Early voting for the March primary begins on Feb. 27th and continues through March 15. The CCCTU is supporting the following candidates and urges you to support them as well:

- Maureen Elizabeth Connors, 1st Appellate Court Justice
- Joy Cunningham, Illinois Supreme Court Justice
- Tammy Duckworth, 8th Congressional District
- James Kaplan, Cook County Court Judge
- Donna Miller, 15th District Illinois State Senate
- Ricardo Múñoz, Clerk of the Circuit Court
- Diann K. Marsalek, Cook County Court Judge
- Jesse Reyes, 1st Appellate Court Justice

You can find the IFT endorsements for state legislative and U.S. Congressional races at www.ift-aft.org.

PENSION UPDATE: The Quinn pension panel has been meeting. There have been no proposals put on the table as of this publication. The Coalition has insisted that any agreed upon proposal must satisfy three criteria. They must be: 1) Fair to all stakeholders; 2) Constitutional; and 3) Sustainable. The panel is led by the governor’s senior advisor, Jerry Stermer, and is comprised of representatives chosen by the four leaders of the legislative caucuses.

- Sen. Mike Noland (D, Elgin)
- Sen. Bill Brady (R, Bloomington)
- Rep. Elaine Nekritz (D-Des Plaines)
- Rep. Darlene Senger (R-Naperville)
Meet the 5,000th member of Local 1600: Bridget Roche

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FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK

5,000 Is a Golden Number

It is not often that an organization can look at certain benchmarks in their voyages though history to recognize and, indeed, celebrate events and moments that are truly monumental. We have reached one of these benchmarks: Cook County College Teachers Union has now enrolled our 5000th member!

Some good news is certainly needed as unions and education are under increasing scrutiny and pressure in our nation. While other unions sadly are losing members, we continue to grow. The drive to redefine our profession from outside business interests has reached a crescendo in several state capitols and even Washington. It is indeed a challenge to consistently deliver the same kind of quality education, while financial support has precipitously fallen to levels of a decade ago.

Margaret Mead once said, “A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” The Cook County College Teachers Union started out with a small group of dedicated, committed faculty at City Colleges nearly a half-century ago. This small group of committed City Colleges faculty to the other seven colleges in Cook County, and then to non-teaching employees at all of the fourteen colleges. It was an idea that spread, because it was based on a sound concept: employees need to have a seat at the table. In fact if we don’t have a seat at the table…we may be on the menu!

The task of bringing a voice to a college’s employees did not come quickly or easily. The Union has had to basically fight for everything we have now. I am constantly amazed at how some new members mistakenly believe that the colleges have given them the salary and working conditions that they now enjoy. Everything we have in all 14 colleges’ contracts we negotiated at the bargaining table. Local 1600 had to pay for each article in your contract by bargaining, going on strike, or even by having its founding president, Norm Swenson, go to jail!

Our Union, over the years, has diversified our educational workforce, recruiting and organizing other professions in our colleges: Professionals, Classified, Mid-Managers and Adjunct Faculty were organized and brought into our Union’s umbrella. With each additional member, our collective voice becomes stronger and our purpose made clearer. We want to work with our colleges to provide a first-class educational opportunity to our students and help them on the road to success.

The credit of these accomplishments goes out to all of you who have served in the leadership of your college. It goes to those of you who have served in any capacity in your chapter or volunteered your time or talent or ideas to help your profession become better. I thank you and urge you to carry on your good work.

COOK COUNTY COLLEGE TEACHERS UNION, LOCAL 1600, AFL-CIO

President.................................................................Perry Buckley
Vice President, City Colleges Division...........Rochelle Robinson-Dukes
Vice President, Suburban Faculty..................Dave Richmond
Vice President, Suburban Classified..............Rose Marie Sakaris
Secretary...............................................................Deb Baker
Treasurer..............................................................Donald Radtke
Legislative Representative.........................Bill Naegele
Grievance Chairman............................................Chuck Mustari
Special Assistant to the President...............Randy Barnette
Editorial Chair.....................................................Todd Lakin
Publicity Chair.....................................................Bill O’Connell
Special Contributor........................................Bob Blackwood

SAVE THE DATE:
March 16: House Meeting
April 14: CCCTU Training
April 20: Executive Board
June 22: Executive Board
July 20: House Meeting

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Visit the CCCTU website: cccctu.org

College Union Voice
Bridget Roche, the Cook County College Teachers Union’s 5000th member, came from Chicagoland. Today, she is teaching English at Wright College, but she had a few adventures along the way.

Roche graduated from Maine South High School in Park Ridge and obtained a B.A. in English from the University of Illinois (Champaign-Urbana). Upon graduation, she decided to join the Teach for America Corps, a sort of domestic Peace Corps. As Teach for America says on its website: “We can turn things around. We can put our country back on track. Let’s start today.”

In the mid-1990s, Teach for America was introducing college graduates to teach in communities which desperately needed teachers but had limited financial resources. All of the teachers were granted credentials to teach. They attended a six-week, summer “boot camp” to prepare them to teach in the fall semester. Roche was prepped for Lincoln Elementary School in Compton, California, not far from Watts.

Roche was placed in a split first-second grade classroom where the students were almost entirely Spanish-speaking. “My Spanish was very limited, so I did almost all my teaching in English, but I discovered that the parents were very supportive of me. They wanted their children to learn English quickly. Soon, I was not only speaking to them on Parent’s Day but also at baptisms, weddings, communions and other events.”

Her experience with the youngsters and their parents were the high points of her stay at Lincoln Elementary. The low points were the limited resources of the school district and the school’s environment. She often found herself staying after school to turn out tests and other materials on the purple-ink ditto machines that most other school systems stopped using in the 1980s. The school district couldn’t afford photo copiers.

The environment included a street where she had to drive every day which contained large number of the “Bloods” street gang. “It was like parting the Red Sea watching how those red shirts would open up a hole for cars. They were not threatening to me; they knew I was a teacher.”

After returning and obtaining her Master’s in English at DePaul University, she tried the private sector, working as a writer for a San Francisco legal firm for two years, only to return to the classroom at a local college in Chicago. She likes working with students who are in school by choice. She started as an adjunct professor at Wright College in the City Colleges of Chicago in 2003; she was hired full-time for the spring semester, 2012. “My job is to keep my students in college until their graduation date or until they transfer to a university or start a meaningful career,” she indicated.

“People don’t realize today that many young people certainly cannot afford to attend a public university in Illinois without a scholarship, let alone a private college or university. We offer students an affordable, quality education at a very reasonable price. This is a place for our students to show they can succeed.”

Bridget Roche is a fine example of our teachers and our members working in other educational jobs throughout the community colleges of Cook County. She and her husband, Terrence, and her children, Jane and Henry, are unique, but Bridget Roche is also just one of 5,000 people doing the best they can for the people they serve.
Pensions & PBF Dominate Discussion at IFT Conference

"The so-called pension 'crisis' is artificial.”
—Bill Naegele

At the IFT Higher Education Conference in the suburbs on November 18-19, the hot-button topics of pensions and performance-based funding (PBF) dominated the discussion.

On Friday night the participants gathered for dinner, drinks and camaraderie at the Doubletree Hotel in Oak Brook before turning their attention to IFT President Dan Montgomery. He thanked the members present and those members of their locals that they represented for their outstanding efforts in lobbying the Illinois House and Senate on alleged pension “reform” legislation.

On Saturday morning everyone gathered at the IFT Headquarters in Westmont for Subcommittee Meetings in three groups: Community Colleges, Universities and Graduate Employee Organization (GEO). The members who attended from Local 1600 all attended the Community Colleges breakfast meeting where the agenda included performance-based funding, pensions and a legislative update.

Legislative Chair Bill Naegele, who is also an IFT Vice President, provided sage advice and good historical background regarding the pension issue: “The so-called ‘crisis’ is artificial. It is solvable so we must remain strong in our opposition to diminish our benefits.”

After a short break all convened in the main meeting hall for the first-ever Higher Education Constituency Council Meeting. IFT Legislative Director Nick Yelverton opened the discussion with an astute summary of the pension crisis. He expected the pension battle to continue throughout the upcoming year.

After Yelverton spoke a more free-flowing open discussion ensued. A main topic involved the various investigators from the Inspector General’s office lurking around campuses. Also the members discussed ways on how to better communicate the IFT’s position in the press.

At the conclusion of the open forum, the members enjoyed networking at the luncheon before heading home.

Local 1600 Spring Training Communications Workshop: “You Are the Message.”

The CCCTU will be offering a spring workshop on communications: “You Are the Message.” Communications was the second-highest ranked (after Negotiations Training) in the recent survey that was conducted in fall 2011. Respondents wanted training on how best to communicate to their members the importance of timely responses to issues before their locals. This workshop will include nationally recognized experts who will help you:

• Craft your message;
• Create a media strategy, including “mock” media interviews; and
• Communicate effectively with your members.

INTERESTED?
Contact your chapter chair to sign up.
Space is limited so hurry!

WHEN?
Saturday, April 14, 8:00-12:30. Breakfast and lunch provided, plus a travel stipend.

WHERE?
The Illinois Federations of Teachers in Westmont, IL.
When the going gets tough, the tough call their Union. Know your grievance procedure.

By Chuck Mustari, CCCTU Grievance Chair

Unfortunately, our contractual rights are sometimes violated. This can be the cause of overwhelming stress. If you find yourself in this situation, try to remain calm. As a member of Local 1600, you are not alone. You have the power of over 5,000 members behind you with all the resources of Cook County College Teachers Union.

Even though the grievance process may vary slightly from Chapter to Chapter, the first step is always the same. Contact your Chapter leadership! In many circumstances, your Chapter Chair or Chapter Grievance Chair will able to fix the situation in an informal manner. But for those times when informal channels are not productive, your Chapter leader can file a formal grievance. Please note that every situation is not necessarily a grievance. Your Chapter leaders will help you make that determination.

If your situation warrants a grievance, it is important to be timely at each step along the grievance process. Every collective bargaining agreement has an article on the grievance procedure. You should familiarize yourself with this article in your contract. It is here where you’ll find all necessary time limits. Your Chapter Chair or Chapter Grievance Chair will be able to go over all this with you.

Some cases will end up in a written grievance. The written grievance is usually a very simple document. Your Chapter Chair or Chapter Grievance Chair will draft and submit this document on your behalf. Here are ten questions that you should answer for your Chapter leaders. These questions will help them to prepare your case.

1. What is the specific contract language or policy specifically violated? (If there is no contract language, there is no grievance. Cite article, section, paragraph, page number, etc.)
2. Who is the Grievant, i.e. Employee(s) or the Union?
3. Who is (are) the responsible management person(s)?
4. Who are the witnesses?
5. When did it happen? (Time and Date of Event)
6. When must the grievance be filed?
7. Where did the violation occur?
8. What did some management representative do or fail to do that gives rise to the complaint?
9. Why is it grievable?
10. What must be done to make the grievant WHOLE? What is the remedy?

Regrettably, not all cases will be solved at these earlier steps. The Union House of Representatives and/or Executive Board votes whether to take, or not take cases to arbitration. If arbitration is approved, your Chapter Chair, Chapter Grievance Chair, and Divisional Vice President will help prepare your case with the Local Grievance Chair and the Union’s attorneys. Arbitration is not a quick process, but rest assured that Local 1600 has an excellent winning record. You do not have to stand alone.

LITERARY CORNER

KKC Prof. Publishes “Expressions from Englewood”

Expressions from Englewood, Volume 5, the annual journal featuring personal essays, poetry, fiction, and investigative pieces from people that live, work or go to school in Englewood, has been released. The journal is edited and published by Kennedy-King College English professor Corey Hall. This fifth edition features 98 different selections, along with drawings from Dayo Laoye, the Nigerian-born artist, as its centerpiece.

The theme for this volume is “Stand...for Forgiveness!” The first option, “Stand,” features essays where the Expressionists (as the contributors are called) envisioned a cause that they wanted to champion or a societal wrong that they wanted to correct. The second option, “…for Forgiveness,” features essays where the Expressionists forgave someone who hurt them in the past, or requested forgiveness from someone who they may have wronged in the past.

“Once again, the variety and depth of expressions here are profound. Our youngest ‘Expressionist’ is 19, and the oldest is in her middle 70s,” Hall said. “I am proud of them all.”

Further information on Expressions from Englewood and its upcoming readings are available by calling Hall at 773.659.9338, or e-mailing him at expressionsfromenglewood@yahoo.com.
The Affordable Healthcare Act is a 955-page document that was passed into law in March, 2010. The Act strives for healthy Americans and guarantees all Americans access to healthcare. In this new healthcare system unions need to be prepared to leverage healthcare reforms to their members’ benefit.

First, since Illinois has not stated its exchange plan, now is the time for unions to become a stakeholder in this process. States are responsible for creating Exchange Governing Boards. These boards cannot solely be comprised of the healthcare providers. Consumer representatives and labor representatives must be at the table when Illinois starts constructing its Exchange Governing Boards in 2012. We cannot afford to make the same mistake that Connecticut made and be left out of the process.

Next, unions also need to be aware of their members’ eligibility status under the new healthcare law. If an employer-sponsored plan is inadequate (covers under 60%) or unaffordable (more than 9.5% of income), a worker may be eligible for subsidized coverage. Some of our members may be eligible for this subsidized coverage, particularly our adjuncts, part-time employees, and PSRPs who are some of our lowest-paid workers. Unions must pay attention to healthcare reform and how its evolvement affects workers.

Finally, unions must negotiate to become a part of the planning stages of the Wellness Initiative, specifically Wellness Centers. Our job, as union leaders, is to discern how wellness centers can benefit in our members in other ways besides health. These wellness centers must be a positive environment for the employees for which they serve, not places of punishment. Unions should be involved in the selection of staff for the wellness centers and decisions regarding services.

Because wellness centers are being created to give preventative care, they should be equipped to provide physicals, dispense drugs, perform diagnostic tests, and give preventative care (flu shots, diabetic meds, and so forth) that would reduce hospital visits and employer and employee costs. These centers must give supplemental, not replacement, care. Centers must give incentives, such as a $50 monthly credit to premiums for a yearly visit or rewarding employees who lower their blood pressure or lose weight. They should not punish workers if they stumble on their quitting-smoking plans. People with addictions, be they smoking, alcohol or food, should be offered counseling and a personal trainer at these centers.

There are many examples of successful wellness centers, such as that of the Wellness Center in Charlotte County Public School System in Florida, which was started within the last three years and has shown high employee participation (88%). The Wellness Center has reduced employee and employer costs and raised healthiness in its membership. Also, the employees were active participants in all decisions leading to their creations.

If unions want to continue to provide good service to their membership during this healthcare reform, they need to be represented in the exchange governing boards, become involved in the wellness center creation process, and become acquainted with the fine print in the law itself, such as the possible access to subsidies and the limitation to grandfather clause for their membership.

*All statistical information is from the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO.
By Brenda D. Pryor, Esq.

Dear Union Brothers & Sisters,

I am writing to you today to discuss an issue of great concern – proper documentation in the workplace. Many of your fellow Union members are being seriously disciplined, and even terminated, for defects in documents they submit to their colleges. I want you to know what to do to avoid these pitfalls.

Here’s an example of what I’m talking about. If you’re scheduled to work from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., with an unpaid 30 minute lunch, is it okay to work from 9:15 to 4:45, take no lunch and record “9-5” on your timesheet? Despite what you may have observed, or have done in the past, the answer is “NO”!

A timesheet is a legal document that you sign that states that you have accurately recorded and worked the times that it represents. Once you turn it in, you can be disciplined for turning in a fraudulent document and possibly asked to repay funds that were paid because of the erroneous timesheet. You also need to be very careful when signing the timesheet of a subordinate. If they are mistaken or lie on their timesheet, you can be disciplined for signing off on it.

To be clear, you should carefully review any document that requires your signature before you turn it in. Ignorance of what a document actually contains is not a defense to prevent discipline. If you can’t verify that the document is correct, you should not sign it until you can. However, I understand that there are times that you are required to sign, or even demanded to sign, documents that you can’t verify. If you are required to sign a document that you are unsure of, you should note that on the document or send an email to your supervisor documenting that you were directed to sign something you were unsure about.

You should make your position known for the record. A disclaimer is appropriate, such as—“Please be aware that I have now signed XYZ document after being directed to by you. I maintain that I am unsure as to the veracity of the document that I signed and submitted, and would like to make it known that my signature only acknowledges that I have seen the document and signed it upon direction by you. Thank you.”

Another problem with documentation that we have been confronting is changes in college documents of which members are not aware and are unknowingly not complying. Besides the contract, you should acquaint yourself with your employee handbook, board policies, and any other work rules that govern your position. If necessary, you should annually request updates from your supervisor or Human Resources Office regarding these rules. This way a new rule can’t “sneak past you” and trip you up. Also, the email requesting an update from your superiors can be used by the Union as documentation should you unfortunately run afoul of a rule and end up in a disciplinary hearing.

Ultimately, you should know that if it’s not documented, it doesn’t exist. But once it’s documented, that’s what you’re stuck with. So, be careful with your documents!
HOLIDAY PARTIES

Editor’s note: There were 12 holiday parties this season, beginning with Oakton’s Annual Pizza Party on October 28, 2011 and ending just recently with Morton College Classified chapter’s post-holiday party on January 27, 2012. All photos of the parties are available on SmugMug: http://local1600.smugmug.com/Parties. Enjoy the photo album!

The Triton College Mid-Managers Association not only celebrated the holiday season, but they also recognized CCCTU President Perry Buckley’s birthday and more importantly, a four-year contract extension at 4% per year. Pictured is CCCTU Treasurer Don Radtke, Chapter Chair John Cadero, Local 1600 Secretary Deb Baker, TCMM officer Rosa Preston and Buckley.

MVSS officers present retiring president Dr. Vernon Crawley with a lifetime invitation to all future holiday parties at their holiday party. From left: Rose Sakanis, Carol Antosz, Lynn Doulas, Helen Agresti, Crowley and Julie Poulos.

The Kennedy-King College chapter hit the dance floor at Pink on East 26th St.

Morton Faculty Chapter Chair Dante Orfei and Morton Grievance Chair Janet Crockett are looking forward to some time off.

TCFA Health Careers Department members Sue Campos, Pam Harmon and Carol Lynch enjoy the festivities.

MXC Grievance Chair CM! Winters-Palacio confers with CCCTU Grievance Chair Chuck Mustari over current CCC events.

Visit the CCCTU website: cctu.org
HOLIDAY PARTIES

SSCSS Chapter Chair Berdy Kuiken joins her soon-to-be-retired colleagues for a photo op. At left is Treasurer Don Radtke and at right is VP Classified Rose Marie Sakanis.

The SSCSS chapter renamed its scholarship in honor of deceased member Robert “Bob” Pinkerton.

Legal Counsel Brenda Pryor, PSCSS Chapter VP Carissa Davis, PSCSS Chapter Chair Susan Braasch and VP CCC Rochelle Robinson-Dukes pose for a photo at DiNolfo’s.

The dance floor was hot at the *Prairie State* holiday party.


Treasurer Don Radtke lets soon-to-be-retired Bonnita Ellis know that “retirement ain’t so bad” at Daley’s party.


College Union Voice  Visit the CCCTU website: ccctu.org
Morton Chapter Warms Cold Adults & Helps Children in This Holiday Season

Every holiday season, the Morton Classified Chapter does one good deed for the needy. This year, it is a coat drive and a few other good deeds. Yes, Chapter Chair Tim Visk and the folks at Morton saw the need for a greater effort. Last year, they collected goods for a food pantry via the college bookstore. This year, they did three additional good deeds.

First, with the help of Norm Swenson Scholarship Winner Jessica Neff, who built and decorated the box, they created a coat drive, which brought in about 30 coats. The clothing will benefit less fortunate families and individuals in and around the Morton College community through the West Region of Catholic Charities, which provides many social services.

In addition, the chapter adopted individuals through the Angel Giving Tree program, sponsored by the Salvation Army and J. C. Penney. They’ve adopted three Angels from JCP. A two-year-old boy received clothing and a toy. A five-year-old girl has a dress and a snowsuit. A 13-year-old girl, who did not have any items on her wish list, will receive a $50 gift card, to pick her own gifts.

Chapter Treasurer Ruben “Santa” Ruiz had no problems untangling the chapter purse strings during this holiday season. The Morton Classified Staff Federation was able to brighten Christmas for some of those in need by keeping some warm and by fulfilling the wish lists of their adopted individuals.

MV Support Raises Money and Gifts for Children

When Leann Murphy went to her leadership at the Moraine Valley Support Chapter requesting some toys for poor youngsters, she had a receptive ear from Chapter Chair Helen Agresti and the other officers. The result was quite surprising.

The first thing they did was request that members bring toys to their November 18 General Assembly meeting. Those who did would have an opportunity to win a free ticket to the Holiday party. Also, they asked all who attended the party to bring a toy as well. Anyone who brought a toy to the party would get a raffle ticket for some good prizes; it was a painless way of giving.

Murphy had adopted a foster child with the assistance of the Children’s Home + Aid. The 125-year-old charity helps 40,000 children and families in Illinois. She helped the chapter members to see the need in these trying times to give Santa a hand and the chapter certainly came through! Chapter members gave over 150 toys. Agresti, Murphy, Asst. Chapter Chair Julie Poulos and Chapter Treasurer Lynn Doulas conferred on Dec. 8, and Doulas wrote a check for $200 to the Children’s Home + Aid.

Manager Sara Norwick at Children’s Home + Aid (100 N. Western Ave., Ste. 200, Chicago, IL 60612) said the toys would go to their clients and programs. Some would go to the Rice Center as well. Norwick tried to match the toys with a Wish List they have received from some children in need.

Last year, the chapter helped a member and her family whose house had burned down. This year, the chapter is helping poor children throughout Chicagoland.
Local 1600 Supports Cunningham and Duckworth in Democratic Primary

Editor’s note: Two candidates who are well regarded by the CCCTU have been endorsed by the IFT for election in the upcoming Democratic Primary Election on March 20—Justice Joy Cunningham for the vacant seat on the Illinois Supreme Court and Tammy Duckworth for the 8th District of Illinois. President Perry Buckley chaired one IFT-Political Action Committee, and Legislative Chair Bill Naegele co-chaired another IFT-PAC which urged the IFT to endorse Justice Cunningham.

Justice Joy Cunningham has a career of public service second-to-none and deserves your vote in the Democratic Primary Election.

Justice Joy Cunningham is a dynamic figure. Her successful career and commitment to the community is unsurpassed by the other candidates running for this seat. She started her career as a member of Local 1199 Healthcare Workers Union New York, and, once she became a registered nurse, she joined the New York State Nurses’ Association.

She earned a Juris Doctor degree in 1982 from John Marshall Law School. She became a judicial law clerk. She later was admitted to the federal trial bar as a member of a major firm and participated in pro-bono activities for a broad range of seniors and indigent clients who needed her help. In the late 1980s, she became Loyola University’s Assistant General Counsel.

In 1996, she served as an Associate Circuit Court Judge in Cook County. In 2000, she returned to the private sector as General Counsel for the Northwestern family of corporations. In 2004, she became president of the 22,000 member Chicago Bar Association, the first African-American woman to hold that position.

In 2006, she was elected to the Illinois Appellate Court. She chairs the Illinois Supreme Court Judicial Performance Evaluation Committee, responsible for mandatory evaluation of all Illinois trial court judges. She and her family live in Chicago.

Tammy Duckworth, a decorated veteran, has been endorsed by the IFT and Local 1600 for election to Congress in the 8th District.

The IFT also endorsed Tammy Duckworth, a candidate whose website ran the following introductory remark on Jan. 31: “Today, the Illinois Federation of Teachers, led by Locals 604 and 1600, has endorsed Tammy Duckworth for Congress in the 8th District Democratic primary.”

As Duckworth said: “Obtaining the Illinois Federation of Teachers’ endorsement is a great honor to me. Our teachers, students, and educational institutions need the resources and support to make sure our children have a shot at the American Dream.”

Duckworth, a captain in the National Guard, lost two legs in combat as a helicopter pilot in Iraq. After recuperating, she served as Director of Veterans’ Affairs for Illinois and then as Assistant Secretary of Veterans’ Affairs in the Obama Administration.

“Joy Cunningham and Tammy Duckworth are two hard-working and distinguished women who deserve our support,” says Local 1600 Legislative Chair Bill Naegele.

For the most up-to-date election endorsements, visit ccctu.org
Spring Semester Campus Visits Bring Sobering News

Editor’s note: January and February have been busy months for President Perry Buckley and his team. As of publication, the CCCTU officers and staff have visited six City College chapters: Daley (1/10), Wright (1/11), Triton Faculty (1/19), Truman (1/26), Malcolm X (2/14), Olive-Harvey (2/14) and Kennedy-King (2/23). A visit is planned for HWC in the near future.

The news at the CCC chapters is much the same and the important items are highlighted below. The full stories of the campus visits are available on the new CCCTU website: ccctu.org. Photos are available for download at SmugMug: http://local1600.smugmug.com/Campus-Visits.

- **Unions are under attack:** “The pressure is coming from Chicago, Springfield, and Washington, D.C. The only way to survive these attacks is to stick together and work with your union brothers and sisters,” says Buckley.

- **Pensions:** Buckley noted that since there is an election in November, the pensions issue may not come up or, at the very least, be altered. He urged everyone to be vigilant and to pay attention to what is going on in Springfield. Just like Indiana, there will be forces in Springfield calling for “Right to Work” laws, which mean “the right to work without the advantages and strengths of a union contract, supported by union members.”

- **Weingarten rights:** Both Buckley and Pryor stressed the importance of invoking your Weingarten rights when approached by the administration. Buckley noted that there are more Inspector General reports, EEO complaints and pre-disciplinary hearings in the City Colleges of Chicago than in the other seven suburban community colleges. There are challenges there to be resolved. Both sides can work on it.

- **CCC contract expires on 7/15/13:** Buckley has offered to do limited negotiations with the CCC beginning very soon. He said, “Nothing would please me more than for me to ask you to approve an extension of our current contract about eight weeks from now.”

- **Inspectors General in the CCC:** VP CCC Rochelle Robinson-Dukes has noted at several meetings that the IG is investigating and probing for anything that could be construed as a violation. To protect yourself, use common sense and follow these rules:
  - CCC faculty must be present at the registration tables during registration;
  - If you are not in your office during office hours, put a note explaining where you are;
  - Also, be sure to take the ethics exam within the one-month time frame allotted; otherwise, you will wind up in a pre-disciplinary hearing.
  - Professionals are advised to put in for your vacation time as early as possible; an assertion of seniority won’t fly if another has eclipsed you by his or her earlier bid for vacation time. Register your bid early.
  - Department chairs should be careful in getting rotation points in on time and may be asked to explain how they work to new administrators. Be sure to remember that chairman hours and office hours are different and may not overlap on your schedule.
  - Security officers should not give students rides in patrol vehicles, nor loan money to them, and should maintain a professional distance and attitude toward them at all times.

The Triton College Faculty Association kicked off the new semester on Thursday, January 19th. Following a series of workshops, the TCFA leadership under the direction of Chapter Chair Stu Sikora, updated the faculty of pending college and union issues.
CAMPUS VISITS

• **Legal issues:** Pryor discussed how to deal with an IG if approached:

  ✔ “The general rule when dealing with a request for a meeting with a representative of the Inspector General or the administration in the CCC and in dealing with the administration in any of the suburban colleges is to contact your chapter chair, grievance chair or me at the union office right away. Your union representative(s) should accompany you in any discussion with the Inspector General or your administration,” she stressed.

  ✔ “You shouldn’t try to explain anything in a meeting by yourself. If you try to explain away whatever event that may or may not have happened to your administration in a meeting without union representation, you simply will be giving them more information to use against you.”

  ✔ “And, should a ‘chance meeting,’ allegedly for a discussion of your Oscar picks, for example, should turn into what you did or didn’t do on any given date, just be polite. Explain: ‘I can’t take a meeting with you until my union representative is present.’ Just cite your Weingarten Rights. If the administrators don’t know what they are, politely suggest they Google ‘Weingarten Rights.’ Your Weingarten Rights are part of a federal law that you may have representation in any investigation of your conduct. But you must invoke them!”

  ✔ “Finally, if you can’t find either your chapter chair or grievance chair, call me (Legal Counsel Brenda Pryor) at 312-755-9400. But whatever happens, don’t go into any meeting without union representation.”

• **Student-Employee concerns:** Pryor reiterated the need for all CCC employees to maintain a professional relationship with students. “This includes NO hugging,” Pryor said. “Sadly the times have changed and you need to change with them. A simple handshake and warm smile will do the trick,” she said. “And don’t put yourself in position where it could come down to ‘he-said/she-said.’ Leave your office door ajar or go to a public space like the cafeteria to talk about any personal issues. Quite honestly, I have had too many meetings dealing with student complaints of harassment for this alleged infraction of the contemporary social code.”

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Visit the CCCTU website: ccctu.org
Richard Finn: Creator of Our New CCCTU Website

Richard Finn, a 33-year-old student, is the creator of our new CCCTU website which is now up and running. The Orland Park resident has a BA degree from the U. of Central Florida in Organizational Communications. Currently he is earning a Web Designer Certificate and an Associates Degree in Management Information Systems as of Spring, 2002, from Moraine Valley Community College. He praises the assistance of his mentor, Professor Kristine Christensen.

In college at UCF, he was working in public radio, hosting a four-hour jazz show. The hazards of dealing with a devoted audience of jazz buffs, however, led him to choose web designing over a career in public radio, a decision with which our own jazz radio host Bill O’Connell may concur.

Finn’s career has included working for several tour and hospitality companies in the Orlando area. In Atlanta, GA, he worked for the Expo Design Center of Home Depot. He also worked in a graphic design studio which was an introduction to web and graphic designing.

Why has he returned to Chicago? To see more sporting events, he says, “both Sox and Cubs.” He is single, married to his course-work, and plans on a career as a full-time web designer, eventually heading his own company. He visits his married younger brother in Chicago and tries to visit the nearby fitness center on a regular basis. His favorite vacation spots are Venice Beach, CA; Santa Monica, CA; Orlando, FL; and the Seattle area.

When asked for his favorite film, he states simply “‘Star Wars,’ the first in the series.” Favorite novelist? “Agatha Christie, I suppose, but most of my reading in the last 10 years has been either textbooks or tech manuals; frankly, I prefer the latter. Most of my reading is online.”

One thing is for sure, Mr. Finn is a hard worker and patient with those not as skilled or as knowledgeable as he.

Markum and visit often the new CCCTU website for the latest updates: ccctu.org

MVAFO Throws Mardi Gras Party

On Feb. 16, MVAFO Chapter Chair Robin Meade threw a Mardi Gras party at Trio, five minutes from Moraine Valley College, that was the best party the MV Adjuncts ever had—and the only one to date. Perry Buckley juggled his busy schedule to make the event. He was joined by VP Classified Rose Sakanis, Treasurer Don Radtke and Legal Counsel Brenda Pryor.

Eventually, over 50 members filled Trio’s stage area including Treasurer Bob Russell, External Liaison for Benefits Dennis Ziemann, Secretary Kathy Schonauer, Delegate Bob Curtis and Social Chair Pat Repec.

True, the chapter was entering negotiations within the next 60 days, but, like all Mardi Gras’ events, _Les bon temps roulez_ (“Let the good times roll” in Cajun French) was the order of the day at Trio. As Meade said to everyone, “Our goal today is enhancing unity within the chapter.”
Latasha Johnson, the grants analyst of Malcolm X College, has been affiliated with the City Colleges of Chicago since 2001 with six of those years at MX. She is a relaxed, convivial person who, like many people in some aspect of counseling or finance, seems to field a phone call about every 5-10 minutes. She does so while still keeping track with a relentless interviewer for the union website and the College Union Voice, a tribute to her ability to multi-task.

Johnson faces pressure in her job both from the students as well as from the nature of overseeing 15 different grants from the federal government, from the Illinois Community College Board (the state), and from a consortium with Illinois State University—the “Grow Your Own Teachers” grant, which the CCC holds as a subcontractor. She must accept some responsibility, therefore, on approximately $11 million yearly and review how the money is spent.

What does this responsibility entail? Well, for one thing, it requires a lot of talking to students, students with problems, students with success stories, and students with lots of questions, many of them a variation on “How do I fill out this form?” Johnson takes her time, gives every student what she or he needs (even if they are not aware of it), and reminds them to call her if they have further questions.

Johnson notes that in addition to students, she interacts with the deans, with the faculty, the clerical staff members in Local 1708, as well as the president and the vice president of Malcolm X. She showed me a brochure she had helped develop just for MX College’s Health Science degrees, as MX is the place for Cook County’s largest selection of Health Science degrees, specifically: Pharmacy Technology, Mortuary Science, Nursing, Radiography Technology, Radiography Technology, EMT/Paramedic, Child Development, Clinical Laboratory Technician, Nephrology/Renal Dialysis, Phlebotomy, Physician Assistant, Respiratory Care, and Surgical Technology.

To create the brochure, Johnson plowed through hundreds of photos from MX, hundreds of pages of copy, ran everything past everyone who had to see the multiple-page-foldout brochure. Everyone made suggested changes, and then she oversaw its production—an unenviable job. The result is a very polished piece. And each brochure contains up-to-date details on tuition, applying for financial aid, scholarships and grants, etc. You might think that Johnson has a blue suit with a red cape sporting a big “S” in her office closet, but, really, as she says, her work is not unique with her. It is a process of working out agreements between her superiors and her colleagues.

Not only was her phone ringing during the hour or so when her interview was taking place, but also people dropped in with questions, such as Upward Bound Director Hubert Dure. She put him at ease and answered his questions quickly and efficiently. When a quiet moment came, I asked her what she does in her free time. Well, with a 15-year-old young man and a 5-year-old son, neither she nor her husband, Gerjuan, has a lot of free time, but they enjoy the occasional family cruise or other vacation about every two years.

Johnson notes that she also teaches Psychology 201 in the evening, as she has a MA in Clinical Psychology. When asked if she would like to transition from being a professional into an instructor, she said, “No. I find dealing with a lot of people every day and talking to them is preferable to teaching. I can put my academic psychology background to practical use in my job here at Malcolm X College. I like talking to people.”

Just as many of our professionals do, Latasha Johnson likes her job. And the people who deal with her, they like the job she’s doing. What’s not to like?