



Executive Board approves MVCCPA Bylaw changes

Members will vote at April 29 meeting

At its meeting on March 27, 2025, the MVCCPA Executive Board approved changes to the MVCCPA Bylaws. The membership will be asked to vote upon the changes outlined below at the General Membership meeting on Tuesday, April 29, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. in Payne Hall room 102 at the Utica Campus.

Italic = old language **Highlight = new**

ARTICLE IV. QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 4. The Secretary shall:

- Record, maintain, and distribute accurate and up-to-date minutes of General Membership Meetings, Special Meetings, and Executive Board Meetings.
- Bring such minutes of the current fiscal year to meetings.
- Assist with any correspondence to the membership or others as needed.

- Serve as the custodian of Association records as directed by the Executive Board.
- Serve as *an ex-officio member of Chair* the Research and Records Committee.

ARTICLE V. STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 3. The Political Outreach Committee shall:

- Be composed of eight voting members of the Association. Four members shall be elected by the voting membership and four members shall be appointed by the Executive Board. The chair shall be elected by and from the membership of the committee on or before June 5.
- Be composed of eight voting members of the Association.

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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

“Who’s on first, What’s on second, I Don’t Know’s on third” is a line from the famous Abbott and Costello routine *Who’s on First*. The routine continues with “tomorrow’s pitching” and “today’s catching.” While Abbott’s comical responses brought much frustration to Costello and humor to the audience, the underlying message that resonates with me is that regardless of who is in what position, together we work better as a team.

As your union president, I work with my team to get things accomplished. In my opinion, the PA President would not be successful if decisions were made in a vacuum without consulting the leadership team. Many times, I consult with the Grievance Chair and/or Negotiations Chair. Other times, I loop in the 1st Vice President or Negotiations Team. My leadership team consists of:

- **Erica Brindisi**, 1st Vice President and Chair of Member Engagement
- **Robin Saxe**, 2nd Vice President and Chair of Internal Communications and Community Outreach Committees
- **Patti Antanavige**, Chair of Grievance Committee
- **Michael Kuczynski**, Chair of Education & Training and Social Justice Committees
- **Aaron Fried**, Chair of Negotiations Committee
- **Yue Riesbeck**, Chair of New Members Committee
- **Justin Rahn**, Chair of Political Outreach Committee
- **Kelly McNamara**, Secretary and Chair of Research & Records Committee
- **Ross Wittenberg**, Treasurer

Individually, we contribute to the success of the PA and together, we work as a team to support our membership and provide one voice for the PA. In this edition of *PAnorama*, 2nd Vice President Robin Saxe provides a listing of vacancies in our leadership and committees expiring at the end of May. If you are curious about any position, please review the [PA By-Laws](#) for information on each officer and standing committee. I ask that you seriously consider submitting your name for an officer position or serving on a committee and becoming part of **OUR** team.

“No one can do everything, but everyone can do something. And if everyone does something, then together we can change the world.” — Author Unknown



Norma Chrisman

Bylaw Changes (continued)

Four members shall be elected by the voting membership and four members shall be appointed by the Executive Board. The chair shall be elected by and from the membership of the committee on or before June 5.

- 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.
- *Expend Vote/Cope funds with Executive Board approval.*
- *The chair shall attend the monthly Oneida County Legislative meetings.*
- Seek active support of Association retirees.
- Submit any activities to the Executive Board prior to implementation.

Section 5. The Research and Records Committee shall

- Be composed of *five(5) four (4)* voting members of the Association appointed by the Executive Board *and the Secretary, who serves as chair.* *The chair shall be elected by and from the*

PA Election nominations due April 25

The MVCCPA is accepting nominations for upcoming elections. The positions up for election this year are listed at right with the number of people needed for each position. Nominations are due by 4 p.m. Friday, April 25, 2025. Please email 2nd Vice President Robin Saxe to add your name to the ballot or to nominate another PA member for one of these open positions.

HELPFUL LINKS

- **PA By-Laws**, which define the roles and requirements for each committee & officer (also check the changes outlined above): mvccpa.org/pa-by-laws
- **Current committee members & committee term dates:** mvccpa.org/committee-chairs-and-members



**SPRING SEMESTER
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP
MEETING**

DATE: Tuesday, April 29, 2025

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

PLACE: Payne Hall 102,
MVCC Utica Campus

AGENDA

- Approval of 2025/26 Election Ballot
- Discussion and Vote on Proposed MVCCPA 2025/26 Budget
- Discuss and Vote on Changes to MVCCPA Bylaws

membership of the committee on or before June 5.

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

POSITION	OPENINGS
President	1
Treasurer	1
NYSUT Representative Assembly	
• Delegate	1
• Alternate	3
Community Outreach Committee	3
Education & Training Committee	2
Grievance Committee	1
Internal Communications Committee	2
Member Engagement Committee	3
Political Outreach Committee	3
New Member Committee	2
Social Justice Committee	3
Audit Committee	3

2 students win 2025 MVCCPA Scholarships

MVCC students Gustavo Nunes and Isaiah Sobolewski have been named the 2025 recipients of the MVCCPA Scholarship. This annual \$1,000 award recognizes outstanding students currently enrolled at MVCC who demonstrate academic excellence, leadership, and community involvement. The scholarships were presented during the PA Luncheon held on Jan. 17, 2025.

Gustavo Nunes, an international student from Belo Horizonte, Brazil, has excelled academically and athletically during his time at MVCC. A Business Administration and Accounting major, he has maintained a GPA above 3.0 while balancing multiple responsibilities. He serves as captain of the Men's Soccer Team, works part-time as a Student Assistant in the Admissions Office, and is an active campus leader. Gustavo has earned recognition on the Vice President's List and was named to the All-Conference Team after helping lead the MVCC Men's Soccer Team to victory at the NJCAA National Championship in Fall 2024. A dedicated volunteer, he also supports local food distribution initiatives. He is on track to graduate from MVCC in May 2025 and plans to continue both his academic and athletic pursuits at a four-year college or university.

Isaiah Sobolewski, a Nutrition and Dietetics major from New York Mills, N.Y., has maintained a perfect 4.0 GPA since beginning MVCC classes as a dual credit student in 2020. He has consistently earned a place on the President's List and was honored as a member of the 2023–2024 NJCAA All-Academic First Team for Men's Track & Field. In addition to these achievements,



MVCCPA Scholarship winners, Gustavo Nunes, top photo, and Isaiah Sobolewski, bottom photo, stand with MVCCPA Second Vice President Robin Saxe and President Norma Chrisman after receiving their scholarships at the PA Luncheon in January.

Isaiah works two part-time jobs and is active in community service — tutoring younger students in math and participating in Earth Day events and community clean-ups. He plans to transfer to Utica University in the fall.

To qualify for the PA Scholarship, a student must have completed at least 30 credit hours at MVCC and have a GPA of at least 3.00. Applicants also must write and submit a 500-word essay on the importance of labor unions in American society or the value of a community college education. Both Gustavo and Isaiah wrote about their MVCC experience in their essays, which can be found on the following pages.

PA Scholarship student essays

The Value of Community College

By Gustavo Nunes

2025 PA Scholarship winner

An excellent option for higher education are community colleges, offering a pathway to affordable, accessible, and good quality learning opportunities. They provided much more than just study, bringing benefits not only to the students but also to the community. A community college education can be transformative, equipping students with skills for career success, fostering personal growth, and contributing to the community at large.

One of the main advantages of community colleges is the accessibility. Unlike traditional four-year institutions, community colleges often have open admissions policies, one example at MVCC they don't have application fees and accept GED diplomas, making them an excellent option for individuals who need a fresh academic start or are returning to education after time away. With tuition costs significantly lower, community colleges provide a financially viable option for students. Being able to take classes and transfer credits to other schools saves a lot of money while getting a quality education that is useful for progressing after graduation. In addition, it makes it easier for international students from countries where the exchange rate is not good to study abroad, allowing them to have an international degree and an introduction to a new language and culture.

Community colleges can serve as a good first step for students aiming to earn a bachelor's degree. Students can complete their general education requirements at a fraction of the cost before transferring to complete their degree. Having good advisement is essential to make the best plan for each student. This ensures that credits earned at a community college are accepted by other institutions, streamlining the transition process. This pathway not only reduces the financial cost for students but also

helps them build confidence in their academic abilities before taking on the challenges of a bigger university. Many community college students graduate from universities with minimal debt, giving them a head start in their careers without the financial stress of significant loans.

Community colleges have tremendous importance in offering career-focused programs that align with local workforce needs. Fields like healthcare, technology and business are greatly benefited by the generation of well-qualified and prepared people by community colleges. Some programs often provide hands-on training, certifications, and mainly associate degrees that prepare students to enter the workforce quickly and competently. Community colleges are also hubs for workforce development. They collaborate with local industries to design programs that address current and future job market demands.

Community colleges are also very flexible. Many offer evening, and online classes, helping students to balance education with work, family, or other responsibilities. In addition to academic flexibility, community colleges provide a huge support service. From tutoring and counseling to career guidance and financial aid assistance, at MVCC for example there are all these resources on campus to help students navigate challenges and achieve their goals.

The benefits of community colleges extend beyond individual students to the whole community. Community colleges also offer non-credit courses, workshops, and cultural events, enriching the lives of local residents.

The value of a community college education lies in the ability to provide affordable, accessible, and career-oriented learning opportunities while supporting diverse student needs.

The positive impact on individuals and communities is profound, making them a very important part of the educational landscape.

The Value of Community College

By Isaiah Sobolewski
2025 PA Scholarship winner

When originally looking for what college to go to during my senior year of high school, I knew that choosing a community college would be the more effective path to take to start my college experience.

Community colleges are a great way to see if a person is ready to start their goal of achieving their dream career within their future. Not only are community colleges affordable to a wide range of people from not needing financial need to those who are less fortunate, a community college is a great door to open new students to college life.

The cost of a community college is not the only great benefit when deciding where to go. As I have found out, there are some courses, such as Anatomy and Physiology, where the students are able to study the structures of the body using doner cadavers. It is very fortunate to have this here at Mohawk Valley Community College as some other school, for example, Utica University, do not have this great privilege.

Some may also say that since it is cheaper to attend here, you may lose some learning potential from the classes, which is false. The instructors that teach here are very helpful and resourceful in advancing your knowledge and understanding of the topic of interest. The classes alone can be compared to four-year colleges and universities and give you the necessary material to succeed in the career path a person chooses. Overall, the classes that I am learning here at MVCC are going to be as helpful, if not, more than any other college or university with the bonus of great instructors and advisors to help each step of the way.

The environment of a community college also is a great benefactor. Community colleges can

*A community college is
a great door to open
new students to college life.*

provide a plethora of extracurricular activities such as sports and clubs that really help produce a healthy community. Since it is also a community college, which mostly looks towards associate degrees, mostly everyone that is attending is going to be a new college student, meaning that everyone is on a level playing field, different from being in a high school. People within a community college can easily create new friendships and study groups that only further aid them in succeeding in the future. There are also many different departments within community colleges, such as financial aid, career development, and more, that are another advantage to help within college life.

From my experience, Mohawk Valley Community College has been very helpful in starting my college life experience. To apply and situate financial aid was very easy to complete with the help of the different departments. When switching majors, the college was able to effectively switch it and provide me access to great advisors within the Nutrition and Dietetics major, which I regularly go to still for extra help and questions. The instructors that I have within my classes can explain material to me very well that I understand it and one of the reasons why I have maintained a 4.0 grade point average.

Overall, I am very grateful for having the privilege to attend MVCC with its diverse community, effective classes, and helpful departments to only help reach my goal in the future.

Professional Association at Rome Campus Trick or Treat!

On October 29, 2025, the MVCC Rome Campus hosted its annual Trick or Treat night, and it was a spooktacular success!

Among the busiest of the night was Robin Saxe, who spent three hours straight painting countless little faces. From pumpkins and bats to basketballs, butterflies, and spiders, Robin worked nonstop, only managing a few seconds to stretch or take a breather. The reward? Seeing the kids' faces light up with beautiful designs and wide, joyful smiles.



While Robin worked her face-painting magic, Steph Roberts and Yue were busy handing out treats. Dressed as a friendly skunk and raccoon, they greeted the little ones with enthusiasm. But despite their best efforts to be friendly, one little girl was so startled by their costumes that she hid behind her grown-ups, tears in her eyes. Luckily, that was the exception rather than the rule, and most of the children left with smiles and bags full of candy — likely on a sugar high by the end of the night! Here's to the parents who braved the sugar rush.

We hope you'll join us for next year's event!
What will you be dressing up as?

Yue Riesbeck
On behalf of the
Community Outreach Committee



Community Outreach Committee

The MVCC PA was recognized for its support of the Ziyara Shriners Feztival of Trees.

Rob Yerdon, Feztival Chairman, said: “We would like to present this plaque as a small token of our appreciation for being a sponsor of the 2024 Ziyara Shriners Feztival of Trees. We extend our deepest gratitude for your kindness and generosity. Your commitment is truly commendable, and we are privileged to have you as our partner in this community. Our 2024 event was our best year yet and it couldn’t have been done without your support.”



New Member Committee

In November, we hosted an unforgettable reception to welcome new members from the past year, and it was genuinely an event brimming with fun. We were thrilled to welcome both new colleagues and seasoned PA members. The evening was filled with laughter, great conversation, and heartfelt moments. Guests enjoyed delicious Italian dinner, beers and wines, and music that kept the energy high.

Many colleagues participated in the “Existing Member Challenge”, where if they brought a new member to the event they were entered into a gift card drawing. The most popular person at the event would have to be our beloved Brad Dixon!

He was brought here by not one but two PA members! Brad was new to PA, but not new to the college. He currently serves as the Coordinator of Assessment and Academic programming.



A special highlight was when PA Eboard members blasted heavy metal music, from some band called something like Metallic ... Metallica? Metallical?

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Andrea (Andie) Alban	Brett LaSalle
Jessica Amerosa	Kayla Merrill
Kayla Cowan	Courtney Metacarpa
Nathan Edwards	Carrie Bryne Putelo
Danielle Kall-Marrone	Kristen Weiss

Special thanks to Nick Evanoff, member of the New Member Committee, who greeted new members and handed out new member gifts! And Hilary Forbes, a relatively new member herself, already a part of the New Member Committee! And a big thank you to everyone who attended and made this reception such a success! We look forward to more memorable moments like these in the future. Until next time,

Yue Riesbeck

New Member Committee Chair