

Address to the Board 5-31-17

My name is Dr. Hazel Ross. I retired from teaching two years ago. I was Chief Negotiator for MPCTA for most of my time at MPC, and for most of that time I handled all the faculty grievances.

Today MPC is at a turning point as it faces going down a long dark road with an uncertain future. In all my time at MPC, I have NEVER seen faculty so demoralized and so riled up. I have NEVER seen an administration so aggressively adversarial.

I have two questions for everyone today.

1. Does ANYONE on either side really want to go down that long dark road on a journey from impasse to mediation to fact finding to striking to a place where no matter who "wins," the students, the college as a whole, and the community loses.
2. Would ANYONE on either side NOT want to try to find a way to pull back from the brink and try to find a way out, no matter how impossible that might seem at this moment in time? Who would have the courage – and, yes, it would take a LOT of courage – to step away from the precipice and pause for a moment to ask: Is there a way to find a solution that is at least somewhat palatable to both sides? Right now I would hazard a guess that both sides are reacting with a resounding "NO WAY!" Emotions are running so high.

Let me tell you a story. A while back there was a situation where a teacher and a student got into a confrontation. Emotions were at a fever pitch and each felt emotionally beat up by the other one. It was ugly, with things escalating and getting way out of hand. The teacher came to me and we had a long discussion. A day or so later he came to tell me what he had decided to do. Quite ruefully, he said "I've decided to fall on my sword." Why decide to do something so unpalatable? He recognized that he and the student here not on equal terms because he was in the position of authority. He extended an olive branch to the student and that opened the door to eventually resolving the issue.

Thank you.

Hazel Ross