



Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges

907 Wethersfield Ave.

Hartford, CT 06114

The Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges (the “4C’s”) defines itself as “an organization of faculty and professional staff of the community-technical college system invested with the responsibility of ensuring that our members are treated with dignity and professional respect by management and are fully represented in relation to the terms of our contractual agreement with the employer and the conditions of their employment.” In its Strategic Plan, revised in December of 1999, it also states that “in addition to contributing to the overall quality of education and academic excellence of each of Connecticut’s community-technical colleges, the 4C’s is fully committed to collective bargaining, academic freedom, and governance, and to the shaping of the future of the community-technical college system into the new century and beyond.”

The precursor to the Congress was a faculty Senate, organized in 1967 after the first three community colleges opened their doors in Connecticut. As the state community college system grew, it was felt that a more formal faculty union was needed, and the Congress formed in 1973. In 1975, it was recognized as the state collective bargaining unit. Today, it represents all twelve of the community-technical colleges in Connecticut. Unique in that it represents both faculty and non-faculty, it is affiliated nationally with the Service Employees International Union.

THE RECORDS

Mary Van Buren, Communications Director, keeps the Local’s newsletter files in her desk, as well as other current working files, including press packets, directories, and state organizing packets from the 1980s and early 1990s. (This was a period of most intensive organizing, with much lobbying and demonstrating occurring at the state capital.) Ms. Van Buren also has a full desk drawer in her of photographs taken in the mid to late 1990s, of many different events, including hearings, gatherings, and meetings, as well as lobbying efforts in Hartford. Some are dated; some are not. They go back only until about 1995, Ms. Van Buren stated.

As Bob Retenauer explained it, he is the organizer who works with six of the twelve colleges, and Dave Bosco, staff representative, works with the remaining six. In both their offices are current “working files”, including grievances (kept for about a year); educational materials; clippings and other information about current political issues (1990s: part time faculty, legislative sessions, campaign plans, PAC reports); presidential reports from the 1990s; newsletters, flyers, and member updates. In addition, Mr. Retenauer said has categorized all grievances from 1970 to 1990 by type, by college, by date, and by

resolution. These are all kept on computer, and some are also kept in hard copy. Fred Stefanowicz, the Presidential Aide, keeps most of his records on computer and on disk. His records include logs of part time workers who sign up for a job bank; communications with management on data and financial information regarding cost of contracts; and a powerpoint demonstration used during the most recent arbitration, which was concluded in February.

Mr. Stefanowicz also keeps grievances filed, alphabetized by name of employee, back to about 1973. In the President's office, down the hall, minutes of Board of Trustee meetings are kept, although Mr. Retenauer stresses that these are now being put into central files as well.

A supply closet between the two offices holds numerous framed and unframed photographs dating back to the 1980s, as well as old picket signs. Apparently, Steve Thornton, who was the organizer from about 1981 until 1991, began the practice of taking photographs to document the union's history. As with the later photographs in Ms. Van Buren's drawer, they depict activities such as hearings at the capital, demonstrations in Hartford, members talking to their legislators, membership conferences and other union gatherings. Again, some are dated; some are not; all appear to be in good condition.

Most of the current working files are being kept in the outer office. These include:

- Internal documents, ranging from office agreements, information on office equipment, elections of officers, minutes of meetings of the delegate assembly or the correspondence and minutes of the Board of Trustees
- Information on membership, including promotions, retirements, board correspondence with individual members, and flyers sent out to the membership as a whole.
- Legislative materials going back as far as 1988, including bulletins sent out, flyers sent out, and correspondence to and from legislators regarding specific issues.
- Miscellaneous information, such as files on each of the colleges and their annual salaries.

Current grievances and arbitrations, as well as agreements with the Board of Trustees of the Community College system dating back to 1978, are kept in a wooden filing cabinet in this office. They also keep information on grievances—individuals involved and specific actions taken—back as far as the 1970s, and they also keep this information on the computer, although Kathleen Collette, Office Administrator, stated that information on grievances that are dropped is not kept.

Ms. Collette also added that the office threw a lot of things out quite recently, for reasons of space. She felt that most of the records that were disposed of were old grievances filed by persons who are now deceased or for some other reason were no longer in the system.

Older files are kept, for the most part, in a back room. These include Board Correspondence, 1982-1991; the files of the former organizer, Steve Thornton; old contract files, lists of promotions, PAC reports, and Unfair Labor Practice cases, from the 1970s through the 1990s; contract agreements, negotiations, and extensions from the 1980s through the 1990s; and state pension and retirement fund information going back to 1988. This room also contains current and past financial records (going back to 1996) of all types.

Ms. Collette stated that she does not retain old membership lists. The updated lists are kept on computer.

A number of boxes are stored in the basement. There appeared to be some records of enduring value, and some that can and will be disposed of. One box was given to the union by a member, and it contains important historical material about the precursor to the Congress, the Faculty Senate, including minutes of its first meeting in 1967, and subsequent meetings to 1968; its 1969-1970 Constitution; its membership list, 1970-1971; minutes of the Community College Board of Trustees meetings in 1971; a notebook kept by the union attorney about the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA); and a file about the newly formed Faculty Association (the original name of the Congress) of 1973, including its original Constitution. This basement area also holds three boxes of notes, minutes of meetings, and proposals and counter-proposals between the Trustees and the union in the 1970s and 1980s. There are also files containing multiple copies of contracts signed during those years. Another box contains the attorney's notes from the 1990s. Many are duplicates; Ms. Collette believed that he also keeps his own copies of these same documents. Among the boxes of records in the basement which are designated for disposal are those containing merely old receipts and cancelled checks.

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