President’s Response to MATC Day Keynote

Lisa Conley
Local 212 President

Rob Johnstone, MATC Day keynote and break-out-session speaker, gets it when it comes to students’ needs and the ways to empower employees to address them.

Here are just a few supporting examples from his address:

- MATC’s front-line employees know best the day-to-day struggles that our students face.
- Structural reforms, such as those inherent in Guided Pathways, won’t work unless students’ basic needs are first met.
- Intake assessments used for placement must be multi-dimensional and should include non-cognitive measures.
- Online student orientations are a bad idea (i.e., college students such as ours need and deserve in-depth, in-person orientations).
- Conscious effort must be made to remove stigmas that deter students from accessing and using support resources (e.g., treat need as the norm and help as an opportunity; make supports visible and easy to access).
- Students in need aren’t broken and therefore don’t need fixing.
- Teaching life skills, including critical thinking and computation, is just as, if not more, important than teaching discipline-specific skills.

- Every time new tasks are assigned to those directly working with students, others must be taken away. In other words, piling unnecessary and time-consuming tasks on frontline educators makes it harder for those educators to be effective in the classroom and responsive to students’ needs.

Our members have been saying many of the same things for years. Let’s work together to make sure that the MATC administration got the message this time and follows through!

Watch a similar Johnstone presentation titled “Equity, Economic Mobility and Guided Pathways” on YouTube.

Why Must MATC Use Walker’s Tools?

Kevin Mulvenna
Executive Vice President

My email is filled with stories from across the country about faculty successfully negotiating contracts at institutions such as Philadelphia Community College, Rutgers, etc.; prevailing through strikes; and organizing workplaces at schools like Wright State and my alma mater, the University of Illinois at Chicago. Simultaneously, news stories across the country and even abroad in places like Northern Ireland detail the increasing shortage of teachers, stemming from the fact that young people realize that ours is a profession that is grossly undervalued and even demonized in states like Wisconsin.

So why on earth—after almost eight years under Act 10—is the MATC administration insisting on using the compensation study as a way of lowering the pay of frontline educators and staff? Newsflash: Wisconsin kicked Scott Walker and his useless tools to the curb last November!

The recent compensation study forums were invigorating for MATC educational professionals and a wakeup call for MATC administration. Again and again, it was pointed out that we have more administrators at MATC making higher and higher salaries than ever before. Administration has tried to explain this away by saying that “administration” was a term that applied to a huge pool of employees, and in response, I would mimic Theodore Roosevelt by shouting, “Bullfeathers!” Shall we just consider vice presidents? Associate vice presidents? You really don’t want to go there.

Data supplied by the college is clear. Management now comprises 18.3% of the MATC workforce and is the highest since 2010—coincidence? We think not. During the same time, 59 full-time faculty positions went unfilled, and para-professionals had their work year shortened. Whom are all these new managers managing? Even during a two-year period when MATC had two fewer administrative positions, wages for that category and

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In Memoriam: Rudy Martinez

Michael Rosen Immediate Past President

Rudy Martinez, a MATC retiree and proud AFT Local 212 member, died on February 20, 2019. Rudy was an educator and activist who dedicated his life to fighting for social justice and equal opportunity.

Born and raised in Cotulla, Texas, Martinez was a Vietnam veteran active in veterans’ activities.

As an activist, organizer and candidate, he helped organize the Raza Unida Party in South Texas as an alternative to the one-party political system in Texas. Its goal was social, economic and political justice for Chicanos through local and state politics. Martinez was also a contributing writer, poet and illustrator for Nosotros: El Pueblo, a La Raza Unida Party newspaper published in Cotulla.

In the early ‘70s, Martinez and his wife, Thelma, moved to Milwaukee, where they raised their children Rudy and Amarilis, a Local 212 Executive Board member and English instructor. Rudy was active in the Latino community’s fight for access to higher education, job opportunities and veterans’ rights. In the early ‘70s, he participated in the student sit-down strike at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, which led to significant advances for the Latino community.

Martinez, a graduate of the UWM Urban Education Program, worked in student services at MATC in various positions related to migrant education, community outreach and multicultural services. He also was an adviser to the Latino Student Organization.

He is survived by his wife Thelma and daughter Amarilis, as well as his three brothers Raul, Roberto and Ricardo.

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only that category increased by more than $650,000. At the same time, they boldly propose cutting the pay of new childcare workers and food service workers as well as prep and office hours for part-time faculty.

Worst yet, they try to tempt us and secure our buy-in by saying that no current employee’s pay will be cut. Newsflash number two: We’re a union, and we have values and principles. We will not be bribed into joining your race to the bottom. Unlike you, who desire higher and higher administrative positions, we don’t have to be silent or follow a chain of command to protect our futures. We will continue to speak up on behalf of our students and for future educators everywhere.

A lot of money has been spent for a compensation study that was never needed. It continues only because while the MATC administration asks us to be “all in” for students, they are not “all in” for the frontline educators and professional staff of our college serving those students.

President Conley is correct in calling the compensation study the Brexit of MATC. MATC administration wants to blow up proven policies and practices that have evolved over decades but will end up with their hands on their hips asking what now.

Brothers and sisters, we will not be bribed, and we cannot be silent. I beseech each and every one of you to stand at the ready and be willing to do what is right and necessary in the days, weeks and months ahead. SOLIDARITY!