

02/06/2021

House Bill 894—Education-Community Colleges-Collective Bargaining SUPPORT

Dear Chairperson McIntosh and members of the Appropriations Committee:

I have taught chemistry at Prince George's Community College for twenty years. The lack of shared governance has been a continual issue. Between 2003-2005 we conducted our Middle States Accreditation review and passed 13 of 14 accreditation standards. The only standard we failed was Governance. Middle States found that governance was not shared at our institution, and to paraphrase, was in the hands of the administration. At <https://www.pgcc.edu/about-pgcc/leadership/college-governance/> the college defines Governance as follows: "Governance is the process of establishing policies, procedures, regulations, and practices of institution-wide significance." Further, this official page states, "the system of governance at Prince George's Community College is one of a collaborative nature grounded in integrity, transparency, and respect." Below, I give four bits of fairly recent evidence to demonstrate our process of governance is top-down, with insufficient collaboration, transparency, and respect." In the summer of 2020 PGCC welcomed our new president. In keeping with a national average of approximately 26 – 29% faculty representation on presidential selection committees, our faculty requested the same; but in a strong-handed manner the administration limited our representation to an approximate 7%.

On February 3, 2021, our Provost presented faculty with a new contract draft. The proposed changes are significant. As does the administration, the faculty need experts in contract law to weigh the consequences of this legally binding document and to contribute to it.

I have served on the Faculty Grievance Committee as both a member and as Chair. Informal resolutions of grievances tend to go well. However, when there have been formal grievances involving the administration and faculty, the faculty has always been at a tremendous disadvantage. Our College Code is a massive document replete with legalese. Faculty do not have expertise or time to interpret this type of law. Nor do we have the resources to hire attorneys.

In recent years, the numbers of mandatory trainings and mandatory meetings have tremendously increased. This together with meeting numerous requirements for achieving satisfactory evaluations, and significant un-compensated time required for instrument setups, running diagnostics, preventative maintenance, consumables inventories, etc. increases work hours significantly beyond 40 per week.

PGCC faculty are dedicated to the college and our students. Last spring when COVID hit, faculty gave up our spring breaks to work night and day, for two weeks, preparing such that our students would successfully finish the semester. Across the disciplines we were team players and never did we request compensation. In that short time, we went through trainings to learn several new softwares and methodologies, and revamping teaching materials to enable teaching remotely. In chemistry, we banded together to convert the laboratories to remote synchronous experiences. This was a tremendous undertaking.

Across the disciplines, we came through for PGCC with flying colors because we are content area experts. We are not labor-law attorneys or negotiators and are requesting equal and fair treatment under the law, by having those whose expertise is collective bargaining represent us. We are faculty, not the military or government employees therefore collective bargaining is not incompatible with our mission.

I ask you to vote yes on HB 894 and strongly urge a favorable committee report.

In solidarity,
Nadene Houser-Archield