

Retiree Chapter Leadership Changes

by Jennifer Madej
Retiree Chapter President



Jennifer Madej, outgoing Retiree Chapter President, with Michael Rosen and Sen. Russ Feingold at the retiree meeting on Oct. 28. Photo by Sue Ruggles

The retiree chapter will soon experience leadership changes. At the end of 2016, I will hand over the position of president to Barbara Toles. Joanne Shansky will serve as Vice President of Events, assisted by Martha Henry. Monroe Lerner will be Vice President of Membership. These capable, dedicated officers will serve a two-year term. I will continue to be involved in the organization, as an active member ready to help out as needed.

As I end my five years as president, I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to Joanne Shansky for being there every step of the way as our chapter has grown. Next, I thank Martha Henry and Jim Radtke who have been such a great help on our steering committee. Finally, to all of you activist members who have attended our planning meetings, I thank you for your time and great ideas.

Lastly, I want to thank Michael Rosen and the entire executive board for their unwavering support and expert advice.

Jennifer

Upcoming Retiree Chapter Events

Social Breakfast
December 9, 2016 9:30 AM
Innovation Restaurant, 10499 W. Innovation Dr, Wauwatosa

Winter Meeting
January 20, 2017 9:30 AM
Room TBD

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News & Views

Happy Thanksgiving

President's Message

By Dr. Michael Rosen
Local 212 President

Kick Employees When They're Down

Local 212 has learned that the college administration has made a major change in employee benefits that you are probably not aware of.

In the past, an employee could use their sick leave and MATC healthcare for an additional six months following the expiration of FMLA if a doctor advised that it was medically necessary.

Here's the language directly from the Handbook Appendix: **"Employee on leave must make their own and the Board's regular contributions to all benefits (pay full premiums) 6 months following the last day of FMLA OR the last day they receive pay from MATC."**

Now the college will kick the employee off MATC's healthcare and force them to pay for Cobra (the full premium) as soon as they have used up their twelve weeks of FMLA.

Very few employees use this benefit. Those that do are among our sickest colleagues fighting cancer, suffering from a heart attack, or dealing with grave family medical crisis.

It is simply wrong and immoral to kick our colleagues off their health care at the time when they and their families need the benefits the most, when they are most vulnerable.

Local 212 strongly objected to this major change in employee benefits and to the

administration's failure to utilize the collaborative decision-making process to discuss it as soon as we became aware of the change.

The administration claims that this was vetted at a benefits committee meeting in October. But, the agenda for the meeting simply states that there is a need "to update" the handbook so as to align with current practice. That implies that the Handbook Appendix language needed only minor adjustments in order to be more consistent with current and presumably agreed upon practice. Here is the agenda item:

2. Handbook Appendix Changes
The Benefits Committee approval is needed to update several appendices to the Employee Handbook that relate to benefits where the appendix language is outdated. Prior to our meeting I will circulate redlined versions of the appendices for your review.

This language clearly does NOT suggest a major change in benefits.

There were no faculty members present when the change was discussed. There was only one paraprofessional and one member of 587 in attendance.

Let me be clear. If the administration had informed Local 212 that it was proposing a major change in benefits, we would have made sure that there were faculty representatives at the meeting and we would have insisted that this change be discussed

by the Handbook Committee whose members adopted the original language. The two employee representatives at the meeting were inaccurately told that there was no Handbook language covering this matter.

Joe Tuttle, who represented Local 212 at the meeting, wrote me that there wasn't any discussion about changing current wording. He was told that we didn't have wording and that if the change was not made it would put MATC's insurance at risk. No vote was taken nor consensus reached. The matter was discussed, but presented as a predetermined result required by the stop-loss insurance carrier.

We have since learned that the college administration signed a contract with this new stop-loss insurance firm that included this change in benefits on July 1st. Yet, the benefits committee meeting where the change was discussed took place more than two months later, in October!

The college claims to practice collaborative decision-making. We judge people by what they do, not by what they say. This change was made unilaterally prior to the October benefits meeting. The administration's

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Cuts in State Funding Hurt MATC

By Dr. Michael Rosen

The cost of attending college has soared. In 1990 only the poorest quarter of American families paid more than 20% of their annual income for higher education. Today, 75% of families pay at least that much.

Even the cost of attending a two year college like MATC has increased significantly, by 28% since 2000, while the cost of attending a four year public university has soared by 54%. As a result, student debt is now over a trillion dollars and is the second highest level of debt only surpassed by home mortgages.

Why has the cost of college and student indebtedness soared?

Because state governments have reneged on their commitment and slashed higher education investments. As Dr. Sara Goldrick Rab writes in her new book, *Paying the Price: College Costs, Financial Aid, and the Betrayal of the American Dream*, "...what has changed is state behavior-and this is what drove changes in prices paid by individual Americans directly from their wallets (as opposed to collectively through their taxes." Call it the privatization of public education!

In Wisconsin, Governor Scott Walker and his legislative allies have been among the most ruthless in slashing investments in higher education.

When the Wisconsin technical college system was established, funding was designed as a three legged stool with state aid a third, property taxes a third, and other sources (there was no tuition) a third. By 2010 state aid had dropped to 10%, property taxes to 60%, and tuition and fees to 20%.

In his first budget, Walker slashed technical college state funding by 30%, the largest cut in state history, reducing tech college state funding to mid-1980 levels. He also decimated the University of Wisconsin's funding by almost half-a-billion dollars in his first two budgets.

Walker claims he has increased state funding. That is technically true. But the increased state funding didn't go to the technical colleges. It was used to reduce

local property taxes. For MATC and other colleges, it was a wash.

In addition, Walker, following the ALEC playbook, passed pay for performance funding for the WTCS. 30% of our state funding is under this category. MATC does exceptionally well on its metrics, but our pay for performance state funding was slashed by almost one million dollars last year.

When public colleges and universities are starved of public revenues, they only have two choices. They can raise tuition or cut programs, services, and employee salaries and benefits.

MATC has eliminated hundreds of sections, been reluctant to hire full-time faculty, increased employee healthcare care co-pays (mandated by state law), and reduced part-time pay in response to these cuts.

The literature is clear that full time faculty are a predictor of student success. The reluctance to hire full time faculty in areas that need them means that program faculty have too many advisees, limiting the degree to which they can provide the personal attention that our students need and deserve. Of course, one thing the administration has not done is streamline the administration. The amount MATC invests in instruction has plummeted to only 46% of the college's 2015 budget, a decline of more than 8% over the past decade.

If MATC and Wisconsin's technical colleges are to survive and train the next generation of skilled and technical workers who are the key to the state's economic growth and prosperity, the state needs to invest in our technical colleges.

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**Submit comments,
suggestions, articles,
and condolences
to blackwek@matc.edu**

President's Message

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behavior does not exemplify collaboration! A major change in benefits should have been vetted by the Handbook Committee. It is not productive to question people's motives; however, the lack of transparency and collaboration in instituting this change is as outrageous as the change itself.

As soon as Local 212 learned of this change we met with the college's attorney, Janice Falkenberg, who runs the college's Human Resources division. She would not agree to convene a Handbook Committee meeting to review this decision. She advised us to request that the Benefits Committee reconvene to discuss this policy change which we have done.

We will keep you informed of our efforts on your behalf.

Ed Secretary: Colleges Must Protect All Students

By Scott Jaschick

Education Secretary John B. King Jr. urged university leaders Tuesday to be sure that students do not feel harassed or intimidated in the wake of a divisive election that has left "many of our students feeling vulnerable." He spoke in Austin Tuesday at the annual meeting of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities.

King said that all students, regardless of race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation or gender identity, deserve to be treated with respect. Higher education leaders need to send "a clear message" that campuses will not tolerate harassment, that "diversity is a value" and that they will "respond aggressively to places where safety is violated," he said.

In remarks that appeared related to this year's election results, King noted that the Morrill Act, which created the land-grant system, was signed into law by President Lincoln, but had been vetoed by President Buchanan in the previous administration. Of the Buchanan veto, he said that "our democracy does not always produce leaders with the right judgment."

Originally appeared November 16, 2016, <https://www.insidehighered.com>.

Part-Time Faculty Corner

By Sally A. Lindner (SAL)

6th VP – Part-Time Faculty

Colleagues,

We recently submitted our Letter of Availability for the Spring 2017 semester.

Here is some essential information about the assignment process. Note: This information is in the Faculty Appendix.

Assignments – Faculty must be qualified to teach the individual courses they are requesting. If the supervisor/department have concerns about an instructor's qualifications to teach a course(s), that should be addressed with the instructor at the time he or she designates courses on the preference form. In determining qualifications, factors may include professional currency, experience, certification, and instructional and technical competence.

Assignment Process – In assigning classes, if the faculty has the requisite longevity and qualifications, he or she will be assigned classes within the load range on the preference form. Administration will strive to meet the top preferences of part-time faculty via longevity; however, they may be assigned any course, campus, time, or day that is designated on the preference form.

Commitment to Assignments – Faculty have the responsibility to be available for the entire assignment, completing all course obligations, except in cases of

unanticipated job conflicts, illness, family leave, or other emergencies. Faculty who do not complete an assignment for reasons other than the above will not be granted a semester of seniority for that semester. Scheduling vacations during the semester is not acceptable and may be subject to disciplinary action if it occurs.

Class Availability – When a class becomes available unexpectedly, efforts to reassign the class will be made based on faculty qualifications, longevity, and the Letter of Availability.

Load – Faculty load will be filled as indicated on the preference form. The maximum load for part-time faculty is 49.9%. Extensions to 60% will be allowed, as needed, if additional part-time faculty are not available. The additional load will be assigned using the same process as regular part-time assignments.

Assignment Issues – Changes in faculty assignments are to be accomplished in a manner that minimizes bumping while balancing the rights of the students with those of the faculty. The supervisor will notify faculty of all teaching assignment(s) changes.

Did You Know?

Longevity at MATC will be determined by the number of semesters an employee

has taught at least one course. Whenever two (2) or more persons have the same number of semesters of longevity, the last four digits of each person's Social Security number (rank order, highest to lowest) will be used to determine order of longevity. If a tie still exists, the employee with the earliest birth date (day and month) will be deemed most senior. All longevity will terminate after an employee has not received an assignment for a period equal to the employee's total longevity at termination, but not less than twenty-four (24) months nor more than forty-eight (48) months. Any part-time faculty who does not submit a Letter of Availability for three consecutive regular semesters will be terminated and must reapply and be hired for a vacant position.

Part-time faculty and full-time overload will be piloted for Spring 2016 with potential full implementation for Fall 2017. The additional load will be assigned using the same process as regular part-time assignments. If all part-time faculty's preference forms have been exhausted and no part-time faculty, full-time faculty (up to 133%), or new part-time faculty can be assigned to a class, part-time faculty, based on longevity and preference form, may be assigned up to 60% in an emergency. This should only be done with the approval of the Provost and only if the class is unassigned within two days of the beginning of the class.

Higher Education Policy Under Trump

By Sara Goldrick-Rab

Here are the top 3 higher education policy changes I expect under President Donald Trump, based on his limited statements and my extensive experiences with Scott Walker in Wisconsin—his "nearest peer."

1. America will be "open for business" when it comes to promoting for-profit colleges and universities. This means cutting regulation and oversight, and defunding public higher education so that students view for-profits as a good deal. Witness: Trump University.
2. Federal student loan origination will be

returned to private banks. Underwriting will be introduced in the name of reducing student debt—which it will accomplish, but only by reducing college enrollment. College prices won't fall, but fewer people will have debt and no degree because they simply didn't attend college.

3. The U.S. Department of Education will be dramatically downsized in the name of state's rights. This will greatly reduce our ability to ensure access to college for vulnerable populations and coordinate policies and practices to protect them.

We have a hell of a road in front of us. States and local communities, I'll be spending my time with you. Call me.

This op-ed was originally published by the Chronicle of Higher Education.

