



## Know Your Grievance Team!

Hi everyone.

My name is

**Dawson McDermott**, and I am your Grievance Team chairperson. I have been on the team and the chair for 15 years. The first fall article of the Panorama, I like to introduce the Grievance Team and what our role



is in your Professional Association. The last few years, there has been a lot of interest in serving on this team, which is very exciting. There is no better way to learn the contract than time on this team.

Here is your team:

**Patti Antanavige**



**Shahida Dar**



**Tracy Coulson**



**Tom Schink**



The primary role of the Grievance Team is to enforce the collective bargaining agreement. Article 15 allows for a grievance to be filed if it is believed to be a violation of the CBA. Bargaining unit members are not expected to understand if an issue is a violation, hence why there is a team. The team is there for you to ask questions as they arise. If you have a situation you need to talk about, these are the individuals to reach out to. If you hear from another bargaining unit member with issues, please refer them to any of us. We also can answer questions about the collective bargaining agreement.

Another role for the team is to represent bargaining unit members in meetings with Human Resources. From time to time, a member may be brought in for an investigation into an issue, being presented a notice of charge (aka discipline), or any issue in need of representation. Our presence is to ensure there is not violation of bargaining unit rights, that protocol is followed properly, and that a member understands their rights and responses if necessary. A role I certainly relish and have learned to enjoy is being a part of the Negotiations Team. Having a member of Grievance necessary. As new language is developed or presented at negotiations, our experiences in applying the language from contracts allows for deeper discussions. Also, knowing the reasoning behind language allows for better application and

representation for our unit. It is also another great way to learn the contract.

Finally, the role that has come just with experience...and being involved for 15 years. Members of the team have access to the history of the PA through files of grievances, arbitrations, and contracts. We become the historians, reaching back to the past, to apply in the moment. At times, that means reaching out to retirees... that include not just our members, but also administrators. Being that I am the old man on the team, I still have access to individuals that pre-date my time at MVCC, and it really adds to the understanding and application of our CBA.

Overall, we are here to answer questions and support you. Please feel free to ask questions of us, contact us when you have doubt, or hear from others concerning issues. Take care and have a great day.

### In This Issue

Prez Desk	2
New Member Profile	3
Community Outreach Update	3
A Call to Action	3
Committee updates throughout	

# PREZ DESK



## What is a union?

By Norma Chrisman

One of the lessons learned during the JANUS versus AFSCME case is the importance of communicating with our members. It is important that members are educated, advocated for and collaborated with. One on one meetings is a tool in our communication arsenal that we implemented to communicate with our members, in addition to emails, newsletters, and general membership meetings. This allowed for PA leadership, also known as ambassadors, to sit down with members to educate them on what is going on in the PA and listen to issues and questions that our members may have. Issues and questions, if they could not be answered in the meetings, were followed up with or referred to appropriate leadership to assist the member. The Community Outreach committee provided opportunities for members to collaborate with different groups where they could donate items or their time to assist others.

So, it sounds like the JANUS court decision only strengthened our union, right? It did, in fact, force us to take a good look at ourselves. We \*thought\* that we already knew how everyone felt about the union but we were unsure how people would react when asking them to recommit to the PA. Were we concerned that not everyone would recommit to staying with the union? I would be lying if I said we weren't. What we found was that of our 252 members, only two stated that they did not want to be part of the union. Statewide, of the 600,000 members, about 300 chose to opt out of being part of their respective unions. JANUS is now behind us. We know that you are sticking with the union but we can't just sit back and think that everything is all good now that the dust has settled from the JANUS decision. Other court cases loom in an attempt to dismantle unions.

Where do we go from here? We will continue to have one on one meetings with our members. I am charging the ambassadors with distributing printed contracts at your next one on one meeting. I am asking that this meeting occur before the end of the fall semester. This will give you an opportunity to sit down with your ambassador and ask them any question that you may have.

What is my ask of you? Educate yourself by reading the contract. The contract that you read today has evolved from a few pages, originating in the early 1970's, to the eighty or so pages that you see now. Advocate for yourself by asking questions either to your ambassador or to any of the PA leadership. Collaborate by either serving on a PA Committee or by participating in any Community Outreach initiative.

Prominent labor activist, Rose Schneiderman, once stated "Today, for many people, being a union member simply means paying union dues, but in the early days there were so few of us that if a majority of the members were not active, the union ceased to exist." Educating, advocating and collaborating are steps that members can initiate to be more involved in the union. I am pledging to be union strong and union proud, will you?

In Solidarity,  
Norma

(In case you want to look at our contract before receiving a hard copy, you can go to <http://mvccpa.org/contract-constitution/> and click on the link in the body of the page. The Negotiation team will be asking you for input in the near future as we head back to the negotiation table in the spring semester.)

# DON'T FORGET TO



# !!!

## NEW MEMBER PROFILE

PAnorama welcomes

**Kate Polivka,**  
Technical assistant  
in chemistry!



Born in Russia, she came to this country as a young child, and was raised in Dolgeville and afterwards in Florida. Fluent in Korean, Russian, and Spanish in addition to her flawless English, she explained "I just love languages."

Kate earned a bachelor's degree in geoscience from Southern New Hampshire University while serving as a peer tutor in science there. But she is also an MVCC alumna. Mentored by Professor Joyce Baumann, she later joined the adjunct faculty, a role that led to her current position.

Besides her work here, Kate teaches ESL on-line to school children in China, and serves as a social media evaluator, critiquing advertisements and Web sites.

Her impressive resume includes such varied non-academic experiences as serving in the Army National Guard, truck driving, and heading up her own construction company. As she told PAno, "I've done every job under the sun except fast food."

She enjoys reading science fiction and fantasy, and is especially enthusiastic about the Harry Potter novels and the work of Stephen King. She's also a fan of Korean film, an interest that motivated her to learn that language. In addition, she loves gardening, and for the past two years has been Garden Leader of the Unity South Community Garden in Utica.

Kate lives in Utica with her two young daughters.

## Community Outreach Committee Update

Committee Members

Robin Saxe  
Kirstin Edwards  
Michelle Kelly  
Carolyn DeJohn  
Lindsey Geary  
Sam Lilly  
Tom Zenon  
Dina Radeljas  
Jed Kimball



The fall 2018 semester is off to a great start! It was a privilege to drop off more than 30 new backpacks to the students of Kernan Elementary School. These backpacks were filled with much needed school supplies. We appreciate your participation with our first backpack challenge, and hope that you will again contribute as we start our coat drive in support the children of Kernan School. Coats, hats and gloves can be dropped off directly to committee members. New and gently used coats in all sizes will be accepted starting Nov. 1.



### Upcoming volunteer opportunities!

November 17th we will be assisting Rome Rescue Mission in preparation for their upcoming holiday events and food give away. For more information on volunteering or donating please contact Sam Lilly.

We will be working with the United Way holding an on campus Day of Action November 27th 10:00-12:00. Volunteers will be packaging meals for those in our community facing food insecurities including our own MVCC C3 students. Look for volunteer sign up information coming to you in email.

We have two PA Film Series movies both with lecture by Bill Perrotti  
Monday November 12th Homeless: The Motel Kids Of Orange County  
Monday December 3rd North Country



Pay day is changing to **every other Friday** effective our next payroll.

Instead of being paid on 10/30/2018, we will be paid on 11/02/2018.



## A Call to Action:

There is no better time than the present to take on your civic duty as a member of the MVCC Professional Association. Approximately 18% of the current membership participate on PA committees. Before long the spring election season will be here. I am not exaggerating, have you been into Walmart lately, it is already the 25th of December. Somehow "All Hallows Eve" and "Thanksgiving" have already passed us by.

The Professional Association has lots of opportunity for you to get involved. You do not have to wait until the spring election cycle and you do not have to be elected to a committee to be part of it (the negotiations committee might be the sole exception). Committee chairs and members would welcome your interest and your ideas. The following is a list of PA committees and committee chairs. I encourage you to take part in any and all you may have an interest in. Now is the time, tomorrow never comes!

### **Audit Committee –**

Robert Huyck, Chair

1. Audit the financial records of the Association for the previous fiscal year.
2. Report its findings to the Executive Board within fourteen (14) calendar days of the end of the fiscal year.
3. Conduct special audits.
4. Report the findings of any special audits to the Executive Board.

### **Community Outreach Committee –**

Robin Saxe, Chair

1. Plan and recommend Association outreach efforts.
2. Seek active support of Association retirees in outreach activities.
3. Plan media coverage of Association outreach activities.
4. Submit any activities to the Executive Board prior to implementation.

### **Education and Training Committee –**

Melissa Barlett, Chair

1. Provide in-house training to the membership as approved by the Executive Board.
2. Facilitate member participation in appropriate educational activities.

### **Grievance Committee –**

Dawson McDermott, Chair

1. Administer the grievance procedure as described in the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
2. Inform the Negotiations Committee of issues that should be considered in negotiating the next Collective Bargaining Agreement or other agreements.
3. Train newer committee members so that all might be able to process grievances, act in cases of discipline, and serve the needs of the membership.
4. Report to the membership the status of various cases.
5. Archive and maintain Grievance Committee records and databases.

### **Internal Communications Committee –**

Diana Ayers-Darling, Chair

1. Formulate mechanisms to effectively and regularly communicate with the membership of the organization.
2. Present a slate of candidates to the voting members prior to May 1st.
3. Conduct elections and other balloting as needed.
4. Ascertain the concerns of Association members eligible to vote with regard to terms and conditions of employment and submit a report to the Executive Board and the Negotiations Committee prior to the start of negotiations.
5. Maintain the member database.
6. Mobilize member support during negotiations.

### **Member Services Committee –**

Patti Antanavige, Chair

1. Identify and train members with specialties who may be resources to the Association.
2. Inform members about Association benefits.
3. Plan social activities with Executive Board approval.
4. Develop and maintain communications and an organizational relationship with Association retirees.
5. Contact new employees for the purpose of recruitment.
6. Plan group activities that unite and promote the Association and its goals.

### **Member Support and Recognition Committee –**

No chair

1. Send out congratulation and get well cards.

### **Negotiations Committee –**

Chair To be elected.

1. Draft a contract proposal to present to the College after receiving the report of the Internal Communication Committee.
2. Present a report outlining the broad goals of the negotiations proposal to the Executive Board.
3. Enter into negotiations with the appropriate individuals or bodies.
4. Report to the President of the Association any change in the status of negotiations.
5. Report periodically the status of negotiations to the Executive Board.
6. Present the proposed Collective Bargaining Agreement to the Executive Board for authorization of the ratification process.
7. Act for the Association in the event that the Association enters into other negotiations during the term of the contract.

Answers on page 5

### **New Member Committee –**

Aaron Fried, Chair

1. Formulate mechanisms to effectively and regularly communicate with the new membership.
2. Work with the other committees to educate new members regarding the role of unions and the Professional Association, their rights and responsibilities under the Collective Bargaining Agreement, the Constitution and By-laws, and the Benefits Fund.
3. Plan group activities that unite and promote the Association and its goals.
4. Provide mentoring for new members.

### **Political Outreach Committee –**

Justin Rahn, Chair

1. Formulate mechanisms to encourage, promote and support the goals of the Association through the political process within the College and at the local, regional and state levels.
2. Expend Vote/Cope funds with Executive Board approval.
3. Seek active support of Association retirees.
4. Submit any activities to the Executive Board prior to implementation.

### **Research and Records Committee-**

Jocelyn Ireland, Chair

1. Build and maintain an archive of Association information as directed by the Executive Board.
2. Design member databases.
3. Conduct research on matters affecting the members of the Association.
4. Provide research and statistical services.

### **Sick Leave Donation Committee-**

No Chair

1. Sick Leave Donation is used when a member needs to request sick leave donation.
2. To approve the request that comes from HR.

### **Internal Communications Committee update:**

Finally, the first meeting for the Internal Communications Committee took place. As the chair of the committee I have the responsibility to provide members with an update.

This committee is responsible for the PA bulletin boards located:

- a. Outside President Van Wagoner's office
- b. In the AB Lobby.
- c. Outside the MVCC bookstore.

In the near future you should see the following on those boards:

- a. Photos and short bios of our new members.
- b. Photos of the Executive Board.

We also reviewed our charges as a committee; most of our discussion focused on our first: "Formulate mechanisms to effectively and regularly communicate with the membership of the organization."

Our discussion revolved around what information do our members want and the best way to provide that information. One of the current goals of the Internal Communications Committee is to provide members with information on meeting dates, times, and agendas for each of the committees. So, be looking for email updates on those.

The committee is also open to suggestions regarding what you want to know and how should we best provide that information. Please send all suggestions and comments to: [day-ers-darling@mvvc.edu](mailto:day-ers-darling@mvvc.edu).

## **Final Results of the Negotiation Team:**

Aaron Fried  
Alison Doughtie  
Shahida Dar  
Dawson McDermott  
Kevin Siembab  
Justin Rahn  
Alternate: Patti Antanavige

## **CC Conference Experience** By Robin Saxe

It was my privilege to attend the NY-SUT Community College Conference in Cooperstown this October. I had attended this conference once before, many years ago, with a much different perspective on my place in my Union. I knew little about the PA then, I was just a member. I attended the conference halfheartedly not knowing how much I really wanted to be involved. I attended this year's conference with full attention and commitment having felt the full support of the MVCC Professional Association as I have since gone through many transitions here at the college. The overwhelming message of this year's conference was unity and communication.

In a world where there is so much communication and so many ways to communicate we don't seem to be communicating at all. Much of the conversation concentrated on going back to basics, the face to face one on one. Having conversations to get messages out and questions answered. Sharing ideas, hopes and fears one on one with our Union brothers and sisters.

This was my take away from this year's conference, supporting each other and keeping our Union strong. I am always here to lend an ear, answer the questions I know, or find the answers I don't.

## Local Action Project – Year 2

Over the summer, the Local Action Project Team came together in Saratoga Springs, NY to strategically plan for the Professional Association's 2018-2019 academic year. Sponsored by NYSUT, the Local Action Plan (LAP) is intended to assist locals with strengthening their union by providing union centered, timely training on the programs four pillars:

- Increasing Membership Engagement
- Strengthening Political Action
- Expanding Community Engagement
- Improving Communications, Media, and Public Relations

These four pillars provide a framework from which to center the association's activities for the current school year. As a part of this year's planning, we have identified initiatives such as recognizing members for their promotions, starting a scholarship fund to address the gap that students have to purchase their academic materials such as books and needed equipment (not fund-able by LAP), resurrection of the Legisletter publication to inform local Legislators about the needs and activities of the Professional association as well as several more initiatives to help strengthen our union.

In addition to providing training and the space to work on our LAP plan, NYSUT provides to us a commitment of funding 40% our approved activities. Committees have already begun working on our initiatives for this year and we hope that many of you will contribute as you see the opportunity to. For more information and details, visit the new [www.mvccpa.org](http://www.mvccpa.org)

## Be the Union!

E E A W W U R M E Y N B E E V  
T C G H Y E V T O O A U T C H  
A I U W B C A S I R L B A N C  
C O W M C C M T G A M B R A O  
U V E P O Z A A V Z O L O V L  
D M A V L I I C B R Q E B E L  
E F D J C N S T R O N G A I E  
L A N O I S S E F O R P L R C  
O T S N B E N E F I T S L G T  
S S G H P F V V P R D L O K I  
A Z G K K M P H G Q K U C G V  
T C A R T N O C Q B N A O H E  
C O M M U N I C A T E O B R M  
P R Z H U E T A I T O G E N P  
N Y S U T L Q N O I N U Q I N

ADVOCATE  
ASSOCIATION  
BARGAINING  
BENEFITS  
COLLABORATE  
COLLECTIVE  
COMMUNICATE  
CONTRACT  
EDUCATE  
GRIEVANCE  
MEMBER  
MVCCPA  
NEGOTIATE  
NYSUT  
PROFESSIONAL  
PROUD  
STRONG  
UNION  
VALUE  
VOICE

## Panorama's Editorial Policy

Panorama is the voice of our local. In addition to the PA website ([www.mvccpa.org](http://www.mvccpa.org)), email, and bulletin boards, Panorama is the principal vehicle for bringing you, on a regular basis, information on the views and activities of our members.

We welcome articles by, for, and about PA members of union related issues and concerns as reflected in NYSUT and AFT activities as well as in the purpose and functions of the PA's standing committees: Community Outreach, Education & Training, Grievance, Internal Communication, Political Action, and Research and Records.

All submissions are subject to the review and acceptance of the Editor and/or Internal Communications Committee. We do not accept articles that make personal attacks and we reserve the right to edit articles for length. We look forward to hearing from you.

Publisher  
MVCC Professional Association  
President  
Norma Chrisman  
Editor  
Sharon Kane Zohne  
Edition  
March 2018  
Website  
[www.mvccpa.org](http://www.mvccpa.org)

 **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION**  
UNITED for EXCELLENCE in EDUCATION





Affiliate #2839

Affiliate #39015