

Congress Chronicles

News from the Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges, SEIU Local 1973 • March 2009



The Future of our Community Colleges will be up for a Vote

This spring, the State Capitol is the stage where the future of our community college system will be decided.

In the opening act, the Governor proposed significant cuts to our budget, raised a radically new idea of combining the community colleges with the technical high schools to create a new middle college system, and took aim at state employee unions by suggest-

ing huge concessions and curtailment of collective bargaining rights.

Now the drama switches to the General Assembly, where 4C's members have a role to play. In an effort to preserve the quality of our community colleges, we will be asking members to contact legislators, lobby at the Capitol, attend meetings, rallies, and more -- all in an effort to bring about a happy ending.

Congress Chronicles



Congress of Connecticut
Community Colleges
SEIU LOCAL 1973

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ActionCalendar

Delegate Assembly

Friday, March 6

Dinner: 5:30 pm; Meeting: 6:00 pm

4C's Office, Hartford

Delegate Assemblies are open to all 4C's members. Join us for discussions of current issues affecting members, our profession, and our system. The April meeting of the Delegate Assembly will be held on Sat., April 4 at 10:30 AM.

Lobby Days at the Capitol

Fridays in March, April, and May

10 am-2 pm, Legislative Office Building

Join your colleagues at the State Capitol for meetings with legislators. A Legislative Action Committee member or a 4C's staff member will meet members in the lobby of the Legislative Office Building and coordinate the day's lobbying activities. Please call the 4C's office first to let us know to expect you, (860) 296-5172.

State Employees Rally

Wed., March 25, Noon, State Capitol

Plans are underway for a demonstration at the State Capitol or Legislative Office Building. Members of all state employee unions are asked to join in! Stay tuned for additional information on transportation, etc.

2009-10 SEIU Scholarships



Unions help working families fulfill their dreams in many different ways. At SEIU, this includes yearly college scholarship opportunities.

Through four different scholarship programs, SEIU awards 52 scholarships that enable SEIU members and their children to pursue their educational goals at accredited colleges, universities, and technical schools.

Go online to see if any of the programs are right for your and your family. Applications must be post-marked by March 2, 2009. Applications and information are available at the 4C's office or online at <http://seiu.org/memberscholarships>.



‘Tis the Season...For Political Action

As the legislature debates how to deal with the state’s revenue shortfall, we cannot afford to be idle spectators. Our efforts as a member of the SEBAC coalition, combined with the activities of our lobbyist, our Political Action Director and our Legislative Affairs Committee need to be augmented by the efforts of virtually ALL of our members if we are to shape the budget outcome in our favor.

Lawmakers must hear us loudly and clearly.

At the moment, we must urge them to:

- Fully fund the Community College system
- Ignore Governor Rell’s call to change collective bargaining

In my February 17th Update, I asked you to email the Appropriations Committee leadership. If you have not done so previously, it is not too late. Our campus organizers are working with chapters to have all of us to participate in a postcard campaign. In addition, 4C’s members will need to be visible and vocal at the legislature on Fridays from 10 AM to 2 PM on a weekly basis. Finally, a SEBAC rally at noon on March 25th will bring thousands of state employees to Hartford.

Details regarding all of the above-mentioned activities are being arranged as I write this column, and other activities will follow. Please participate in every way you can.

If we stand together and let our voices be heard, we can make a difference.

Legislative *ACTION*

Defending the Quality of our Community Colleges



Senator Eric Coleman (D-Bloomfield) talks about the budget with 4C's and other SEIU members at a Hartford area legislative forum. A dozen similar forums are scheduled around the state.

On February 4, Governor Rell announced her proposed budget for the next two years. Since then, changes have been occurring on a daily basis, with proposals being discussed, altered or rejected and additional ideas for solving the budget crisis being made.

For the most up-to-date information, visit the 4C's website at www.the4cs.org.

The 4C's is taking an active role on several fronts. We invite you to join us in defending the quality of education at our Community Colleges.

Legislative Action Committee Designs Action Plan

The 4C's Legislative Action Committee, chaired by **Janet Lanci**, met on Feb. 13 to devise an action plan for the coming months. Immediately following the meeting, the group visited the State Capitol where the Appropriations Committee was holding hearings on the Higher Education budget.

President Steve Cohen testified on the proposed budget, saying "My fellow 4C's members and I chose our careers, in large measure, because we enjoy help-

ing others. Please give us the resources to do our jobs."

Cohen also criticized the Governor's proposal to create a "Middle College System" by merging the community colleges and the technical high schools.

"It may or may not be a good idea, but it requires serious study. More to the point, it requires the involvement of those of us who understand how our system works and what our students require," he said.

The Legislative Action Committee, with help from Political Director **Bob Fernandez** and our lobbyist **Bob Shea**, is asking every member to take part in legislative activities this year. "It is so important for legislators to hear from faculty and staff concerning the impact cuts will have on our colleges and our students," Janet said.

Because Gov. Rell has proposed significant cuts to the Community College budget as well as devastating changes to collective bargaining laws, the Committee is urging members to contact their legislators with two simple messages: "Don't slash the community college

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Economist Robert H. Frank speaking at a forum on Connecticut's Economic Crisis.

SEBAC Sponsors Forum on the Economic Crisis

Immediately funding public services and creating jobs should be the first steps in solving our economic crisis, agreed Cornell Economist Robert H. Frank and Cong. Chris Murphy. The duo were keynote speakers at a SEBAC-sponsored economic forum held at the State Capitol on Feb. 9.

Frank, a New York Times columnist, said cutting services and imposing regressive fees on middle and lower-income wage earners will only worsen the crisis. He suggested a more progressive income tax structure that increases taxes on the wealthy.

Cong. Murphy talked about the federal stimulus legislation. "This is about preserving jobs and putting funds into the services that will get us through the difficult times," he said.



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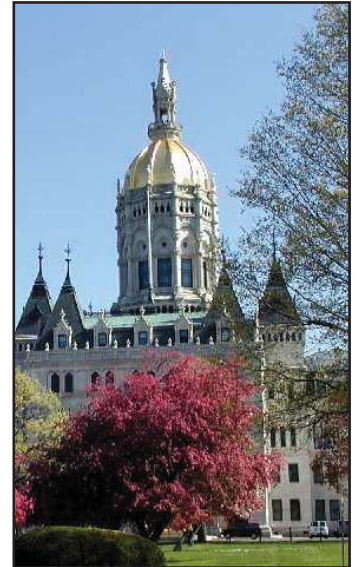
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Find Legislative Information
at the General Assembly
Web Site:

www.cga.ct.gov

Defending the Quality of our Community Colleges



Several members of the 4C's Legislative Action Committee attended a public hearing on the budget for Higher Education, including those shown here: (from left) Trent Wright, MxCC, Bryan Bonina, TxCC, Janet Lanci, HCC, Steve Cohen, NCC, Bob Reutenauer, 4C's staff, and Bill Tyszka, 4C's retiree.

continued from page 4
budget and don't cripple collective bargaining."

Contact information for legislators is printed on the next several pages. Sample messages are available on the 4C's website, www.the4cs.org. If you do not know which legislators represent you, click the link for "Find My Legislator."

Meeting with legislators face-to-face is extremely effective. The Committee plans to hold 4C's lobby days every Friday at the Capitol. If you can join us on a Friday between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., please call the 4C's office.

In addition, regional and local meetings with legislators are scheduled. Go to the 4C's website for specific dates, times, and places.

State Employees Asked to be Part of the Solution

Representatives of the state employee unions, including the 4C's, are meeting with the Rell administration to discuss ways we can work together to save money and preserve services.

Several sessions are scheduled during the month of February.

A confidentiality agreement limits information on the substance of these talks, but the unions have pledged that all tentative agreements will be presented to members for ratification.

All information is posted on the 4C's website as it is released, www.the4cs.org.

Better Choices for Connecticut: State Budget Plan

A recently-formed campaign in Connecticut announced its "Better Choices" budget plan to reform the state tax system and raise the revenue to protect crucial public structures – like schools, health care programs, roads, environmental protection agencies, and public safety organizations – from severe cuts that would undermine the state's economic recovery and quality of life.

On February 2, 2009, the new "Better Choices for Connecticut" campaign, which was formed by nonprofit providers, public service workers, and community and advocacy organizations, released a policy paper explaining a detailed plan to balance the state's budget through increased revenues.

The 4C's approved a motion to join the coalition at the February meeting of the Delegate Assembly.

Revenues in the "Better Choices" tax plan for Fiscal Year 2010 come from:

- Raising income taxes on the state's wealthiest residents (\$0.8 to 1.2 billion)
- Closing corporate tax "loopholes" (\$130 to 150 million)
- A one percentage point increase in the sales tax (\$575 to 625 million). This would be offset by new tax credits aimed at stimulating the labor force and economy:
 - a state earned income tax credit (-\$50 million)
 - a new small business property tax credit (-\$100 million)
- Scaling back public subsidies to the entertainment industry (\$90 to 100 million)
- Increased taxes on alcohol and tobacco (\$78 to 80 million)
- Funds expected from the federal economic stimulus plan (\$700 million)
- Funds drawn from the state's "Rainy Day Fund" (\$500 million)

The group says that proposals that depend heavily on service cuts will

only deepen the recession in the short term and make the state less fiscally sound in the long-run.

4C's Members

ACC Member Authors Books on Faculty Development

Asnuntuck Professor **Bill Searle** used his sabbatical last year to complete three books. "They have sexy, best-seller style titles," he kidded as he ran through them:



- *Classroom Assessment: A Manual for Faculty Developers.*
- *Engaging Students: Professional Development Resources to Support a Student-Centered Teaching Program.*
- *Learning Styles: Professional Development Resources.*

Bill writes for the North American Council for Staff, Program and Organizational Development, which provides the manuals to members for free. Copies have also been given to every college in our system.

The manuals suggest dozens of workshops, numerous ideas for helping college faculty develop additional teaching skills, and links to more than 100 excellent online sites.

"I know of no other such resource," said Bill. "The manuals will be especially helpful to small colleges, like ours, that do not have full-time staff in Teaching/Learning Centers."

Below: HCC members enjoy themselves at a Holiday lunch. Party-goers donated items which allowed the chapter to distribute 26 bags of food and toys to needy students and families.



Jerry Pagano and Colleagues Honored at NVCC Ceremony

In December, Naugatuck Valley honored 49 faculty and staff members for their years of service to the college.

Jerry Pagano, professor of math, was recognized for forty years of service to the Community College.

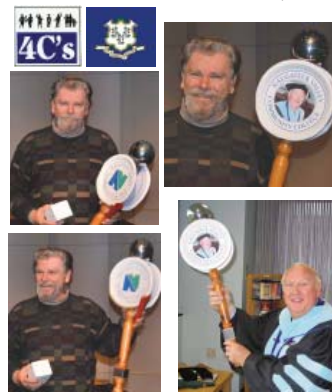
He has also been a 4C's member and union leader since the union's founding in 1973.

The union applauded his dedication and commitment at the December meeting of the Delegate Assembly. He was presented with the citation, at right, by NVCC colleague **Rob Henderson**.

Congratulations Jerry Pagano

on your 40 years as a State of Connecticut Employee and dedicated 4C's Union member.

December 12, 2008



A citation honors Jerry Pagano. He is holding a mace bearing the picture of former NVCC president Richard Sanders.

NY Times Features HCC Member

The *New York Times* featured Housatonic ESL professor **Andrew Coté** in a November 30th article. The article is primarily about Andrew's beekeeping and honey-making skills.

Andrew, who provided 4,000 honey bears for distribution to 4C's members last year, maintains over 200 hives in Connecticut and New York.

The *Times* article also mentions Andrew's passion for travel and his recent educational project, a non-profit aid program: "Bees Without Borders". The group teaches bee-



Andrew Coté with a frame of honeybees.

keeping techniques in impoverished areas around the world. For information, visit **beeswithoutborders.org**. For information about Andrew's honey business, visit **cthoney.com**.

CCC Member Rushes to Aid Choking Colleague

Capital's Dept. of Public Safety congratulated CCC's Director of Placement Testing and 4C's Presidential Aide **Hassan Babatunji** for his effort to save a colleague from choking. The victim was close to passing out when Hassan performed the Heimlich Maneuver. Hassan was able to dislodge the material on his third attempt. The victim reported that she was choking on "lumpy Spanish rice."

Elections for 4C's Officers this Spring

This spring, 4C's members will elect the union leadership team for the next two years. Any 4C's member has the right to seek nomination.

On February 7, the Delegate Assembly selected an Elections Committee. The Committee's first task is to solicit nominations for each office. Individuals or chapters may forward names for consideration to the 4C's Elections Committee, 907 Wethersfield Avenue, Hartford, CT 06114 or by e-mail to mary@the4cs.org.

On March 6, Officer candidates will be nominated at the Delegate Assembly meeting. At this meeting, the Elections Committee will present its nominations. Further nominations may be made from the floor of the Delegate Assembly. Nominations will be closed at the conclusion of the Delegate Assembly.

The Elections Committee will design a ballot for use in April elections and



Ballots will be mailed to members' homes. Make sure the union has your correct address. A change of address form is available on the 4C's website.

will establish election procedures which ensure ballot secrecy while enabling verification of voter eligibility. The Committee is guided by U.S. Department of Labor standards for electing union officials.

Members who have questions about what is involved in serving in a leadership position are encouraged to talk to members of the Elections Committee. Committee members, along with other elections information, is posted on the 4C's website, www.the4cs.org.

Officer Positions to be Elected

There are 8 Officer positions up for election this spring:

- President
- Secretary
- Vice President from Teaching Faculty
- Vice President from ACLS
- Vice President from Part-timers
- Professional Affairs Officer
- Organizational Affairs Officer
- Diversity Officer

Changes to the 4C's Constitution Approved by Large Margin

In balloting held in February, members approved a number of changes to the 4C's Constitution designed to make the union more democratic, transparent, and accountable to the members.

Some of the most important changes are:

- Increasing the number of state-wide elected officers from 6 to 8.
- Increasing the number of Chairs elected (as opposed to appointed) by the statewide committees.
- Transferring some power from the Executive Board to the larger Delegate Assembly

The 4C's Constitution is available on the 4C's website, www.the4cs.org. Printed copies will be available in the near future.

Gateway's Jesse Davis Tapped for Equal Opportunities Committee

The 4C's Equal Opportunities Committee has chosen a veteran member to lead the committee. **Jesse Davis**, a founding member of the 4C's, is in his 38th year teaching at Gateway Community College.

A Psychology and Philosophy Professor, Jesse says he's eager to move forward on a number of projects and welcomes all newcomers to the committee.

The Equal Opportunities Committee is charged with addressing issues of equity and parity within the community colleges, increasing career

advancement opportunities for minorities, promoting an appreciation of our diversity, and monitoring the Minority Fellows Program.

Jesse takes over the helm of the committee from Mildred Hodge, a TRCC member who led the committee for many years. Mildred resigned as EOC Chair last semester.





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