in Attachments C and D of 2017 MOA, transparency of the Priority List, “snow day” pay for adjunct librarians and counselors, adjuncts’ right to tuition-free enrollment in WCC classes.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT FUND:

Rowan Lindley reports: “The WCCFT provides professional development funds to faculty for activities conducted during each academic year. Please refer to the forms posted on our website for details of what is covered and how to apply: <http://www.sunywccft.org/2017/06/faculty-development/> Applications from full-time faculty for activities between September 1st 2018 and August 31st 2019 are now being accepted and are due by September 30th 2019. Applications from adjunct faculty are accepted between October 1st and October 31st. Applicants must have been a member of the WCCFT at the time of the activity for which they are requesting reimbursement.”

POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE:

According to Ellen Zendman, WCCFT participates in VOTE-COPE, the political fund-raising arm of our state-wide affiliate, NYS United Teachers. This non-partisan action fund coordinates the voluntary contributions of members and supports candidates and campaign committees that are pro-public education and pro-labor. All

VOTE-COPE funds are voluntary donations, completely separate from members’ regular union dues. Ellen says that “The suggested VOTE-COPE donation is \$4 per pay period and requires completion of a payroll deduction authorization card that will be sent directly to NYSUT, which then informs the WCC payroll office. If you already are donating, we thank you. If not, please consider it. Every contribution makes a difference!”

As the only Westchester County-wide NYSUT local, WCCFT is in a unique position to endorse and support candidates for county offices. With that in mind, Ellen, Jim Werner, and Deirdre Verne met at the NYSUT Tarrytown offices on September 23 to interview six candidates for the Westchester County Board of Legislators who had sought WCCFT endorsement. These interviews and the resulting endorsements will be reported at the October 2 membership meeting.

SICK BANK:

According to Sick Bank Trustee Rowan Lindley, September and October are the annual enrollment period for the WCCFT Sick Bank for full-time faculty. New full-timers have been informed about the Sick Bank and sent the enrollment form. Any other full-time faculty who are not members of the bank and would like to join should contact Rowan at rowanlwccft@gmail.com. A complete report on Sick Bank activity will be given at the November membership meeting and then posted on the WCCFT website.

TEACHERS RETIREMENT SYSTEM NEGOTIATIONS:

WCCFT representatives John Torrieri and Rowan Lindley met over the course of the spring semester with members of Administration from Payroll and IT to discuss the reporting of time to the NYS Teachers Retirement System for adjunct teaching faculty. Everyone agreed that the current method (one hour for one contact hour of teaching) was unfair, and the committee designed and tested a method for implementing the recommended TRS method (as a fraction of the 15 contact hours required for a full time load). In May, a report was prepared, recommending changing to the correct method for the Fall semester. For reasons that remain unclear, this report did not reach Dean Brian Murphy until September 11 and the WCCFT representatives have not been told what will happen next. We continue to inquire and to press for the change to be made. There is now little hope that the change will be implemented this semester because of the delay over the summer ■

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT JIM WERNER

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FOR ALL BARGAINING UNIT MEMBERS: significant pay increases; contractual guarantees of healthy and safe working conditions; discussions on how we might implement the NYS Paid Family Leave Law; an additional paid "floating" holiday per semester; limitations on "acting" or "interim" administrative appointments. IN ADDITION, we are proposing:

FOR ALL TEACHING FACULTY, both full-time and adjunct: incentives designed to set harder caps on class sizes; increased Faculty Development funds; a clear and fixed pay rate for independent study and internships; clinical hours paid at 100% of adjunct/overload rate. For full-time teaching faculty: greater transparency and timeliness in personnel actions; addressing the ratio of classes taught by full-time faculty to those taught by adjuncts.

FOR ADJUNCT TEACHING FACULTY: pay by course, not by contact hour; salary increases to a level that realizes equal pay for equal work; increases linked to promotions/ranks established in 2017 MOA; additional pay for adjuncts who lose courses due to late cancellations for low enrollment; recommitment of administration to the adjunct pilot programs in the 2017 MOA (student success hours, adjunct observations, and multi-semester contracts), as well as adjunct professional status

FOR ALL ADJUNCTS: accumulation of up to three sick/personal days per year

FOR ADJUNCT NON-TEACHING FACULTY: three sick/personal days per year with pay; no loss of pay for emergency main campus or extension site closings

FOR FULL-TIME COUNSELORS: working day of 8 AM to 5 PM (not 11 PM, as per the current CBA section 4.6b); addressing issue of large counseling caseloads.

FOR ACADEMIC SUPPORT CENTER COORDINATORS: pay equivalent to full-time teaching faculty ranks; all personnel actions to go through Central Committee, exactly as faculty do.

I am pleased to report that while many of our initial sessions have focused on clarification of the meaning and intent of each side's bargaining items, we are making substantial progress, both in advancing our proposals and in addressing Administration's demands. With the latter, we have taken a "values-based" approach to negotiations. First, we ask questions: what problem or dilemma is Administration attempting to address with each demand? If we agree that such a problem exists, is this the best way to resolve it? Are there other, more effective solutions that would not have a negative impact on our members? This approach has enabled us to more precisely identify the true goal of several Administration demands, and point to a clearer pathway toward a resolution acceptable to both sides.

These are encouraging developments, but it's important to keep in mind that these are initial positions, and we are still in the early phases of what could be a long, complex process. Still, I can tell you from personal observation that your negotiating team has been nothing short of exemplary in its work ethic, painstaking in its consideration of detail and implications, and firmly resolute in maintaining a unified front. We know that we represent a varied membership with diverse needs and concerns; but we also know that we speak more loudly and effectively, and command greater attention and respect, when we speak with ONE voice. As I said in my campaign, by making things better for each of us, we make things better for all.

I look forward to bringing you future tidings about negotiations in communications to come. In the meantime, you have my best wishes for a productive and happy Fall semester!

In solidarity,

JIM

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

IN THE LIFE OF AN ACADEMIC COUNSELOR

BY LAURA MILHAVEN

Academic counselors are responsible for the counseling of the following student groups:

1. New students (approximately 2500.)
2. Students on Academic Probation and/or Restriction (approximately 2000.)
3. Students who have under 31 completed academic credits (approximately 4800.)

Not all students in the latter group come to see an academic counselor, but the first two groups are required to see an academic counselor before registering for classes.

Through attrition and repurposing of full-time academic counseling lines, there are only five full-time counselors to service these groups of students. While there are currently only two “frozen” lines, the bigger picture shows that full-time counseling lines have gone to fill other needs of the College, leaving our department with minimal support. Examples of this are:

- A. A full-time academic counseling line that was used to hire the current Viking Roads director
- B. A full-time academic counseling line that was used to hire one of the two full-time social workers
- C. A full-time academic counseling line that was used to add a fifth financial aid counselor.

So, what is it that we academic counselors do every day?

We saw 21,000+ students between August 2018 and April 2019 (nine months). Students come to see us for a variety of reasons, and none of them are simple. Explanation and understanding are necessary. Some are more apt to understand while others need further conversation.

Some examples:

- A counselor is not apt to sign a change of major form without reviewing a student’s entire academic record and discussing how this change might affect their degree completion.
- Dropping a course can have a direct effect on a student’s ability to receive financial aid, either for the current semester or for future semesters. Counselors must explain this to students and make sure they understand the possible consequences before they drop courses and this requires time.

Perhaps more complicated and time-consuming are:

- A student who has recently been evicted
- A student who does not have enough money to buy textbooks
- A student who does not have enough money to buy food or get to and from home and school.

Students may be depressed, confused, and lost. They go through what they think the motions are to be a college student, but truly many do not know what that means nor do they have the support systems to make that work.

WCC academic counselors are highly skilled and trained professionals, holding master’s degrees in guidance counseling, psychology, or closely related fields. They help students create academic plans, personal plans, time management plans, and financial plans--all in an effort to support each student’s success.

We listen, empathize, and make recommendations based on each student’s situation. We understand when they say they failed their courses NOT because they are not smart but because sometimes “Life gets in the way.” We shore them up and help them move forward. We help students fill out applications for scholarships, housing, and other benefits so they might have a better chance to succeed. We celebrate their accomplishments be it a good grade, the birth of a child, application for graduation, or acceptance to a four-year college. Academic counselors are much more than advisors; more often than not, they are a link or a lifeline that a student holds on to while they navigate the challenges of college and life ■

Editor’s Note: One of the collective bargaining issues that has absorbed the most time and on which both sides remain far apart is Administration’s demand that: “Librarians and counselors shall work a 12-month, five-day, 7-hour schedule. Work assignments as part of this assignment may be on any day Monday through Sunday.” Librarians and counselors have different schedules and face different time constraints and pressures as they strive to provide the best possible guidance and support for students’ academic success. Unity is the key to the strength of any union, and unity among the teaching and non-teaching, fulltime and part-time faculty who comprise the WCCFT membership requires mutual understanding, respect, and support. As a step in this direction, FTConnect presents an article by academic counselor Laura Millhaven, a member of the WCCFT Negotiating Team.

OVERVIEW OF THE 2019-20 WCCFT BUDGET

BY MATT SOKOL **TREASURER**



Fiscal year 2018-19 was the first year that the US Supreme Court's decision in the Janus Case impacted the financial wellbeing of WCCFT. For that year, the union had an operating income of \$282,094 and spent \$333,977 for a loss of \$52,062, with the majority of our budget going to NYSUT for member dues (\$193,372). It should be noted that this deficit was not due to mismanagement by the prior Executive Committee, as they were acting on recommendations from NYSUT to not modify their budget for this year, and WCCFT currently has \$181,026.40 in savings accounts.

The goal of the new Executive Committee for the 2019-20 budget is to stabilize our finances and put WCCFT back on a strong financial footing. To that end, we are recommending cuts across the board to bring our spending down from \$140,605 to \$97,876 (excluding dues to NYSUT).

The biggest cuts in the budget shown below come from stipends, operating expenses, and scholarships.

- Stipends totaled \$76,625 in 2018-19 and are budgeted for \$44,800 in 2019-20 with the officers taking the largest share of the cuts.
- Operating expenses totaled \$20,351 in 2018-19 and are budgeted for \$13,300 in 2019-20. The biggest changes here are to expenses in legal, internet, and office supplies. We are not budgeting money for arbitration proceedings, have switched to the college internet, and do not need any large replenishment of office supplies in the coming year.
- Scholarships totaled \$6,000 in 2018-19 and are budgeted for \$500 in 2019-20.

Presented below is a summary of our budget by major spending category followed by a more detailed budget summary:

	Estimated	9/1/18 to 8/31/19	9/1/18 to 8/31/19	2018-19 to Estimated 2019-20
NYSUT Dues	\$ 190,000	\$ 210,000	\$ 193,372	
Union Events	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,900	\$ 6,371	\$ (900)
Conferences	\$ 6,500	\$ 8,000	\$ 4,041	\$ (1,500)
College Events (including Scholarships)	\$ 500	\$ 6,500	\$ 7,028	\$ (6,000)
Student Scholarship	\$ 500	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ (5,500)
Operating Expenses	\$ 13,300	\$ 32,800	\$ 20,351	\$ (19,500)
Stipends and Salaries	\$ 72,576	\$ 113,820	\$ 102,814	\$ (41,244)
President	\$ 6,000	\$ 10,385	\$ 10,385	\$ (4,385)
Vice-Pres.	\$ 6,000	\$ 9,290	\$ 9,290	\$ (3,290)
Secretary	\$ 4,000	\$ 8,090	\$ 8,090	\$ (4,090)
Treasurer	\$ 4,000	\$ 13,555	\$ 13,555	\$ (9,555)
Fac. Dev. Coord.	\$ 500	\$ 600	\$ 600	\$ (100)
Exec. Comm. (8 *1850)	\$ 14,800	\$ 19,675	\$ 19,675	\$ (4,875)
Sick Bank Coord.	\$ 500	\$ 600	\$ 600	\$ (100)
Negotiating Team (6*1500)	\$ 9,000	\$ 14,430	\$ 14,430	\$ (5,430)
Office Help	\$ 20,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 15,173	\$ (5,000)
Payroll Tax (0.12)	\$ 7,776	\$ 12,195	\$ 11,016	\$ (4,419)
Operating Exp. Total	\$ 97,876	\$ 167,020	\$ 140,605	\$ (69,644)
Op Exp. Incl. Dues	\$ 287,876	\$ 377,020	\$ 333,977	NA
Operating Income (dues & interest)	\$ 280,000	\$ 315,010	\$ 282,094	NA
Net Gain (loss)	\$ (7,876)	\$ (62,010)	\$ (52,062)	

WCCFT 2019-2020 DETAILED BUDGET SUMMARY

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	2019-2020 Budget	Janus Budget 18-19	Actual 9/1/1 to 8/31/19	Variance
	Estimated	9/1/18 to 8/31/19	8/31/19	Bud '18 - Est. '19
NYSUT Dues	NA	\$210,000	\$193,372	
Union Events	\$5,000	\$5,900	\$6,371	\$ (900)
Membership Meetings	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$2,404	\$ -
Other Meetings	\$0	\$200	\$3,195	\$ (200)
Adjunct Activities	\$500	\$200		\$ 300
Neg Team & EC Mtgs	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$771	\$ -
Union Planning Meetings	\$500	\$1,000		\$ (500)
Demonstrations	\$0	\$500		\$ (500)
Conferences	\$6,500	\$8,000	\$4,041	\$ (1,500)
Comm. College Conf.	\$2,000	\$2,000		\$ -
Rep. Assembly	\$2,000	\$2,000		\$ -
AFT Higher Ed	\$500	\$2,000		\$ (1,500)
Others	\$2,000	\$2,000		\$ -
College Events	\$500	\$6,500	\$7,028	\$ (6,000)
Student Scholarship	\$500	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$ (5,500)
Gifts	\$0	\$0	\$1,028	\$ -
Speakers	\$0	\$500	\$0	\$ (500)
Special Events	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$ -
Operating Expenses	\$13,300	\$32,800	\$20,530	\$ (19,500)
Accounting	\$10,000	\$14,000	\$10,000	\$ (4,000)
Legal	\$0	\$10,000		\$ (10,000)
Phone	\$1,000	\$2,500	\$3,294	\$ (1,500)
Supplies/Equipment	\$1,000	\$3,000	\$2,433	\$ (2,000)
Website	\$300	\$300	\$843	\$ -
Publ. + Newsletter	\$1,000	\$3,000	\$3,960	\$ (2,000)
Stipends and Salaries	\$72,576	\$113,820	\$102,814	\$ (41,244)
President	\$6,000	\$10,385	\$10,385	\$ (4,385)
Vice-Pres.	\$6,000	\$9,290	\$9,290	\$ (3,290)
Secretary	\$4,000	\$8,090	\$8,090	\$ (4,090)
Treasurer	\$4,000	\$13,555	\$13,555	\$ (9,555)
Fac. Dev. Coord.	\$500	\$600	\$600	\$ (100)
Exec. Comm. (8 *1850)	\$14,800	\$19,675	\$19,675	\$ (4,875)
Sick Bank Coord.	\$500	\$600	\$600	\$ (100)
Negotiating Team (6*1500)	\$9,000	\$14,430	\$14,430	\$ (5,430)
Office Help	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$15,173	\$ (5,000)
Payroll Tax (0.12)	\$7,776	\$12,195	\$11,016	\$ (4,419)
Operating Exp. Total	\$97,876	\$167,020	\$140,784	\$ (69,144)
Op Exp. Incl. Dues	NA	\$377,020	\$334,156	NA
Operating Income	NA	\$315,010	\$282,094	NA
WCCFT Dues	0	\$315,000	\$281,915	
Interest	0	\$10	\$179	
Net Gain (loss)	-	(62,010)	(52,062)	

Editor's Note: Following a brief discussion, the 2019-20 WCCFT Budget was approved by the membership at the September 18 general meeting.

100 WCCFT MEMBERS HEAR VP DEIRDRE VERNE'S COMMENTS



UPCOMING EVENTS

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS TEC 107

Sept. 18, Oct. 2, Nov. 6, Dec. 4, 11-Noon

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS

Sept 4, 27, Oct 16, 30, Nov 12, 28, Dec 12

NYSUT REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

Nov 8-10, Cooperstown, NY

FIRST FRIDAY ADJUNCT GATHERINGS

Oct 4, LIB Foundation Boardroom, 12-3pm
 Nov 1, LIB Foundation Boardroom, 12-3pm
 Dec 4, Location TBA, 12-3pm

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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2019-2020

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