

Stalled Talks From Admin, Rising Tensions For FSFCCP in Summer Union Bargaining

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city and state have been chronically falling short of their marks. While tuition has remained unchanged for eight years, the faculty and staff foot this bill either in their salary, course load, or class sizes.

The argument the union coalition brought to City Hall was that CCP, Philadelphia's Public College, serves a primarily Black, female, and working-class student population but has faced chronic underfunding from the city for over four decades. As a result, Black and Brown students have been forced to take out "nearly \$20 million in loans annually," while dealing with inadequate support services due to understaffing, poor working conditions for faculty and staff, and deteriorating campus facilities.

Still, when the union approached Dr. Generals to join the campaign, the president of our college Dr.

Generals declined to ask the city for more money. Dr. Generals only specifically mentioned \$500 thousand would be necessary for the dual enrollment program for high school students and \$10 million for a new Northwest Municipal College, for which Mayor Cherelle Parker has allocated funding.

In early June, City Hall approved \$5 million annually in funding for the CCP general operating budget. However, that money is not directly allocated for faculty or staff though fought for by the federation. With faculty and staff contracts expiring, administrators could, of their own volition, allocate that funding.

Now that the current contracts are sure to expire, the union is prepared to escalate demands at the next Board of Trustees meeting. The meeting is in the Isadore A. Shrager Boardroom of the Mint Building, M2-1, on September 5, 2024 at 2:30pm. The MyCCP website has further information.

Join via Zoom

Meeting ID: 978 2821 1903

Passcode: CCPBOT

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The Independent

Community College Students' Source for Philadelphia News

Committee of Seventy's Tanisha Bezue Answers 2024 Presidential Election Queries

Jayson Massey

August 24, 2024

CCP's Institute for Community Engagement and Civic Leadership hosted an information session with the Committee of Seventy about the United States (U.S.) presidential race, from Biden's dropping out to the inauguration. Room BR-26 contained a lively discussion and question and answer period about voting and our election system. Tanisha Bezue is a Program Director for the Committee of Seventy, the leading organization for trusted Philadelphia's political and government information and analysis. Mrs. Bezue talked about the path to electing a President and your rights as a voter in a presentation called 'Your Questions on the 2024 Presidential Election Process Answered'.

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M.P. Hassel

August 26, 2024

The college president is strangely uninterested in paying faculty and staff fairly. At the last bargaining session on August 21st, the Faculty and Staff Federation of Community College of Philadelphia (FSFCCP), Local AF-T2026, presented new contracts for full-time and part-time faculty, and staff. These contracts, drafted as memoranda of agreement, were intended to finalize negotiations before their expiration on August 31st. However, the college administration chose to extend the bargaining process, scheduling the next session for mid-September.

The current proposals from the federation reflect what members need based on a bargaining survey. The union

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As you know, Kamala Harris accepted the Democratic nomination for President on Thursday. Biden was the presumptive nominee, but party nominations are only official after the party hosts its convention. Political parties use primaries, so people choose the nominee instead of party officials. Pennsylvania uses a closed primary system, so Republican voters can vote only for Republican candidates and Democratic voters can vote only for Democratic candidates.

In primary elections for U.S. president, voters elect party delegates and vote for who they would like those delegates to support at the convention. Since Biden dropped out, those delegates were up for grabs. On August 6, the Democratic delegates chose Kamala Harris via videoconference.

November 5 is the General Election, and polls are open on election day from 7 AM - 8 PM in Pennsylvania. The last day to register to vote in Pennsylvania is October 21. You can go to the #CCPVotes site to find out how to register to vote.

When we vote for president, we use the Electoral College to determine the winner. Each state plus Washington D.C. is represented by electors equal to the number of elected officials the state sends to the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. Pennsylvania has 17 Representatives and 2 Senators (each state has two Senators) for a total

of 19. There are 538 electors in total. To prevail in the Electoral College, a candidate, Kamala Harris or Donald Trump, must receive a majority of at least 270 electoral votes.

One of the two biggest dates after the presidential election is January 6, 2025, when U.S. Congress counts the electoral votes. If Harris & Walz or Trump & Vance have received 270 or more electoral votes, the President of the Senate announces the president-elect. Interestingly, the current president of the Senate is Vice President Kamala Harris. Then on January 20, 2025, the president-elect is sworn into office on Inauguration Day.

Mrs. Bezue stressed the importance of planning to vote. The first step is the register to vote. You can use the PA Check Your Voter Registration Status site to see if you're on the current voter rolls. If you are not, register! You must be at least 18 years of age on the day of the election. You also must be a resident of your Pennsylvania election district and a United States citizen for at least 30 days before the next election. If you are a returning citizen, know that voting rights are only lost while you are incarcerated for a felony, and they are automatically restored after release. Check your voter registration status to determine if you can vote and where your polling place is.

The second step in the plan is research. Use voter guides to provide background information on candidates, like who you can vote for and their experience and goals. Sample ballots show you who and what you are voting for in an election. Fill out a sample ballot on

program coordinators. These specific support services are incredibly useful for several students and should be utilized. However, during the semester, students toil to grab the few available appointments with academic advisors and counselors while student support offices cannot help students academically. Academic advisors and counselors handle far too many students in a day. Course program coordinators, the faculty members that make sure students are on their way to graduating with their degree, are often paid little if anything for their extra work to help their students.

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When asked by Majority Leader Councilmember Katherine Gilmore Richardson asked about the childcare center, Dr. Generals said, "our students and faculty were not using it," because the number of children at the facility were "less than double digits in some semesters." The administration realized that little children were not getting packed in as efficiently as the students were and permanently revoked parents' on-campus access to childcare.

Councilman Isaiah Thomas was more direct in his inquiry. "You clearly have a contract issue taking place right now. This is the legislative branch of

government that wants to help you solve it. I listened to councilmember O'Rourke's questions and I'm kind of disappointed that you didn't come here today with a number saying city council if you give me this amount of money, it will put me in a position to solve our contract dispute. So, am I wrong in that assessment? We clearly know you have a contract dispute. You could clearly tell by the councilmembers' line of questioning that we want the contract dispute settled, and we want to be able to pay the people who work at CCP a quality wage. We can't go back to the mayor and say CCP needs this much money to get rid of the contract dispute if you don't give us that dollar amount."

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Without much help from Dr. Generals and his administrators, the union took initiative in conjunction with The Action Center on Race & the Economy (ACRE), AFSCME DC 47 Local 2187, Amistad Law Project, Treatment Not Trauma, National Domestic Workers Alliance-PA chapter, One PA, Philly Black Worker Project (PBWP), and Tax the Rich PHL asking for \$20 million in funding from the city. The city, state, and tuition from students fund the college, theoretically in equal thirds, but the

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the Committee of Seventy site to make voting easy.

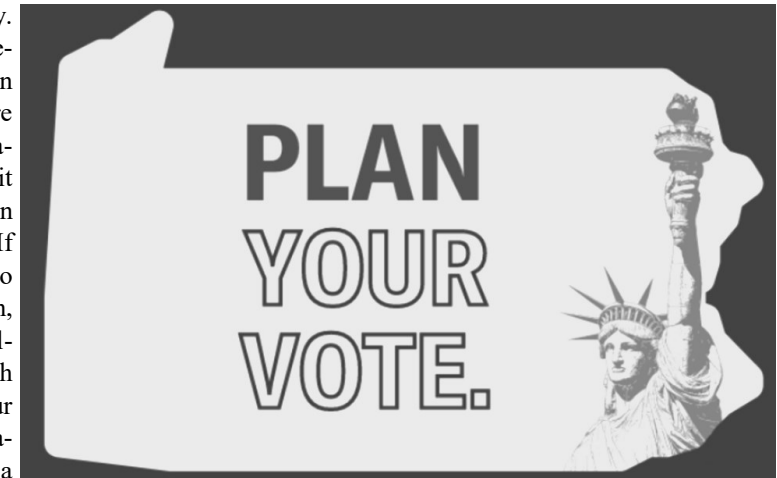
Websites for research include the Committee of 70's Interactive Voter Guide at Voters for Pennsylvania election information, Ballotopia for candidate information, and SpotlightPA, a non-profit journalism source which covers Pennsylvania politics.

The third step is to plan for Election Day. You can request a mail-in ballot if you're unsure or unable to make it to the polls on November 5. If you decide to vote in-person, take your mail-in ballot with you to your polling location. Request a mail-in ballot at the PA Apply for a Mail-in or Absentee Ballot site.

Plan to go to the polls on November 5. Plan the time and how you are going to get there. Take some friends or family with you to the polls for support and companionship. If you're nervous about voting at the polls, know that you have rights. You can request assistance and almost anyone can assist you. Just sign a voter assistance form. You can also request a new ballot from a poll worker if you make a mistake. And you can vote while wearing clothing that supports a candidate or a party.

Speaking of voting, poll workers are an important part of the voting process. And our poll workers are getting older. A Newsweek article states

that the average American poll worker is 72. We need new poll workers to allow us to continue the democratic process of voting. One way to find out more is to go to the Power The Polls site* and sign up. You'll get paid training and work on Election Day to help folks vote in your county. Another way is to attend a Poll Worker Information Session with the Committee of Seventy on-campus.



There was also a question-and-answer period where Mrs. Bezue easily handled a gaggle of voting, government, and political questions. She also went over the experience of working at a Democratic National Convention. She's a real asset to voters in Philadelphia. Find out more about the Committee of Seventy's work at <https://seventy.org/>, or on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X, YouTube, and LinkedIn.

*The author of this article receives a stipend from the organization that runs the Power The Polls campaign.

SGA Showdown Over An Email Survey

August 25, 2024

In what can only be described as a veritable clash of egos, the leaders of the Student Government Association (SGA) at the Community College of Philadelphia found themselves embroiled in an overdramatic standoff over a survey. Yes, an email survey that was sent to SGA members by the faculty advisor. Move over student concerns, the real issue is whether our SGA President and Vice Presidents can manage to play nice.

SGA President Frank Scales fired off an email filled with bellicosity and lacking any subtlety. He lambasted Faculty Advisor Jeff Markovitz for daring to send out a survey to SGA members. "This survey is unofficial, and some feel quite below board," Scales wrote. Scales' growing concern is that the survey, having the audacity to ask SGA members about their opinions on constitutional changes, could affect the efforts he has taken to reform the SGA's constitution this summer.

Scales was quick to demand that the "unauthorized" survey results be tossed out and insisted that any future communication follow the strict protocols of the SGA Constitution. Because, clearly, nothing shows off your leadership capabilities like good old-fashioned bureaucratic disputes.

Not to be outdone, First Vice President Angie Orozco waded into the fray, wielding her keyboard like a mighty sword – something she has neglected to do for The Independent after several inquiries. In a lengthy rebuttal, she defended Markovitz as the unsung hero of

the summer, who juggled Zoom meetings, childcare, and the thankless task of advising the SGA. Orozco's email was a plea for respect and appreciation, tinged with the frustration of someone who's tired of being dragged into seventh grade level drama.

Orozco also took a swipe at Scales, accusing him of running the SGA like his personal fiefdom and ignoring the wisdom of experienced staff. She lamented

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Bargaining

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Rotunda

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the lack of transparency and inclusivity in the constitutional conventions, as if the college's fate hinged on these gatherings of students with no better place to spend their days during the summer but in the Bonnell Learning Commons tripping on utopianism.

At the absolute peak of this digital melodrama, Second Vice President Jar Hernandez-Orsini entered the email chain, "After thoughtful consideration and

analysis, I feel that Jeff was attempting to coerce me to respond negatively to the survey regarding the Constitutional changes we have been working deeply on," She wrote. Hernandez-Orsini, who started off with high hopes for a productive meeting, found herself disillusioned by Markovitz's attempts to "coerce" her into opposing the constitutional changes.

She quickly assured everyone that Markovitz is still committed to amending the constitution. She also expressed hope that Markovitz would "respect the current constitution," which is apparently as sacred as the Magna Carta in the hallowed halls of SGA. Is that why she and Frank are trying so hard to change it?

It's hard not to wonder if all this energy could be put to better use. The SGA Constitution, if immediately markedly rewritten, could at most have minor effects on student life. Is this the hill our SGA leaders want to focus all their resources on mounting?

Perhaps, instead of treating every minor disagreement as a battle for the college's soul, the SGA leadership could take a step back and remember what they're here for. It's not about who can send the most scathing email or play unitary executive for the day. It's about serving the students and practicing leadership.

As the new academic year approaches, it remains to be seen how these internal conflicts will impact SGA's ability to function effectively and represent the student body. Take a deep breath and remember this isn't Capitol Hill. You were elected to help your fellow students.

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and CCP administrators have been bargaining since January. FSFCCP Co-President Junior Brainard has said, “what we want largely reflects what we want for our students.”

From the audited financial report on CCP, the college has \$57 million in “cash or cash equivalents” and over \$11 million in “short-term investments” as of June 30th of 2023. This is to say that the college has a surplus of money to comfortably pay faculty and staff modest salaries and fair wages.

The union’s contract proposals have five major goals: raises in wages, proper staffing, reduction in class sizes, subsidized or free SEPTA transportation, and on-campus childcare.

The raises in wages should reflect the current cost of living with inflation, especially for newer, younger hires. Staffing has been down since the Covid-19 Pandemic, meaning counselors, advisors, and course program coordinators are often not compensated for the extra work of helping you on your degree path. Class sizes are too large for students and teachers, but administrators profit from the practice of packing in students.

Transportation includes a proposal for free SEPTA TransPasses for CCP students and faculty to get to and from campus. Driving to Main Campus entails either paying six dollars a day in the ever-full parking garage or looking for metered street parking. These TransPasses would allow students to park

closer to their local train or bus line, paying less for parking or not at all.

The childcare proposal includes not only the reinstatement of the childcare center on the main campus, but faculty members’ rights to paid parental leave and taking sick days when their kids are sick.

President of Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) Dr. Guy Generals appeared in testimony before City Council on April 30th where he made several remarks regarding the union AFT Local 2026. He appeared composed early in the hearing saying “We’re anxious to negotiate with the unions right now and you know I think if they would negotiate with us, we can come to a happy medium and that’s our goal.”

During testimony to City Council, Councilmember Rue Landau cited the MIT cost of living calculator, noting the living wage for an adult in Philadelphia is \$22.29 an hour, then asked Dr. Generals, how much the lowest paid staff makes. Dr. Generals, looking over his shoulder to check, responded, “The lowest hourly paid is we moved it up to 15, I believe, you know that Jacob, 16.40.” Over half of staff and faculty do not make living wages due to the rising cost of living. The union’s proposed contracts would raise the minimum wage at the college to \$20 an hour immediately.

Dr. Generals and the administration at CCP are quick to tout certain student support services such as the I Am More Re-entry Engagement Program, Food Collaborative, Center for Male Engagement, Women’s Outreach and Advocacy Center, and MarcDavid LGBTQ Center, but systematically underfund counselors, advisors, and course

program coordinators. These specific support services are incredibly useful for several students and should be utilized. However, during the semester, students toil to grab the few available appointments with academic advisors and counselors while student support offices cannot help students academically. Academic advisors and counselors handle far too many students in a day. Course program coordinators, the faculty members that make sure students are on their way to graduating with their degree, are often paid little if anything for their extra work to help their students.

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