

the GREEN SHEET



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An Invitation

By Kevin Lindstrom, MSCF President

Over the course of the past year or so, we have been making a deliberate attempt to give membership engagement a more prominent role in how MSCF functions. If you have participated in this effort, I want to take this opportunity to thank you and encourage you to continue to participate. If you haven't yet had a chance to be part of the effort, please consider this an invitation to be a fully engaged member of the union.

Much of our engagement involves organizing around issues of importance to us. The most prominent and recent example of our engagement efforts was in response to the system's Long Term Financial Sustainability (LTFS) recommendations. Hundreds of our members wrote letters and signed a petition indicating our concerns with the recommendations. The letters and the petition were delivered to the Board of Trustees. As the trustees ponder their action on the recommendations, I am certain that your input will play a role.

We'll continue to have opportunities to organize around

other issues, both at the state and local levels. Our newly created membership engagement committee, chaired by Gretchen Long (Hennepin Tech), will lead us in those efforts. I look forward to the training session they have planned for chapter membership chairs in conjunction with our December board meeting. It's critical that our engagement efforts be founded in local chapters. Our role at the state MSCF office is to give you the training, guidance, and resources necessary to fuel your efforts.

While our work with membership engagement is just beginning, I want you to know how energizing it has already proven to be. The excellence and passion of our members shone through in the letters written to the trustees regarding LTFS. Many of those letters were generated in chapter writing sessions, where members got together to write in unity. The more time we spend together working on issues of importance to us all, the more we're going to find energy in the power of the collective.

For some the inclusion of a prominent membership engagement



component in the work of MSCF may represent a shift from our traditional service model approach. I want to assure all of you that we will continue to provide the same level of member rights service we always have. We'll continue to assertively bargain and enforce the contract. We'll continue to advocate for our members in numerous venues, including at the system office and at the legislature. Our membership engagement efforts will only serve to strengthen our efforts in these and other realms.

It's an exciting time in MSCF. We're deliberately moving forward with a membership engagement effort designed to mobilize our members around issues of importance to us all. Please consider this your official invitation to join the movement.

Wildcat Strike

By Norm Halsa, MSCF Vice President for Technical Education

I've been a union member almost all of my adult life, with the exception of two years serving in the U.S. Army and a few years working as an automotive technician in a small automotive dealership in northwestern Minnesota.

My first membership with a union was with the International Woodworkers Union who represented the blue collar workers at Arctic Cat Enterprise. I worked as a welder in a welding shop that was overridden with smoke because of the welding of parts that still had production oil on their surface. We went to administration many times to have the problem of all the smoke discussed. It seemed that the only thing the company folks wanted was to continue to push all employees to produce more snowmobiles each day and were not interested in fixing our issue.

We had three shifts of welders at that time who supplied all the welded parts that went into building the sleds.

As health concerns about the ever present oily smoke being inhaled into our lungs rose, we knew we needed to do something to get the company's attention.

This is where union engagement came into play. Although illegal, all three shifts of welders walked off the job on the same day, leaving but three scabs behind. I remember the head of human resources standing on a fifty-five-gallon paint barrel stating that he was going to fire all of us.

This wildcat strike shut down the production of snowmobiles within three days. The company rushed to find ways to finally fix the issue of the smoke by installing air handling fans to provide fresh air and remove



the majority of the smoke. All of the welders that had walked out were recalled with no disciplinary action taken against them.

I realize that MSCF is much larger than what I describe above, and that member engagement is a bit fragmented. However, the day is coming, perhaps sooner than we anticipate, when all of us will need to be engaged.



www.msfcfmn.org

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Emails, Facebook, Newsletters...Oh My!

By Darci Stanford, MSCF Vice President for Liberal Arts

Better communication! It is a huge hurdle for many organizations yet it is what members, employees, etc. cry out for over and over again. It is also a key strategy in member engagement. Strategic, effective and efficient communication with our members has been a big priority for us over the last year. It started with a survey last fall to get a sense of what means of communication members engage in, which they liked and which ones they didn't. What we found was many people didn't know all the communication tools we had (e.g., social media, campus bulletin boards), a strong preference for tradition in the way of hard copy options (i.e., Green Sheet) and face-to-face communication (e.g., Chapter Meetings) and the pros and cons of relying mainly on email communications (e.g., too many, too long, not getting forwarded). This feedback has allowed us to re-examine what we use, how we use it, when we use it and what else could be used to better inform and engage members.

Over the last year, there has been a growth in the number of members engaging in our social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter. More of you have liked our page or are following us. More of you have liked, shared or commented on

posts and tweets. More of you have sent us information to post and tweet. We ask you to continue to engage with our social media tools in whichever way you are able.

There has also been an increase in traffic to the MSCF website. The website is not only a place to find general information about the organization, sign up new members and fill out event registration forms, but now has added features to help keep you informed of MSCF events and information. First off, a calendar of events has been added. This includes events related to MSCF activities such as, but not limited to, MSCF committee meetings, MSCF board meetings, and political activity events (e.g., Road Warrior events, campaign opportunities). With the atmosphere around this year's campaign season, participation in political activity events is vital so check out the calendar regularly for updates.

The website also has an MSCF Updates page. This contains information related to our organization that, likely in the past, would have been communicated through email. It will also serve as a repository for information that is shared via email. How many times do you find yourself trying to "find



that email" with information you know you have previously read? Currently, the MSCF Updates information accompanies the MSCF Minute email so please watch for it.

What we ask is that you make a habit of regularly engaging with at least one of our communication methods whether it is via email only, a combination of Facebook, email and the website or email and the website, to name a few options. The state office will continue to work hard to provide you with pertinent, relevant information relative to the organization, higher education and labor organizing at the state, local and national level. For all of this to be effective, there needs to be front-end and end-user engagement. Informed members are engaged members!

At-large members of the executive committee elected at July Board of Directors meeting

2016-2017 at-large members are:

Tom Baldwin, Mesabi Range

Rick Nelson, Century

Dave O'Donnell, Vermilion

Von Rathsachack, MN West-South

When Faculty Care

By Kent Quamme, MSCF Treasurer

“When faculty say ‘I don’t care,’ bureaucracy wins.” This was a quote from Greg Mulcahy, former MSCF president, at the first session of the Emerging Leaders College. The quote came about after participants in the college asked what faculty can do to make a difference and what faculty militancy looks like or how does it start.

Even though President Emeritus Mulcahy may not have ever uttered the words, “member engagement,” or “member organizing,” he knew exactly what it meant and what it does for the faculty union. Being engaged means caring about what happens not only to us as individuals, but to the faculty as a collective. Many times we will sit back, teach our classes, help our students, and believe this is enough. We will let others take care of that “union” business. This is not enough. We always want to do what is best for our students and doing the work of the faculty union is what is best for our students. The work of the union provides for more faculty on campus, class size determination, academic freedom, transferability of

courses, professional development opportunities, etc... These are all examples of union work that allows us to provide quality education to our students.

The Academic Affairs and Standards Council, under faculty leadership, allows faculty to create bold, dynamic, and rigorous curriculum that will challenge our students and help them learn. The AASC was brought to us via contract language negotiated by the union. MnState did not just hand that to us, it was fought for by faculty who cared.

The Faculty Shared Governance Council section of the contract is language that gives faculty a voice in the operations of the college. This is language that faculty across the country are envious of and for which they are fighting for at various levels of higher education. To many faculty, this seems like a right which we have always enjoyed, but that is not the case. Faculty Shared Governance was negotiated by faculty who believed we had a right to it and who cared enough to get it solidified into the contract.



Like the two examples above, our contract has been fought for by faculty who care. Not just those on the bargaining team, but by those who are defending it on a daily basis through committee work, by talking to potential members, by filing grievances, by attending meetings, by doing our best in the classroom, and just by getting involved. When asked to serve in an important role such as committee work, recruiting new members, or by stepping into a local or state leadership role, please take the request seriously and consider it. Let’s show them we care.

July 27, 2016, MSCF Board of Directors Meeting Motions

MOTIONS

1. Motion and second from the executive committee to approve the 2016-2017 committee appointments as submitted. Carried

2. Move that meet and confer ask the system to develop yearly a list of security requirements and functionality for apps used on personal electronic devices in order to ensure faculty are not held liable for security breaches. Homann/Aspaas. Carried

Why Can't I Just Drive?

By Gretchen Long, Membership Engagement Committee Chair

I love my car. Actually, I love the idea of just getting in my car and driving where I need to go without thinking too much about it. What I really love is the idea of just driving. Of course, that's not how driving works. A lot of stuff affects my ability to "just drive", but without a car, I'm not driving anywhere.

I feel the same way about teaching, and, I suspect, so do most of you. I love the idea of being able to "just teach". But, like driving, that isn't really how teaching works. Many factors affect our ability to "just teach", the most influential being our union. Beyond setting the basic terms and conditions of employment, our union gives us a voice that allows us to influence larger decisions that affect our colleges, our classrooms, our ability to "just teach". Our union is the vehicle that allows us to just teach.

Just like the idea that "just driving" is an illusion, so is the idea that any of us can "just teach". If we aren't engaged with and maintaining our union, we're neglecting the vehicle that allows us to "just teach". Many of us know this and are already engaged in the work of maintaining and strengthening our union, but each of us needs to be routinely engaged to make sure our union is functioning as well as it can.

I am not a mechanic, and I don't want to be a mechanic. But, despite that, I know it's mostly up to me to maintain my car. I have to remember to get gas. I have to remember to get oil changes, get tires rotated, and get new batteries. And I have to check in with my mechanic so I know what else to do and when so my car keeps running. Staying informed about my vehicle is one of the best ways to maintain it. And while my mechanic

may do some of the work, it's still up to me to make sure my car stays functioning if I want to keep driving.

Engaging in the work that maintains our union doesn't require special skills or expertise. We can all attend chapter meetings and talk with new faculty. And we can all stay informed. Knowing what is going on with our union is critical to knowing what else we need to do to maintain it.

I can pretend I can "just drive", neglect my car and eventually, it won't start. Or, I can take a little time and effort, do some regular maintenance, and most of the time be able to "just drive". Our union is the same. Without your engagement, our union won't work, and if our union doesn't work, we aren't going anywhere.

Education Minnesota Foundation Grant Opportunities

The mission of the Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is to promote vision, best practice and achievement. A large part of that is accomplished by offering grant opportunities to classroom teachers and faculty, across all levels and disciplines, including higher education. The decisions regarding funding and management of the foundation rest with a Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is made up of eight K-12 teachers, one higher education representative (Norm Halsa, vice president, technical), one ESP, one at-large member and the officers of Education Minnesota.

Last year, grants were awarded to 16 MSCF members representing 11 different colleges in amounts ranging from \$810-\$3,000. To the right is a list of grants that higher education faculty can apply for now. Grant application information and forms may be found at the Education Minnesota website, www.educationminnesota.org.

- **Higher Education Faculty Professional Development Grant – deadline April 3**
- **Bruce Vento Science Educator Professional Development Grant – deadline Dec. 9**
- **IMPACT Grant – deadline Jan. 13**
- **Affinity Grant – deadline April 3**
- **Classroom Technology Grant – deadline April 3**
- **Classroom Project Grant – deadline Dec. 9**

MSCF Minute on Engagement

By Robert Frame, MSCF Standing Committee on Contingent Faculty Chair

What does “engagement” mean to, and for, contingent faculty?

The Minnesota State system faculty includes a substantial number of temporary full- and part-time instructors (for brevity: contingent faculty). The MSCF/MN State contract allows the system to have no more than 30% contingent faculty, which still yields a goodly number working with MN State students at any given time.

First, and most important, contingent faculty engage with their students. All faculty care about and do our best to make the learning experiences of our students meaningful. To those few who may not think about it, contingent faculty are as trained and as committed to students as permanent faculty!

Lots of contingent faculty are interested in serving on committees, offering their expertise and energy to help focus the college on what is best for students, and to help the college thrive in what is currently a difficult climate for higher education. This service has

centuries-long roots, encapsulated in the idea that “the faculty are the college.” While modern life relies upon bureaucracy (meaning lots of staff and administrators, too) to run complex enterprises, together we do focus on how we can best serve our students.

Feeling a sense of connection with colleagues and their campus is another draw of service as well as an aspect of engagement. A frequent question for contingent faculty would be: On which campus? Contingent faculty frequently cobble together work on more than one campus. The practical realities of travel and having two (or more) “work homes” makes it tough for contingent faculty to get engaged through service while keeping up with students.

Engagement for contingent faculty: your main focus, and what is likely most important to you, is to do your best with your students. Service can enrich connections with colleagues (and we all know they are not bad on a CV). When you can make it work, when you can offer expertise or energy, and

when its focus interests you, join a committee on your campus.

What does “engagement” include for permanent faculty? One aspect of engagement is to raise permanent faculty members’ awareness about concerns affecting their contingent colleagues. Many permanent faculty never worked in a temporary capacity in MN State. For the substantial number who were contingent at one point, it may be quite some time since they held that status.

Know your contingent colleagues, ease the practicalities of life on your campus (how to get copies, food options that may be available if they teach nights or weekends, whatever helps them fit into campus), and—odd as it is to have to include this—be sure you respect their training, expertise, and commitment as a professor and as a colleague. (Great point about this level of engagement: those are exactly the types of interactions with contingent faculty that can lead comfortably into conversations about being members of MSCF!)

New Government Relations Chair

Mark Grant, Dakota County Technical College faculty member, will be the new MSCF Government Relations Chair, replacing Rick

Nelson who is returning to the classroom full-time next year. Mark will work with Rick during the upcoming legislative session.

We welcome Mark to the office and thank Rick for his many years of outstanding service.

Summer Leadership Retreat

By Darci Stanford, MSCF Vice President for Liberal Arts

Norm and I worked with staff to develop a new summer training opportunity for chapter leaders. Chapter Presidents(29), Board Members(28), Chapter Grievance Reps(29), Chapter Academic Affairs and Standards Chairs(9) and state MSCF committee members(26) attended a training event at Treasure Island Resort and Casino on July 25-27, 2016. The decision to move this training to late summer rather than mid-October (formerly Ruttger's) was made in order to provide relevant training and networking opportunities to campus leaders prior to the beginning of their MSCF work for the year.

The schedule included large group and small group training, a presentation by an AFT organizer and networking and socializing opportunities, while allowing time for family fun. The post-event survey results provided resounding feedback to keep the training in late summer. Be on the lookout for summer of 2017 dates.



Picture A: Chapter President Stephen Nelson (Northland-Thief River Falls) and MSCF Vice President for Technical Norm Halsa (Northland-Thief River Falls)

Picture B: Chapter Presidents Dwayne Hickman (Saint Cloud), Greg Latterell (Alexandria) and Von Rathsachack (MN West-South)

Picture C: AASC Chairs Training

Picture D: MSCF Staff Chip Dykstra along with Grievance Reps Mary Gruis (Ridgewater-Hutchinson), Shawn Bjerke (M State-Moorhead), Tracy Morstad (M State-Fergus Falls) and Mark Grant (DCTC) discuss scenarios during Grievance Rep training.

Picture E: MSCF Treasurer Kent Quamme (M State-Fergus Falls), Mary Belanger (DCTC), Linda Samuelson (Northland-Thief River Falls) and Gretchen Long (Hennepin Tech-Brooklyn Park) discuss membership engagement strategy.

Picture F: Grievance Reps Gae Davis (Central Lakes) and Chris Hensiak (Hennepin Tech-Brooklyn Park)

Picture G: Attendees listen during a Summer Leadership Retreat general session.



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Upcoming Meeting Dates

Board meeting
December 2, 2016
Education Minnesota

**Delegate Assembly
& Board meeting**
April 7, 2017
*Ramada Plaza
Minneapolis*