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Ask the Prez

Have a question for the Local President? Submit it to lfield@fsc.edu. Thanks to those who have submitted questions.

What is a Step IV hearing?

A Step IV hearing is one that is heard by the Board of Higher Education Review Committee: Peter Tsaffaras from the Board of Higher Education, one Human Resource Director from a state college, one Human Resource Director from a community college, a staff member from AFSCME Council 93, and an elected member from AFSCME Local 1067. There are two types of Step IV hearings: grievance and reallocation.

What authority does a Step IV panel have?

With the exception of terminations and suspensions over 5 days, the Review Committee has the same authority as an arbitrator. For reallocation, the

Step IV panel is the last step in the process.

It seems that there is such a long time before a Step IV hearing takes place. How many Step IV hearings have taken place so far this year and for what schools' cases?

We have made Step IV hearings a priority. Since February 2007, there have been nine full days of hearings. There were 33 grievances and 8 reallocations before the Panel.

On February 20, Massasoit Community College cases were heard. On March 7, cases were at Westfield State. On May 2, cases were at Salem State. On May 8, cases were heard at Cape Cod Community College. On May 22, cases for Springfield Technical Community College and Westfield State were heard. On May 30, cases were at Fitchburg State. On June 5, Massasoit cases were



heard. On June 20, Fitchburg State and Mt. Wachusett cases were heard. On June 28, Salem State cases were heard.

PHENOM News

Here's some of what PHENOM has been up to this summer:

1. Meetings with Senators: We have met with the majority of State Senators to promote our legislative agenda for well-funded, affordable and accessible higher education.
2. Revenue Sources: The

PHENOM Steering Committee has decided the organization needs to carefully and democratically examine possible sources of additional revenue that might be dedicated to public higher education.

3. Campus Councils: We hope to meet all interested individuals and groups on

all campuses this summer to help organize PHENOM councils in the fall. RSVP us at 413-577-4121 to arrange a visit.

4. PHENOM's Structure: The PHENOM's General Assembly will meet in the fall.

We look to you for feedback and suggestions!



Have a suggestion or an issue regarding workplace safety? Send it in to lfield@fsc.edu.

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Workplace Health and Safety: Are You Prepared?

From www.afscme.org

The tragic events in September of 2001 have increased feelings of vulnerability and uncertainty. Thousands died at the World Trade Center and Pentagon, and in the airliner that that crashed in Somerset, PA., before reaching its destination. A few weeks later, the intentional contamination of mail with anthrax resulted in several deaths and serious illnesses. Psychological damage has accompanied the loss of life and physical harm.

These crises occurred in work-

places, and most of those who died or suffered injuries were workers. As a result, workers and their employers have a heightened concern about safety and security. However, workplace emergencies are not a new problem.

Typically, it is not until after emergencies occur that we realize the importance of planning. But the time to prepare is before they happen. An emergency is any unplanned, unexpected event that threatens life, property, or the envi-

ronment.

In general there are two types of emergencies that can occur in a workplace: natural emergencies and emergencies caused by people. Natural emergencies include fire, flood, hurricane, tornado, earthquake, and winter storms. Emergencies caused by people include fire, violence, intentional or unintentional release of chemicals or infectious agents, release of radiation, bomb threat/explosion, and civic unrest.

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Safety Forum: Evacuation Action Plans

AFSCME Local 1067 asked our members to tell us their safety concerns. Many responded that they did not know what their college’s evacuation plan was or whether or not their college even had an evacuation action plan. The tragedy at Virginia Tech highlights not only the importance of such plans but their distribution so that every member of a campus community knows their role in such an emergency.

The AFSCME Local 1067 Collective Bargaining Agreement provides a forum for such a discussion to take place between labor and management. It is called the Union/Management Safety Committee. Article 26 Section 2 discusses the details of the committee.

Please contact your chief steward if you are interested in serving on your college’s Union/Management Safety Com-

mittee. Also, an Emergency Action Plan should be on the committee’s agenda to discuss and to develop.

The Local and Council 93 are committed to the health and safety of our members. Evacuation Action Plans are crucial as each of us needs to know what our role is in an event of an emergency.



Elements of an Emergency Action Plan:

Here are some specific areas of concern that should be included in an Emergency Action Plan:

1. Emergencies the employer may reasonably expect in the workplace
2. Alarms/communication systems, and how alarms will be activated

3. Methods of reporting an emergency
4. Emergency escape procedures and routes
5. Procedures for assisting workers and visitors with disabilities
6. Procedures for those who remain behind to operate critical operations.
7. Names of key personnel
8. Rescue and medical proce-

dures

9. Procedures for special situation, such as precautions involved with certain chemicals and equipment.

For more information on the elements of an emergency action plan, check out AFSCME’s publication *Are You Prepared? A Guide to Emergency Planning in the Work Place* at www.afscme.org/publications

Government for Sale: The Shortcomings of Contracting Out
www.afscme.org/publications

Contracting out costs more than advocates claim because indirect and hidden costs of service delivery are often ignored. Such costs include expenditures for contract monitoring and administration, conversion costs, charges for “extra” work, and the contractor’s use of public equipment and facilities. The Government Finance Officers Association estimates that such costs can add up to 25% to the price of a contract.

The quality of service can dete-

riorate when profit is the prime motivation in service delivery. As many examples show, the profit motive can be an incentive to “cut corners”, especially when contract specifications are vague or poorly defined. Public employees routinely perform tasks outside of their official job descriptions. Those duties usually are not included in contract specifications, and public managers no longer have the flexibility to get them done.

There is an adverse economic

impact on communities when state or local governments contract out, particularly when companies are located in other parts of the country or overseas. The local employment base is eroded when good jobs are replaced with low-wage jobs. Resources are drained from the local economy as profits flow out of the community.

Dependence on contractors increase as in-house expertise and capacity is reduced or eliminated.



www.afscme.org

The Pacheco Law at a Glance

Privatization of state services has become a buzz phrase luring citizens of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to think that privatization would save costs, continue to provide high quality of service, and ultimately lower taxes.

In 1993, the Privatization Law was passed in Massachusetts mandating state agencies to ensure that there would be a cost savings before contracting out state services to a private

contractor. Commonly called the Pacheco Law or the Pacheco-Menard Law, it requires state agencies to submit contracting plans to the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) for an independent audit.

Several types of contracts are exempt from the Pacheco Law including those valued under \$200,000., contracts involving legal, management, consulting, planning, engineering, or design services.

The law does apply to contracts over \$200,000 where the state agency proposes to use “private contractors to provide public services formerly provided by state employees.” (Massachusetts General Law, Annotated Part I, Title II, Ch. 7, (Privatization Law), 52 &53)

“Privatization of state services has become buzz phrase luring citizens of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts”

Mass College of Art: What Can I Do?

Massachusetts College of Art has decided to privatize all of their residence halls. Since the contract amount is under \$200,000, the Pacheco Law does not apply to this case.

AFSCME Local 1067 and Council 93 is taking any and all appropriate action in all forums possible regarding this matter.

However, we need your help to draw attention to a crucial aspect of this case. It is unclear

as to what exactly are the cost savings to this privatization plan. We need each member to contact his or her state representative and senator and ask him or her to find out some answers to this question. If the purpose of privatization is to save the taxpayers money, what is the cost savings with the privatization of the residence halls at Mass College of Art? Also ask that they follow-up with you and let you know what they find out.

A crucial point to this issue is that no AFSCME members lost their jobs. All impacted members were transferred to other duties on campus.

Let me know at lfield@fsc.edu what you find out!

Contact your legislators at 617-722-2000 and ask for them by name. Don’t know who yours are? Find out at www.wheredoivote.com.



AFSCME Local 1067

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We're on the Web!
www.afscme1067.org

AFSCME, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, is the largest union for workers in the public service with 1.4 million members nationwide. AFSCME organizes for social and economic justice in the workplace and through political action and legislative advocacy. AFSCME represents a diverse group of service and health care workers in the public and private sectors including nurses, EMTs, bus drivers, child care providers, custodians and librarians.

Local 1067 represents over 3,000 clerical, technical, maintenance, trades, storekeepers, and public safety employees at the 9 state colleges and the 15 community colleges in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

