

August 25, 2014

Dear Colleagues,

I can hardly believe that the summer is nearly over and we will very soon be back at CCRI beginning a academic year. I have had a busy summer working with your negotiating committee, meeting with CCRIFA members and NEARI leaders, attending the Northeast Organizing Institute, and preparing for a busy year that I hope will be a dynamic and transforming one for the Faculty Association. Before we meet again, I have some news you may be interested to hear.

Contract Negotiations:

Your CCRIFA Negotiating Committee has met to work on counterproposals three more times since my last update and has been back to the negotiating twice. We anticipate that we will be working through a number of challenging issues in meetings tentatively planned for the coming weeks. We continue negotiating in order to have contract, compensation, and benefits as soon as possible, but exactly when may depend more on the Board of Education, our counterpart in the contract.

The coalition of six of Rhode Island's public higher education unions, whose purpose is to negotiate on wages and benefits, has not met since the beginning of the summer since the Board of Education has not responded to our proposal.

Denise Lazo and I attended the first meeting of the new Council for Post-Secondary Education of the Board of Education on August 4 at the Alton Jones Conference Center to observe the proceedings. It was evident that the council is only now being introduced to their work. President DiPasquale and the presidents of RIC and URI made presentations to familiarize them with our institutions, but the council was given no information that we are in the midst of contract or compensation negotiations. The next opportunities for them to consider our proposal will be when they meet again on September 3 for a work session and on September 10 for a meeting of the Council, but there is no guarantee that it will be on their agenda at this point.

The Northeast Organizing Institute:

For a week in Early August, I attended the Northeast Organizing Institute organized by the Northeast Region of the NEA. It gave me an opportunity to network with leaders from K-12, Higher Ed, and educational support professional unions from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, and all the New England States. Most of us were there to learn more about the transformative movements that have been shaking things up in educators unions across the country, and we heard some inspiring presenters such as [Jackson Potter of the Chicago Teachers Association](#).

One evening during that week, pairs of participants visited NEARI members at their homes for short conversations. If you were one of the members who were visited, you may have been asked to share stories about the challenges we face, how you relate to NEARI and our schools, and what you would like to see change. It was but one of several exercises that others have used to transform their organizations and return to different models of empowerment.

Though most of the participants were K-12 educators and some of their specific concerns were not ones we face at CCRI, there was a lot of common ground. Local leaders from Rhode Island who attended have continued to meet to keep the momentum going and to challenge the NEA and NEARI to evolve if they are to meet our needs and challenges in the future.

CCRIFA Scholarships:

The CCRIFA scholarship committee selected ten students to receive merit scholarships for the 2014-2015 year. Each winner received a \$600 award to be used toward the coming semester's tuition. This is an increase in both the number and size of scholarships over past years. The complete list of recipients can be found at the CCRIFA webpage (<http://www.ccri.edu/facultyassn/scholarship.html>).

The award was established in 2008 by the CCRI Faculty Association to provide financial aid to a CCRI student in recognition of academic achievement. Contributions from the CCRI Faculty Association members provide funding for the award. Many thanks to contributors and to the members of the scholarship committee for providing valuable support to our students.

Office hours and appointments:

If you have questions or comments about any of these topics, please feel free to contact me or stop by my office in Lincoln or the Faculty Association office in Warwick. I am very willing to arrange a time to meet if you cannot come to my posted office hours. Until next time, enjoy your summer and be well!

Regular office hours

Monday and Wednesday 2-4 pm in Flanagan 2361

Tuesday 2-4 in Knight 3013

Thursday, 10-12 pm in Knight 3013

Warm regards,

Shawn Parker, CCRIFA President