

panorama

UNITED FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION



Applications open for annual PA Scholarship

The Internal Communications Committee will present two \$1,000 scholarships this year; please spread the word and encourage students you work with to apply by Dec. 1.

Application process

Scholarship forms are available at the Office of Institutional Advancement, Payne Hall 220, Mohawk Valley Community College, 1101 Sherman Drive, Utica, NY 13501-5349.



Eligibility

To be eligible for the scholarship, applicants must:

- Have completed at least 30 credit hours at MVCC at the time of application,
- Submit a current MVCC transcript reflecting a minimum 3.00 GPA,
- Include two letters of recommendation, and
- Write a 500-word essay on either The Importance of Labor Unions in American Society or The Value of a Community College Education.

The PA Internal Communications Committee will review all completed applications, select the scholarship recipients, and forward the students' names to the PA Executive Board for approval.

The essays of the scholarship winners will be published in an upcoming issue of PANorama, and scholarships will be awarded during the PA's annual January luncheon.

CONTENTS

Prez Desk	2
Contract Update	2
Member Benefits News	3
Holiday Ajar Information	3
Fall 2024 Member Recognition	4-5
Union Story	6-7
Community Outreach Committee	7
PA Finances	8
Yue Riesbeck wins Gompers Award	9
New Member Committee	10
Member profile	11

panorama

EDITORIAL POLICY

Panorama is the voice of our local. In addition to the PA website (www.mvccpa.org), email, and bulletin boards, Panorama is a 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 Communications, Political Action, and Research & 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

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR

Robin Saxe

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WEBSITE

www.mvccpa.org

Prez Desk

The Fifteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution states, "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Furthermore, the Nineteenth Amendment states, "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."



Norma Chrisman

I won't get on my soapbox and tell you who I think you should vote for as it is not my place to do so. You are well-educated and informed people who are more than capable of deciding who to vote for. Some vote along "party lines" while others vote on preference of one candidate over the other. Regardless of which method you use, you are still exercising your right to vote.

While "election season" brings out mud-slinging, it becomes something akin to defending your favorite sports team. Your team always has that one rival. You always have the facts regarding why you root for the "better" team. Politics tends to be much the same.

Continued on next page

CONTRACT UPDATE

Check your mailbox: 2024-2027 contract delivered to membership

Please note that printed copies of the 2024-2027 MVCC Professional Association Contract have been delivered to the membership.

If you have not received a printed copy, please check your mailbox. If you still don't have one, please contact PA President Norma Chrisman at nchrisman@mvcc.edu.

Prez Desk (continued)

Regardless of how bad your team/candidate may be doing, you always find some quality you hold in high regard. I may not agree with everything they do or say, but in the end, they are “my team/candidate.”

During many recent elections, and in particular the upcoming election, I’ve heard many people say they don’t intend to vote because they don’t like any candidate. Voting for one candidate over any other doesn’t mean you truly like them any better, it just means you may dislike that candidate less than the other.

Our forefathers felt it was our right to vote for the candidate of our choice. Not voting implies that you don’t care about that right nor do you care how the elected candidate chooses to represent you. President Franklin D Roosevelt said, “Nobody will ever deprive the American people of the right to vote except the American people themselves and the only way they could do this is by not voting.”

Don’t leave it all up to “Sally” ...



Please do your part — get out and



New from Member Benefits: Credit counseling

Credit card debt has hit an all-time high. Cambridge Credit Counseling is a great resource for helping PA members pay down and eliminate their credit card debt.

NYSUT members are eligible to receive a free, confidential, no-obligation debt consultation with one of Cambridge’s certified counselors, who can assist you with:

- Better understanding your unique situation and financial goals

- Identifying, categorizing, and reviewing all of your income and expenses
- Creating or revising a budget
- Offering recommendations for achieving that budget

Cambridge also can assist NYSUT members with debt management. To learn more about these services, visit this link: <https://memberbenefits.nysut.org/program-service/legal-and-financial/debt-counseling>

Holiday ajar information for full-time employees

Please be advised that most College offices will be closed for the ajar period beginning Tuesday, Dec. 24, 2024, and will re-open on Thursday, Jan. 2, 2025.

For PA and AMVA members, Columbus Day, Election Day, Veterans Day, and Lincoln’s and

Washington’s Birthdays have been designated as in-place-of days for the 2024-25 academic year and will be observed during the ajar period. Excluded Administrative Staff and UPSEU members who wish to take time off during the ajar period may use accrued and unused vacation, compensatory, and personal time.

Member Recognition

On Aug. 21, the PA welcomed new and returning members to the 2024-25 academic year at its Fall Luncheon, where many PA members were recognized for retirements, years of service, promotions in academic rank, and continuing or career appointments. Congratulations to all!

2024 Retirees

- Robert Christman
- Elin Cormican
- Alan Hazen
- Carolyn Pace
- Todd Rankins
- Kevin Siembab

Promotions in Academic Rank

Assistant Professor

- Michael Kuczynski
- Amanda Sandstrom
- Kenny Stover

Associate Professor

- Ruyn Cavic
- Jocelyn Ireland
- Michelle Parker
- Alisia Pooley
- Nathan Roscup
- Derrick Stevens



Professor

- Jeffrey Birt
- Richard Kelly
- Jennifer Krohn
- Thomas Mihevc
- Roman Santos

Level II

- Tabitha Carter
- Amir Harbas
- Justin Johnson
- Isabella Theall

Level III

- Timothy Burke
- Teresa Fava-Schram
- Rachel Golden

Level IV

- Sandra Cummings
- Jennifer Fanelli
- Chrono Ho
- Barbara Seaton
- Matthew Warchal



Continuing & Career Appointments

Career Appointment

- Monica Brown-Hodkinson
- Timothy Burke
- Grace Costello
- Robert Rogan
- Robin Saxe

Continuing Appointment

- Lorin Williams
- Ross Wittenberg



Years of Service:

5 Years:

- Grace Costello
- Claire Ehrlich
- Gina Hayduk
- James Kelly
- Michael Kuczynski
- Dean McCarthy
- Amanda Sandstrom
- Robin Saxe
- Michelle Sebastian
- Kenny Stover
- Valerie Anguilli

10 Years:

- Angie Christian
- Shannon Crocker
- De'Anna Hopkinson
- Marek Koscinski
- Frank Noti
- Nathan Roscup
- Amit Sharma
- Nicole Benton

15 Years:

- Belinda Alvarado
- Joann DeTraglia
- Michael Faitell

- Aaron Fried
- Kathy Kotary
- Anna Radlowski
- Erin Severs
- Gina St. Croix

20 Years:

- Rosemary Fuoco
- Roman Santos

25 Years:

- Jeff Kimball
- Sergey Myalik
- Russell Penner
- Thomas Schink
- Scott Selden
- James Vitale
- Jennifer Krohn

30 Years:

- Nelissa Nowicki

My Union Story

When I first started my career in 2002 at MVCC, I had no intention of getting involved in the Professional Association (PA). At that time, my husband was employed at Beech-Nut Nutrition and he was very involved in his union. Every night, we would hear about different union/employer issues that he was battling, whether it be negotiations or day-to-day work issues. Not to mention the occasional phone calls, arbitrations or other duties that would pull him away from our family time. I would think to myself, what is the point in dealing with this nonsense day in and day out?



Norma Chrisman

Manager of
Educational
Technologies

PA President

At the beginning of my time at MVCC, unions were allowed to automatically deduct union dues from our pay. We could opt to be a member or be an agency fee payer. Agency fee payers could reap all of the benefits contained within the negotiated contract but could not vote in any of our union elections or attend any union functions/meetings. It was at that time that I started to change my opinion of unions. I figured, if the union is taking money from my paycheck, then I wanted to be involved and have a say in my union. I began by helping the webmaster of our mvccpa.org website and then became the database administrator for the Benefits Fund.

Fast forward to 2005 when I get a phone call at work from my husband. "Yeah, I just wanted to let you know that I got fired today." You can only imagine the thoughts that went through my head! Then he says "but don't worry about it. I'll be getting my job back." WHAT?!?!? HOW?!?!?

The next eight months were quite an educational

experience for me. I learned how long the grievance/arbitration could be, and quite honestly eight months is kind of quick (except when it involves you and your family going through it). After he came home from going to the first grievance meeting, I asked, "So when do you go back?" He just laughed, which was obviously not the answer I wanted to hear, and then he proceeded to explain the whole process to me.

The grievance / arbitration process is much like a court proceeding. During the grievance process, the two parties discuss the situation. (My husband had been accused of being insubordinate.) They attempt to come to a mutual agreement. If they can't come to an agreement, they go to arbitration. During arbitration, there is a hearing officer (the arbitrator), the representative for the union (a lawyer or labor relations specialist), and the representative for the employer (typically a lawyer). Witnesses are called for both sides, where each representative has the ability to cross-examine the witnesses. After all witnesses have been questioned, each representative writes a brief. The brief is a written statement by each representative explaining why they think their side is correct. The arbitrator reviews their notes from the hearing session(s) and each side's brief. After that, the arbitrator renders their decision. In my husband's case, the employer was found to be guilty of not having sufficient evidence to support his firing and my husband was awarded his job along with back pay since being let go.

It was after that that I felt like I needed to be more involved in the PA. I started by running for an open grievance committee position. While I knew that everything wasn't sunshine and roses at the College, I was blind to the issues that did exist. Through my years of serving in various

Continued on next page

Community Outreach Committee

Robin Saxe
Community Outreach Committee

Thank you to everyone who donated food and school supplies for Kernan Elementary. While we were dropping off the supplies, the students shared with us the tremendous success the pantry is having. They talked about the lack of stigma there is for those who use the pantry and how this is an opportunity for students to support and develop empathy for each other.

The Community Outreach Committee will be collecting food again prior to the upcoming holiday break. Donations can be brought to the New Member Reception on November 15, and starting November 11, donations can be dropped off in the box outside of the Testing Center in the first floor lobby of Payne Hall. And as always, a



monetary donation can be made via our PayPal account (mvccpa1@gmail.com — select “paying a friend”).

We are working on other opportunities for members to volunteer and donate throughout the year. Please be sure to watch your email for announcements!

My Union Story (continued)

capacities within the PA, Grievance Committee, Second Vice President, and now PA President, there has been one common thread. The relationship between labor and leadership relies upon each party having mutual respect and open communication. You may not always agree with the other party, but without respect, progress cannot be made. Without open communication, how can anything be settled?

I have seen the evolution of the level of communication between the PA and the College over the past 18 years. We have seen administrators come and go, but I truly believe right now, we are in a good place regarding

our union relationship with the College and its administrators. Don't get me wrong, we don't always agree, but we are both willing to talk through the issues and try to come up with an amicable solution.

While you may never aspire to being the PA President, I do hope that you would consider being involved in your union. Whether you serve on a committee (nominations for open positions will be accepted in April), attend a luncheon or dinner, or attend a General Membership meeting (typically the beginning of each semester and a third at the end of April), your involvement in the union is important!

Ross Wittenberg, PA Treasurer

The following is a brief overview of the current dues structure and a report as to the actual financial results for our prior academic year.

Dues Structure for 2024-25

Dues are paid by our members, including both teaching faculty and professional staff. Member dues contribute towards our annual budget, which consists of expenditures for community outreach, member engagement, training, and negotiations and grievances with the college.

A portion of dues collected are paid to our affiliates, New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) and American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Our affiliations date back to 1970, and the PA receives numerous benefits resulting from these affiliations, such as training for Executive Board members, legal advice, and guidance for our local PA leaders. During arbitration and legal matters, NYSUT's labor relations specialists and legal staff are available to assist the PA as part of the affiliation. In addition, we have the support of a multitude of professionals within the NYSUT office who welcome questions as they arise.

Dues that are paid by members are set nationally, statewide, and locally. AFT is responsible for national dues and NYSUT dues are set by delegates from institutions across New York State, while local dues are proposed by the PA Executive Board and approved by you, our members. The approved dues structure is then submitted to payroll.

The dues structure for the 2024-25 academic year was approved at our membership meeting

in May. NYSUT increased annual state member dues by \$8 per year, which accounted for the change in your member dues this year. After decreasing annual local dues by over \$50 in 2022, we will continue to monitor our fund balance in the upcoming years to determine if any additional changes should be made to the dues structure.

Financial Results for 2023-24

In 2023, the membership approved a PA budget of \$214,691.20 (including passthrough national and state dues to AFT and NYSUT). During the 2023-24 academic year, we underspent the budget by \$21,820.91, but due to the 2022 decrease in local member dues, that still resulted in a net decrease to our fund balance of \$9,369.95. The variance in expenditures was primarily caused by fewer grievances against the college resulting in less spent on arbitration.

Financial records for the 2023-24 fiscal year were examined by the PA Audit Committee in June. The Audit Committee found proper financial documentation and reporting had occurred throughout the year and had no recommendations.

If you have any questions related to the budget or the dues structure, please feel free to contact me or plan to attend our next membership meeting.

Thank you for your continued support, and I look forward to continuing in my role as Treasurer this year. I wish you all the best this semester.

In solidarity,

Ross

Yue Riesbeck honored with Gompers Award



Award recognizes dedication and efforts to keep unions strong

In October 2018, Yue Riesbeck joined the MVCC Professional Association. In 2021, she became a member of the New Member Committee, and in 2023 assumed the role of New Member Committee Chair. In this position, Yue has made it her mission to meet with each new member, provide them with membership materials, answer their questions, and use her outgoing personality to help them feel welcome.

Additionally, Yue serves on the union's negotiation team, having helped to negotiate our contract prior to the expiration of our previous three-year contract. In this capacity, she provides thoughtful feedback and asks questions about anything she doesn't understand. Yue's spunky, inquisitive nature makes her well-suited for analyzing proposals from both the College and the union.

Yue is a proud union member who is eager to learn more about our union and sharing her knowledge with our membership. The MVCCPA is proud to present her with the Samuel Gompers Distinguished Service Award!



New Member Committee

Dear new PA members,

Welcome to our PA family! We're excited to have you on board and can't wait to get to know you through our upcoming events and activities!

As part of our vibrant community, your participation and engagement are essential. I encourage you to connect with seasoned PA members and jump in whenever you can. Here are a few great ways to get involved:

- **Join PA events:** We host a variety of events that provide wonderful opportunities to connect and have fun. Be sure to watch for emails from Erica Brindisi about luncheons, holiday parties, and more! Mark your calendar for our New Member Reception on Nov. 15 at the Utica campus. This is a fantastic chance to meet existing members and build connections.
- **Volunteer:** The PA lends a hand to many organizations and individuals in need through the Community Outreach Committee. We have hosted basket raffles for the NYSUT Leadership Conference and raised money for Making Strides Against Breast Cancer, collected food and donations for Kernan School, The Center, and more. Volunteering is not only rewarding but also a great way to have fun with fellow PA members!
- **Better call Ross:** Make sure to take a look at our new contract. If you have any questions that involve numbers, Ross Wittenberg is your go-to person! Ross is great. Ross can help.
- **Explore our website:** Visit mvccpa.org to learn about the leadership team, access our contracts, see meeting minutes, and check out issues of our PA Newsletter, PANorama.

Thank you for being part of our community!

In solidarity,

Yue Riesbeck

New Member Committee Chair

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Brett Carguello	Ricky Mulvaney
Vanessa Cole	Sakibul Noyon
Ryan Dembrow	Lesley Paul
Bradley Dixon	Kathy Reilly
Beth Dubeck	Morgan Roller
Brandy Gray	Karin Salas
NeDavius Ladmiraault	James Tavares
Michelle Luvisi	Frank Vellone
Kelly McFerren	Wade Wollaber
Courtney Metacarpa	Ryan Yutzler

Save the date — New Member Happy Hour is Nov. 15

The New Member Reception / Happy Hour will be held on Friday, Nov. 15, from 4:30-6 p.m. in ACC116, at the MVCC Campus in Utica.

[Please RSVP here!](#)

Existing member challenge: Bring a new member (listed above!) to the reception and be entered into a gift card drawing.

Donations: We're again collecting donations for Kernan Elementary School, including easy-to-prepare foods like mac & cheese cups, fruit cups, granola bars, and ramen. You also can make a financial contribution through our PayPal account (mvccpa1@gmail.com — select "paying a friend").

Professional Association New Member Happy Hour



Friday, November 15

4:30 - 6 p.m. | ACC116

Beer & Wine Open Bar 4:30 - 5:30 | Italian Dinner

RSVP by Friday, November 8



Member Profile

NeDavius Ladmirault

Multimedia Designer

What degree(s) do you have, and where did you go to school?

I went to school at the Fashion Institute of Technology and have an Advertising & Digital Design degree.

What inspired you to get into the field you chose?

Throughout my childhood there were seeds of art and creativity planted within me, whether through elementary and middle school art teachers, playing make-believe with my cousins, or absorbing foreign cultures while travelling with my family. That, combined with growing up in an era of prevalent and rapidly-growing technology, built the foundation of my interests, and when it came time to explore careers/majors I looked for ways to combine those interests. Design stood out as the most inspiring and open-ended field to begin with at the time.

What attracted you to the position you are in?

As a recent graduate, the opportunity to learn about the world of higher education first as a student and now as staff attracted me to MVCC, combined with the fact that I would be able to contribute to a close-knit and diverse community while getting to see the impacts whether on campus or out in the world.

Can you tell me a little bit about your position here at MVCC?

As a multimedia designer I get to work with the college's Marketing & Communications team to design and develop a range of printed and digital graphics and communications for MVCC, combining my interest in art, technology, and creativity into tangible uses for the community.

What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

Outside of work I enjoy travelling and trying good food, going to live music events, fitness, and exploring more ways to express my creativity.

What is something people might be surprised to know about you?

People are often surprised to hear that I grew up in Japan and Singapore for a large chunk of my childhood (and yet am still only fluent in one language)

