

Hello Senators Rotundo and Raffety, Representatives Gattine and Murphy, and Members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, and the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Paul Rudenberg of Falmouth, Maine.

I have a bachelors in Biology and a doctorate in Veterinary Medicine and have worked as a veterinarian for 40 years. I have also served 8 of those years as an advisor, then dean, then provost of a college in southern Haiti, where I also briefly taught microbiology and animal health. I have taught adult education for about 20 years, including both classroom and remote. I began teaching at SMCC in the fall of 2015 after returning from 25 years in Haiti.

I began at SMCC by teaching general biology in Brunswick and was then asked to teach microbiology with lab in South Portland the following year, mainly for nursing students. Later I was asked to cover Pathophysiology. I was recently requested to teach Human Anatomy and Physiology, but declined to take on the learning of one more subject area. Twice I have taken on courses that had already started by another instructor– a challenge for sure. I have thoroughly enjoyed the students at SMCC, the academic challenge, my colleagues, and the learning experience.

I come from a line of outstanding STEM teachers/researchers. My grandfather taught engineering in Europe and the US and worked on the early electron microscope. My great grandfather taught mathematics in Switzerland and developed the equations for Space-time. His brother helped elucidate the pancreatic origin of diabetes. This legacy in no way guarantees that I would be a good teacher or research scientist, yet it certainly constantly gives me the encouragement and drive to do my best in education and science. I believe one of us at Maine Community Colleges could end up teaching the next Einstein.

I have personally felt that if I was teaching at an institution I believed in, I would support the students and the college in other ways. So I did that: For at least four years at SMCC, I spent time with a team from 7 to 8 New England colleges choosing two recipients from each school to receive a paid summer research internship sponsored by NIH. After taking my pathophysiology course, one of my former students requested and received my help making decisions about which programs to support at SMCC with a \$14,000 donation from her family's trust. I also encouraged the SMCC Biology department to change textbooks in pathophysiology to one more suited to our students, located possible texts and evaluated them together with the department head, leading to a new and more effective text choice. I edited several chapters of the McGraw Hill microbiology text we used, leading to one of two mentions of SMCC in the published acknowledgments. Over the years, I wrote a number of student recommendation letters, assisting these students to succeed in further nursing studies, one to attend pharmacy school, several to find good tech jobs. I attended Biology faculty meetings to encourage

chemistry be added to the nursing curriculum, though this wasn't successful. I presented at one or two expositions of SMCC science in Portland. .

I mention all this because there is the perception that adjunct instructors have a more limited scope of responsibility at the community colleges— they just teach. Not true for me and for many others. We take the time to be involved.

Regarding my courses, I put in about two hours of preparation and evaluation time for each course contact hour. That means that for the microbiology course, which includes two lectures and two labs a week, I put in, on average, 12-14 hours of work in addition to the 7 contact hours - a total of about 20 hours – or half time. With a payment of about \$7000 for the entire course, or \$440 per week, I calculate that I was earning about \$22 an hour teaching at SMCC. That didn't include the other ways I was investing in the College. \$22 per hour, with no health insurance, retirement account, or other benefits. (In fact when my wife took a photography course at the college, there was no discount for adjuncts.) I calculated that this was slightly less than half of what full time faculty were being paid, in addition to their excellent benefits. This was the opposite situation of my veterinary work, where with professionals working part time without benefits, clinics needed to pay more per hour so you could cover benefits.

When in recent years I decided that I wanted to phase out the veterinary work and focus on more adjunct teaching, I also came to realize that the adjunct instructor hourly wage would not sustain my family (I did *not* expect the wage to be equal to my veterinary earnings). I have one daughter still in college, and I am paying a mortgage, though my wife helps with many household expenses. I am not sure how younger instructors that are trying to make a living out of full-time adjunct work, unless other institutions pay better, can survive.

Instead of increasing my hours, I realized I could not justify working even the seven contact hours of the SMCC microbiology course, which with preparation, etc. took up half my work week. I told my department head I would take on a 3-credit course, (considering myself a partial volunteer), but these courses haven't been available recently. So, I don't teach. I doubt I will be back, unless there is a radical change.

In summary, I think its admirable that the state is offering free tuition for community college to all young people graduating from Maine high schools. However, if this education is to be one of good quality, then it needs quality faculty as well. If adjunct instructors aren't paid a much better salary for the hours they need to commit, then many only stay a year or two – including the best ones. Or they skimp on preparation and evaluation. The quality of instruction goes down, and department heads are constantly looking for new instructors. It is not a recipe for excellence. The State must produce a

budget for community colleges that allows the community college system leadership and the union to come up with a much more sustainable wage for its adjunct instructors -one that approaches the hourly rate of its diminishing full-time faculty, to encourage its best instructors to stay.

Without this, free community college tuition is just a ticket to mediocre instruction.

Thank you.

Paul Rudenberg DVM