

MTA Higher Ed Director meets with faculty on adjunct/contingent issues

Joey Hansen, MTA Higher Education director, met with faculty last week to discuss ways to improve conditions for contingent faculty (adjunct and temporary full time) at MCLA and state-wide.

He also met with faculty members considering switching from the Optional Retirement Program (ORP) to the state pension plan (MERS).

Both tenured and contingent faculty gathered in the Faculty Center to strategize how to extend the "Reverse the Course," campaign to state universities and colleges

"Reverse the Course" was initiated last year to reverse the over-reliance on part-time faculty at community colleges and create more tenure-track positions. In November, sponsored by the MTA, House Bill 1086 was introduced to the state legislature. Titled "An Act to Maintain Faculty and College Excellence in the Commonwealth," the bill calls for equity pay for contingent staff, based on a pro-rated workload. Now before the Joint Committee on Higher Education, it also calls for greater consideration of contingent faculty in hiring.

"I am glad that we invited Joey to campus to a range of issues related to the work lives of contingent faculty," Faculty Association president Dana Rapp said. "It was his first visit to any of the nine state universities for such a purpose.

"Several of us left the meeting with the sense that the conversation should continue both locally and at the state level.

"I have asked Joey to visit the remaining eight state universities and have the same conversation so that we can build a broader platform and voice for contingent faculty."

Dana said he will also ask the MSCA and MTA for additional support for efforts to improve conditions for contingent faculty, including planning a yearly conference to focus on faculty concerns.

Thanks to those who served, from Dana Rapp

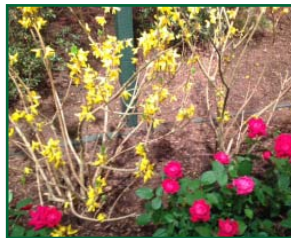
I want to thank everyone who served on governance committees in the 2013-14 academic year and encourage new faculty, and faculty who have not served on a committee for a while, to nominate themselves. The governance committees provide an opportunity to influence and direct decisions being made about our academic life and institutional culture.

The position of Faculty Association President, as I mentioned in the past, will also need to be filled. I encourage anyone interested to contact me for information above and beyond what I have outlined in the committee responsibilities attachment.

Ballots have been mailed email. Committee roles and election protocols are also outlined in email.

Many thanks to Graziana for helping with the process.

— Dana



Professor Ed Miano has taught management and accounting at MCLA for 30 years. He retires this spring.

Retiring college professor Ed Miano has been a mainstay in college academic life

Maria LaValley, office manager for Sociology and other departments, was a student in 1984 when Ed Miano joined the faculty in the Business Administration and Economics Department.

She took several classes from Miano, including a winter-session course. "He was always concerned about his students and their learning," she says. "He was very caring, would go the extra mile for you."

For 30 years Miano has taught a range of courses in the Business Administration & Economics department. He also taught Core Curriculum and First Year Seminar classes, and collaborated with other faculty. Concerned with good writing, he challenged his students to broaden and improve their skills. Evenings and weekends, he spent many hours reading and assessing papers.

A colleague, Michele Ethier, writes:

"Ed has been a friend for over 28 years. His sharp wit and devilish sense of humor made many committee meetings worth attending. Put a libertarian and a socialist in a room, however, and sparks are bound to fly. We didn't often agree about how to interpret the contract or what to do about an issue but I always, always, respected and admired Ed's commitment to truth and justice. Besides Ed's warmth, genuineness, kindness, and generosity, I will miss his sincere dedication to his students, his devotion to the ideal of the university and his skill as a grievance officer. Many times I sought his wise counsel on matters that concerned faculty rights and obligations. Without Ed Miano, the university is diminished. Congratulations, Ed, and Happy Retirement!"

Department colleague and former department chair, Nancy Ovitsky writes:

"When I think of Ed, I think of someone always hard-working, always conscientious, willing to take on additional assignments for the good of the students and our programs. He would often take on five preps a semester (and if I remember correctly, a few times it was more than that!), serving both the department and the Core Curriculum through his teaching of College Writing II and his Core Capstone course. And almost every time I see Ed, he has a stack of papers in his hand that he is grading!

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Retiring Professor Annie Raskin shown talking with then Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky.

English professor Annie Raskin to retire after 12 years teaching literature & writing

Annie Raskin, whom students have known for her Graphic Novel, other literature and writing courses, retires at the end of this semester.

Since 2002, she has taught a range of courses in English & Communications, Women’s Studies and the Core Curriculum. While a member of the adjunct faculty (often teaching three courses a semester), she designed and taught three upper-level courses in the English Department, and one new Core Human Heritage course, American Regionalist Writers.

For three semesters she taught Introduction to Women’s Studies.

A writer as well as teacher, Raskin has been writing poems since she was a teenager. She has shared her poems in readings on and off campus, and has published poems in several journals, including *The Mind’s Eye*.

“I have been writing poetry since I was in Junior High,” she writes, “but began embracing the craft with purpose and intensity when I decided to compose a yearly poem for my daughter on her birthday, a practice I still continue with joy. This led me into a solid sense of myself as a poet, and I’ve now had a fair number of poems published in literary journals, have participated in poetry readings and had a sole reading at the North Bennington Library, just down the hill from my home.

“In this strange and not yet experienced new life as a retired woman, I hope to find the time, skill and luck to put together and publish my manuscript in progress with the working title of *Eros and Place*.”

Four poems from this collection can be read in *The Mind’s Eye*, 2013.

“Annie brings the mind of a poet to her love and teaching of literature,” a colleague, Ben Jacques, writes. “And she has been a gateway to scholarship and the pleasure of learning in the varied courses she has taught.”

Notes & credits

Math professor **Duy Nguyen** and MCLA’s mathematics club organized the first annual mathematics tournament for area high school students on Saturday, April 12, held in the Center for Science and Innovation.

English professor **Zack Finch** recently organized a service project for his creative writing class. The project involves MCLA students mentoring students in Drury High School’s Writing Workshop, led by teacher Melissa Quirk Cairns. Professor Finch plans to continue this project next year.

Thanks to Biology chair **Ann Billetz** and Modern Languages chair **Graziana Ramsden** and the advisory board for planning and coordinating the 12th annual Undergraduate Research Conference April 17.

Earlier in April Billetz and Ramsden traveled with eight students, who presented at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research at the University of Kentucky.

Environmental studies chair **Elena Traister** attended the Northeast Natural History Conference in Springfield with two students, who presented.

Ed Miano continued:

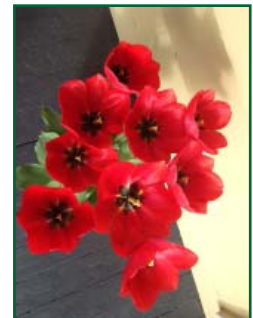
“Beyond the classroom, Ed has always been a strong union member, which results in his tireless commitment to contractual obligations and beyond. He was our campus grievance officer for a number of years; he has served on the Committee on Promotions multiple years; within the Department he helps with everything—Admission events, faculty searches, peer evaluations, curriculum development, etc.

“I wish Ed the very best in his retirement, and I and MCLA will miss his tireless devotion to the institution and to his students.”

The Faculty Center

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Faculty Center News
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Take me for a ride
in your pickup?

Photos by Ben Jacques

