



MONROE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
FACULTY ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER

VOL. 57 NO. 5

MAY 2024

FACULTY COUNCIL ELECTION EDITION

Faculty Council elections will take place May 30-June 3. You can cast your ballot in person, at the FA office, between 10-2pm on May 30 or via absentee ballot until 2pm on June 3.

Absentee ballots and instructions will be emailed with this edition of FAN. Please see the candidate statements in this issue of FAN.

Thank you for your support of our Faculty Council candidates!

Remaining Spring Faculty Council Meetings

June 12

Faculty Council meetings are open to the FA membership. If you would like to attend a meeting, please contact Sonja at slenhard@monroecc.edu or call x2019.

All meetings are on Wednesdays from 3:15 to 5:00 pm in room 3-115.

If you have rsvp'd and plan to join us for the Family Picnic, please bring your lawn chairs.

June 6, 4pm

Veterans Memorial Park,
Henrietta
Roberts Cabin

2023-2024 FACULTY COUNCIL OFFICERS



President, Bethany Gizzi; Professional Staff VP, Phil Oettinger; Teaching Faculty VP, Jennifer Hill; Secretary/Treasurer, Jeff Baker; Teaching Director, Gordon Dutter; Teaching Director, Jim McKenna; Professional Staff Director, Julie Slate; Professional Staff Director, Melissa Santiago; Adjunct Director, Diane Dinkins-Lourette; Adjunct Chair, PJ Ciaccia; Grievance Officer, Bill Horton; Communications Chair, Judi Salsburg-Taylor; Legislative Chair, Joe Scanlon; Equity & Inclusion Officer, April Daniels; Membership Chair, Kevin French; Health & Safety Officer, David Lederhouse; Site Director, Antonia Custodio; Site Director, Tom Gerwitz

Candidates for Faculty Council

Ballots will be sent via e-mail on May 28. Balloting will take place from 10:00 to 2:00pm on May 30 at the FA Office (7-205).

If you do not receive a ballot contact Sonja at slenhard@monroecc.edu
All completed ballots must reach the FA mailbox either by e-mail or mail by 2:00 pm on June 3 to be counted.

<i>Term</i>	<i>Office Position</i>	<i>Nominee(s)</i>	<i>Term of Office</i>
2 Years	Grievance Chair	Bill Horton	2024 - 2026
2 Years	Teaching Director	Gordon Dutter	2024 - 2026
2 Years	Professional Staff Dir.	Julie Slate	2024 - 2026
2 Years	Site Director	Tom Gerwitz	2024 - 2026
2 Years	Membership Chair	Lisa Ekiert	2024 - 2026
2 Years	Communications Chair	Jay Keith	2024 - 2026
2 Years	Health & Safety Chair	Dave Lederhouse	2024 - 2026
2 Years	Adjunct Director	Robert Leopard	2024 - 2026
2 Years	Legislative Chair	Joe Scanlon	2024 – 2026
Spring 2025	Nominees: Delegates to the *NYSUT RA	April Daniels Lynda Wheat Judi Salsburg-Taylor	

*The NYSUT Representative Assembly is held annually. Delegates to the Representative Assembly consider proposed amendments to the NYSUT Constitution and Bylaws, Resolution, and other business, according to NYSUT constitution provisions or policy.

Officers with Terms 2023-2025

President	Bethany Gizzi
VP of Professional Staff	Phil Oettinger
VP of Teaching Faculty	Jennifer Hill
Diversity & Inclusion Chair	April Daniels
Teaching Director	Jim McKenna
Professional Staff Director	Melissa Santiago
Downtown Site Director	Antonia Custodio
Adjunct Chair	PJ Ciaccia
Secretary/Treasurer	Jeff Baker

FACULTY COUNCIL CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

Candidate for Grievance Chair: Bill Horton

Greetings to all FA members. Thank you to everyone for their efforts in supporting the proper administration of our current union contract. It is not a perfect document, but it is all our responsibility to try and make sure that everyone lives up to the agreements set forth in it. It is the only way we must maintain some control over the responsibilities we have to perform to provide our students with what they deserve and expect when they attend classes here.

As the interim Grievance Chair, I have been working hard to advocate for our membership when their working conditions are being harmed by violations of the collective bargaining agreement. The college has had a large turnover in senior administrative leadership and the human resource personnel management team who are not familiar with this contract. This has made it very challenging. There are many things to continue improving on to build more trust and respect between this current administration and labor.

Please support me so I can continue to grow and serve in this position working with all the dedicated people who serve on the FA team during these challenging and adverse times. I will work arduously to defend our collective bargaining agreement and our members when they are being harmed by breaches of it.

Candidate for Professional Staff Director: Julie Slate

I am currently the Director of Admissions at MCC. I have been working for the college in the Admissions Office since 2009 and have close to 19 years of Admissions experience including extensive experience in recruitment.

I have been involved in numerous college-wide committees, as well as in local, state, and national leadership positions including serving as President of the American Association for Women in Community Colleges (AAWCC), Region 1 Director of AAWCC through the National Board, Chair of the Rochester Area College Committee, and SUNY College Admissions Professionals (SUNYCAP) E-Board Community College Representatives. Currently I am the Treasurer of SUNYCAP. In 2019, I was named SUNYCAP Professional of the Year.

I hold a B.S. in Marketing from SUNY Oswego and an MBA from Medaille College. Currently I am enrolled in the Educational Doctorate of Higher Education leadership program at American College of Education. I have been working more with the Faculty Association within the last few years and am so happy to have served as your Membership Chair and in negotiations in the past. I also serve on Faculty Senate and the Nominations, Elections, and Governance Committee. I am interested in continuing my role as the Director of Professional Staff.

Candidate for Health & Safety Chair: David Lederhouse

My name is David Lederhouse. I am a Network Specialist in Communications and Network Services. I have worked at MCC since 2010. I am running for re-election to the seat of Health and Safety Director on the MCC FA Faculty Council. This will be my second term. I have served on the Legislative Committee and three contract negotiation teams.

My family has been Union Strong for three generations. My father was a UAW member, and my grandmother was a CSEA member. I bring a perspective to our Union from the Professional Support Staff point of view. Unions have provided my family with living wages, great benefits in healthcare and a strong middle-class income.

All of us, regardless of position, department, or title deserve the right to a comfortable and safe workplace. We all can agree that we want our workplace and world to be a better place. I believe that despite our individual differences we all can come together for solutions. We are stronger together!

If I am re-elected to the position of Health and Safety Director, I will continue to do my best at every opportunity I have to serve you.

A bit about me. I love a good TV and movie Reference. My favorite shows are Seinfeld, The Simpsons, and King of the Hill.

I have been a model railroad hobbyist for 38 years. I reside in Webster with my wife Jennifer and my identical twin sons Sean and Shane.

Thank you.

Candidate for Site Director: Tom Gerwitz

I respectfully submit my name for your consideration to fill the FA Site Director- ATC role for the upcoming term. I started my journey at MCC in 2016 as a non-traditional student and quickly realized that this is a unique place, one that I am fortunate to call home. As an Alumni, employee, and proud union member, I am asking for your support as I look to take an active role in our shared governance model here at the college. I have served for the last several months as Interim Site Director-ATC and I would be honored to continue serving in that capacity as we move forward towards a brighter future together.

Candidate for Communications Chair: Jay Keith

It would be my honor to serve as your Communications Chair in the Faculty Association. My vision for this position involves working closely with FA leadership and members to articulate our constituency's value to our students, our institution, and our community during this unprecedented period in MCC's history. I have been inspired to put my name forward because of the unwarranted and unprecedented attack on our membership. I want to help our college leaders, our community, and our elected officials recognize and respect the vital importance of our labor. I recognize that this is my first time volunteering for FA service. If chosen, I will serve with gratitude to my fellow officers and a deep commitment to the solidarity of our union, the rights of our members, and the success of the students we serve.

Some background: I have been a full-time faculty member in the English/Philosophy Department for 23 years, teaching, among other courses, a great deal of Professional and Technical Communication. I currently serve as Retention, Tenure and Promotion Chair for my department, and have previously served as Adjunct Coordinator and Hiring Chair (three times). I have also contributed to both an MCC Strategic Plan and an MCC Technology Plan and completed several other small technical writing projects for the college. Prior to my service at MCC, I was a full-time technical writer for Universal Instruments in Binghamton while also completing smaller contracts for SUNY Binghamton, Lockheed-Martin, Xerox, Kodak, and

others. I did my English MA and PhD work at Binghamton, and my undergrad work at Bucknell University (mathematics). If selected, I promise to serve with candor, humility, and passion.

Candidate for Teaching Director, Gordon Dutter

It's a tough time to write a candidate statement in a crisis. I usually write something flippant in my quest to be the first candidate to lose an unopposed election.

We hope we succeed in preventing layoffs by the time next council term begins. Longer term, it seems there is something structural that keeps turning management, whoever they are, against faculty. There are interesting proposals to reform community college boards afloat. I say we advocate for boards composed of representatives of constituencies that care about community colleges, meaning their students and teachers.

I hope to try to bring a bigger picture perspective to council, as well as some experience and a near-end-of-career perspective.

Candidate for Membership Chair: Lisa Ekiert

Hello colleagues! I would like to enthusiastically express my interest in serving as the Membership Chair for the Faculty Council for the 2024-2026 term. I have proudly been serving MCC students since 2007 in a number of different roles. I was employed by the MCC Association Inc. for eight and a half years, working with students at the Damon City Campus as first the Campus Center Coordinator, then the Assistant Director of Campus Life. I was actively involved with student government, clubs and organizations, Orientation and the First Year Experience programs, student leadership and enrollment and retention initiatives.

In 2017, as MCC's Damon City Campus transitioned to the new Downtown Campus, I moved to a role with the college as an academic advisor. My position has evolved over the years due to the changing needs of our student and college culture. I currently serve as the Professional Advisor for the School of Community Engagement and Development, working with our Criminal Justice, Education and Human Services students and faculty, and I split my time between the Brighton and Downtown Campuses.

One important part of my work is to welcome new students to our college and share onboarding information to help ensure a positive beginning in their college journey. I believe this skillset will be effortlessly transferable to the role Membership Chair, in welcoming new faculty and staff to the Faculty Association and sharing all the benefits of membership. I look forward to joining Faculty Council, familiarizing myself with the responsibilities, and working together to continue the amazing work of the Faculty Association.

Please consider supporting me for this position, thank you!

Candidate for Legislative Chair: Joe Scanlon

I am asking for your vote for the Faculty Association Legislative Chair position for the term beginning in the 2024-2025 academic year. As Legislative Chair, I aim to identify and work with candidates and officials supportive of MCC's mission and goals, the role of the FA at the College, and labor unions in general. I have been a member of the FA since my start at the College in 2013, and I wholeheartedly support labor unions in their efforts to organize and

bargain. I firmly believe our country's standard of living and quality of life correlates with empowered labor unions and worker respect and representation.

My academic background complements the Legislative Chair position. I studied political science at Central Michigan University, received a Ph.D. in political science from Northern Illinois University, and currently teach political science at MCC. I now coordinate The Democracy Commitment at MCC, a campus initiative dedicated to civic engagement and education. I previously served on the Faculty Senate, including chair of the Professional Development Committee, which provided me with leadership experience.

Overall, I am well suited for the Legislative Chair position and look forward to the opportunity to support the College's and FA's representation in local government.

Candidate for Adjunct Director: Robert Leopard

When I started teaching at Oakland University, I was pleased to find that we were part of the AAUP. I am still benefiting from having been in that union.

At Finger Lakes Community College, I contacted NYSUT in 2005 about establishing an adjunct union and our campaign was successful. I was on the first negotiating team even though I was by then full-time at MCC. When I returned to FLCC I benefited from a union's having been established and I have been an officer of it for 6 years.

During my full-time years at MCC I was on the Faculty Council. I like to think that I made genuine contributions at that time, not the least was helping thwart the board's attempts to appoint Bill Smith as president.

I have regularly attended the NYSUT annual Community College Conference and have presented workshops on adjunct issues at several of them.

I'm now an adjunct at both MCC & FLCC and benefitting from the presence of unions at both. I want to play a role in supporting adjuncts in the MCC FA.



Connect with us on social media to get the latest news & updates:
Facebook: MCC Faculty Association (members only group)
Twitter: @MCCFacultyAssoc
Instagram: @mccfacultyassoc

Faculty and Staff Mental Health

Judi Salsburg Taylor, Communications Chair

On Friday, April 26, 2024, I travelled to Syracuse University to attend the conference, *Focus on Faculty and Professional Staff Stress and Burnout: The Newest Epidemic Threatening Higher Ed*, presented by the New York State American Association of University Professors. It was a day rich in multiple speakers from various disciplines, institutions, and agencies providing insights on the toll higher education culture has on the mental health of faculty and staff. While it's been made clear from Governor Hochul that the mental health of students and youth is paramount, very little is available—let alone discussed—for faculty and professional staff.

Though I was the only faculty member from a community college, I was surprised to find that our university counterparts are experiencing much of the same stress as us: greater student needs that require our time, attention, and care; increased disparity and disconnect between management and rank and file staff that leads to miscommunication, distrust, and isolation; frequent turnover of leadership positions leading to fatigue and inconsistent priorities; “initiative” weariness; greater responsibility of faculty to track and manage multiple administrative tasks of students, such as attendance and behavior reports; gaps in student academic preparation from inconsistent pandemic expectations; students arriving on campus with greater psycho-social needs that often have an impact on classroom culture; faculty and staff expected to exponentially perform more work duties with fewer resources; faculty expected to perform in multiple roles beyond delivering content, such as quasi-counseling and other direct emotional supports, for which they are not qualified; and having to fulfill these many roles with increased data points around student retention and completion. In short, the pressures on college faculty and staff have never, in the history of higher education, been greater.

While I listened to my university colleagues speak of their work demands and the toll it takes on their personal and collective mental health, I must say to you that, while we at MCC have experienced most/all of these situations, I was actually struggling to report to others the current state we find ourselves in here. I want to say to you this: If you feel weary, distracted, exhausted, angry, betrayed, unenthused, and even physically ill, you are quite likely suffering from burnout. In fact, for many of us who have been living in this context for years now are quite likely suffering from trauma.

These realities are all the more pressing and persistent among our BIPOC colleagues.

The afternoon of the conference provided an engaging workshops, facilitated by representatives from the Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, College of Mental Health Education Programs—an agency devoted specifically to faculty mental health within the Boston area. The workshop led participants through various strategies to manage stress that include:

1. **Empathetic listening** Practicing active listening with one another and responding with paraphrases and offers of tangible support.
2. **Self-Efficacy practices** Examining self-efficacy by believing you have the ability to complete a goal and thereby build resiliency.

3. **Eight Dimensions of Wellness from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration** Suggesting whole-person wellness as explored through various domains including emotional, physical, social, environmental, financial, occupational, intellectual, and spiritual.
4. **Stop, Start, Continue** Evaluating your current actions, decide what you will continue doing, and start ventures that will produce results.

Though not discussed in the workshop, many people find an intentional mindfulness and meditation practice enormously helpful. Colleagues Renee Dimino and Terry Shamblin offer weekly mindfulness practice on Fridays, at noon, through May 24, at [this zoom link](#).

Perhaps most importantly, if we ourselves are serious about improving our mental health (a phrase that seems farcical given management's proposal for faculty lay-offs), we must begin to speak openly and honestly with each other about our mental health and honor each other's truth. This means that, among ourselves, we begin to normalize mental health by bringing it into our regular conversations, meetings, and the very work we do to move our college forward each day.

Further, the Employee Assistance Program can be accessed by going to your myMCC tile page and following this path: Employee Home; Human Resources; Online Forms and Documents; Human Resources, Employee Assistance Program. Here, you will access a flyer with a central number to call. HR assures me any use of EAP is confidential.

Ask A Mediator

Written by: Elizabeth Baxter, Susan Bender, and Robert Muhnickel

Question: Myself and other faculty members in our department are facing issues with full-time faculty members who have been teaching fully remote since COVID, have not been back to office hours or teaching on campus since, and do not want to be on campus. Some faculty only come to campus for monthly meetings. This has been problematic for multiple reasons. In addition to the lack of physical presence, these faculty members communicate minimally with other faculty in the department. This has led to misperceptions due to lack of presence and actual dialogue with colleagues. There have also been issues that impact our service to students, with some curriculum issues that would likely have been addressed sooner if they had a presence. There is too much fear and pressure from these individuals to do anything at the department level. We know we are not the only department with these issues and the result is the deterioration of work culture, increased paranoia of remote faculty, as well as reduced attention to student needs due to being physically absent. If administration nor the union will set a minimum for in person presence to support what is needed for our work environment and optimal service to students, how can we prevent things getting even worse?

Mediator Response:

There are several key concerns here:

Lack of Physical Presence: You are correct that neither the Faculty Association nor the Administration have set policy on teaching or working face to face a certain number of hours/classes each week. However, we do have a Remote Work Policy. It's important to note that working remotely doesn't necessarily mean a decrease in quality. The post-COVID work environment has embraced remote positions, which are likely here to stay.

The Administration might argue that our new flexible work policy, which allows for both onsite and offsite work, has been a significant factor in their recruitment efforts. This benefit has helped MCC attract and retain quality employees in a competitive job market. Decisions regarding the balance between onsite and offsite work are made by department chairs or directors. They are responsible for ensuring equitable work distribution among staff with similar responsibilities. Faculty members teaching online or remote sections must provide office hours and support to online students via electronic communication.

Quality of Communication: With that said, perhaps the bigger or more accurate issue for you and your on-campus colleagues is the decline in communication quality with offsite colleagues? Without everyone's attention to maintain communication and presence in new ways, morale and relationships could and will likely deteriorate. Having clearly outlined expectations for faculty presence on campus in terms of teaching, office hours, and departmental activities is important. Document these expectations in a formal policy approved by the department. Departments have this flexibility to assess and develop a set of policies necessary for the smooth and equitable operation of the department. Another step may be for your chair, if willing, can take it to the Chairs Network for discussion? If they take a unified position, it might make a difference to individual chairs' ability to negotiate this issue.

Encourage open and respectful dialogue where all faculty members can express their views and listen to others. This may be difficult if people on and off site are feeling fearful, defensive, or pressured. It isn't clear where that is coming from in your submission. When decisions need to be made (assigning courses, changing curriculum, establishing pre-requisites, etc.) let your off-campus colleagues know when their feedback and thoughts are needed to prevent delays. Seek to understand the reasons behind some faculty members' reluctance to return to campus, which may include ongoing health concerns or personal issues.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS THIS SUMMER?

NYSUT Member Benefits offers a variety of endorsed programs & services that can help you enjoy today, while planning for tomorrow.

As a NYSUT member, you have access to participate in a number of programs and services endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits. These products have been carefully cultivated to provide members with quality programs at competitive prices, including insurance programs to help you protect your family; legal and financial plans to help you plan for the future; and shopping, travel & personal services to help save you money.

Member Benefits also offers a number of benefits available free of charge to members such as the premium Calm service, Peer Support Line, Financial Learning Center, and more.

Participation in our endorsed programs features the added protection of having a trusted advocate on your side. Our staff take great pride in stepping in to support members with any questions, concerns, or issues that may arise.

No matter what your plans may be, NYSUT Member Benefits is a great place to start. Explore all that your union membership has to offer!



Learn more by scanning the QR code to the left, visiting memberbenefits.nysut.org, or calling 800-626-8101.

For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.



May/June 2024