

the Green Sheet



VOLUME XXVI, ISSUE I

The Official Publication of the Minnesota State College Faculty

JANUARY 2024

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By Kevin Lindstrom, MSCF President

Bargaining often seems all-consuming, at least that's the way it feels while going through it. That's not to say we don't do anything else while bargaining, but our organizational capacity is certainly stretched while bargaining. Now that 2023-25 bargaining is done, well ahead of our traditional pace, we can turn our full attention to other matters. And, as luck would have it, there are some really big other matters to attend to.

Those of you who know me know I spend a good deal of time trying to put things in context, connecting the pieces, and checking my perspective. As I've done that with the issues currently facing us, and on the horizon, I have often found myself asking those around me, "Are these issues bigger, more consequential, and moving faster than ever before, or am I just getting old?" While Nicole and Carolyn have been more than willing to confirm that I am, in fact, getting old, they've also assured me the issues are bigger, more consequential, and moving faster than ever before.

The elimination of standalone developmental education courses. The redesign of general education, including a potential substantial shrinking of the Minnesota Transfer curriculum. Changes in Higher Learning Commissions standards on credentialing in response to a fundamentally flawed concurrent enrollment model. Online program managers (OPMs), specifically designed to take control of the curriculum and de-professionalize faculty work.



Common course numbering, a slippery slope that could lead just about anywhere. Artificial intelligence and the contention by a college administrator that it could replace faculty in the near future. IFO faculty teaching lower division courses on one of our campuses. The continued exploitation of contingent faculty. Publisher content dominating the content and delivery of our courses. MSCF budget challenges as a result of declining membership post-Janus. Vacant hallways at many campuses as a result of enrollment declines and a shift to online delivery. Moving from a highly customized ISRS to an off-the-shelf, inflexible Workday. Payroll errors that happen over and over and impact our most vulnerable disproportionately.

These are just the issues that come immediately to mind. I'm sure I've missed a few, and I'm sure others will emerge soon. The obvious question that follows

such a list is, "So, what are we going to do about it?" A portion of the answer will likely be a function of how the issues move at the system office, but there are certainly some things we can put in place now to get started.

We're going to continue to use a member action approach, just as we did with bargaining. We know nothing impacts the system office like your voice, and we're going to be deliberate about bringing your voice, and the voices of your faculty colleagues, directly into the conversation. You'll hear a lot more about specifics as we move forward.

We're going to add a "Current Issues" section to our website under the "News & Updates" tab. There you will find the name of our point person for the issue, documents related to the issue, recordings of committee meetings related to the issue, and any other relevant information we have.

We're also going to be deliberate about enhancing our communications with members. We've heard some harsh criticism of our current communication practices. The good news is the criticism has come with an offer from the critics to use their expertise to help us. Look for the reconfiguration of the current member engagement and recruitment committee, possibly via a C&B amendment, to get us to where we need to be.

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You Are Needed

By Matt Dempsey, Vice President

I am honored to serve as MSCF vice president for another three years. I started in this position four years ago and it has been quite a journey, from all the work we did with COVID up to a second tentative agreement and now a contract with Minnesota State and everything in between.

Of the many lessons I have learned in those four years, the most important has been that active, engaged members are key to accomplishing anything. While I am committed to working tirelessly on your behalf, it is your time and energy that are crucial in making significant gains. Hopefully you have already read President Lindstrom's piece in this Green Sheet and know that there are more issues than ever where we need you!

Here are a few initiatives I am involved with where faculty input and participation are much needed.

Course Placement

A new policy on course placement will soon be released for comment. Your representatives on the Assessment for Course Placement Committee (ACPC) spent hours and hours reviewing research, discussing options, and fending off some truly bad ideas. However, if large numbers of faculty take the time to review the proposal and comment, it will send the message to the system leadership that it isn't just the handful of committee

members who are concerned. If only a few faculty review and comment, the opposite message will be sent. So watch your email and keep an eye on the upcoming "Current Issues" area of the website to find out when you can read and comment on the new policy.

Corequisite Models for Development Education

Last spring the system formed a Developmental Education Workgroup that was charged with the initial planning to implement a corequisite developmental education model. Your representatives on this group, while being supportive of the corequisite model, carried forward the resolution passed by the Delegate Assembly opposing any system level mandate and affirming that, by contract, curriculum is controlled locally by the Academic Affairs and Standards Council at each college. The workgroup has disbanded and the system is starting a new steering committee this spring. The MSCF representatives on that steering committee will again need your support to ensure the process respects faculty expertise and does not impinge upon our contract.

General Education Redesign

Again, your representatives have been working with others in the system on a philosophy of general education, on revising the model used, and even a new



name. The committee, I hope, is close to releasing some of their work for wider comment. When that happens, please take the time to review and provide feedback—the more MSCF members who comment, the stronger it makes the voice your representatives have on the committee.

In conclusion, I am excited to have another three years to continue to work on these projects and more, but I know that my work alone is not enough. We are far more effective when you take time to review proposals and provide feedback. This is your union, and its work is your work. To be effective, MSCF needs your engagement and support. Thank you for the honor and privilege of serving as your vice president and I look forward to working with you in our many worthy endeavors!



WWW.MSCFMN.ORG

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Delegate Assembly: Return to Virtual

By Nicole Bietz, Secretary

After a very successful in person Delegate Assembly (DA) last spring our DA will return to a virtual format on April 12, 2024. As you may recall, the MSCF Board of Directors approved a change to the MSCF Constitution and Bylaws to state that the Delegate Assembly shall meet in person no more than once every two years. For those of you who may be new to MSCF, the DA is our largest annual convening of members. Delegates will hear reports from MSCF officers and committee chairs on important issues facing our union and will act on business items such as resolutions, actions items or amendments to the MSCF Constitution and Bylaws. Below you will find additional information to help you as you consider being involved in this important union work.

Who Can Attend?

Delegates are made up of each chapter's board member as well as a certain number of members elected as delegates from each chapter. The number of delegates is determined by the number of members in the chapter in fall semester. In addition to delegates, any member is welcome to attend and observe the DA proceedings as a non-voting guest. Members who are interested in serving as delegates should reach out to their chapter leadership.

Why Attend?

Delegates play a critical role in shaping the direction and priorities for our union. They propose new policies to the board of directors, provide organizational direction and establish organizational positions via action items and resolutions. The DA is also a great opportunity to hear more about what is happening across the state at the 26 colleges in our system. There are also prize drawings for first time delegates and chapters that fill all their delegate seats!

Submitting a Business Item

Business items can be submitted by a chapter, standing committee, the Board of Directors, or individual members.



Individual members can submit business items regardless of whether they are serving as a delegate. There are 4 categories of business items that can be submitted including: Policy Proposals/Revisions, Action Items, Constitution and Bylaw Amendments and Resolutions. The deadline for submitting business items this year is February 27, 2024. Submission forms for business items are available on our Delegate Assembly website. If you are interested in submitting a business item, we encourage you to attend an information session and consult with other members prior to your submission.



Learn More

To get an idea of the type of actions and issues past DA's have acted on you can review meeting minutes and standing



resolutions on our MSCF website under the "governance" section. Additionally, we will be holding two virtual Delegate Assembly Information sessions on January 30 at 6pm and February 15 at 4pm. Information and registration links for these sessions can be found on the Delegate Assembly website along with the forms for submitting business items. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to your local or statewide leaders. As the DA gets closer, we will also hold a resolution information session and a new delegate information session. Participating in the DA is critical to maintaining our strength as a union and it is how we ensure our rank-and-file members continue to shape the direction of our organization. We hope to see you there!

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This is just the start of what is going to be engagement on a variety of high-stakes issues. Getting through it effectively will be a collective effort. You made the

difference in bargaining, and you'll make the difference on these issues, as well.

Now that bargaining is done, this is what's next.

Budget Concerns, Dues, and Membership

By Kent Quamme, Treasurer

At last year's Delegate Assembly, the Budget Workgroup was formed and tasked with the following:

1. Develop guidance or framework for developing a budget. Provide documentation to Executive Committee.
2. Determine whether the budget will reflect the dues income or will the dues income be a product of the budget. Provide recommendation to the Executive Committee.
3. Prioritize MSCFs' values in our expenditures.
4. Develop a position, statement, or policy on reserves and how/when the organization should access its reserves. Provide statement/policy for consideration to the Executive Committee.
5. Update budget when revenue or expenditures change during the year.

The workgroup was formed and the following faculty volunteered to serve. Dan Norgard, Normandale Community College; Sadie Pendaz-Foster, Inver Hills Community College; David Riggs, Inver Hills Community College; and Kelly Befus,

Anoka Ramsey Community College – Coon Rapids Campus; and myself.

The group started its work this past fall and will be wrapping up prior to the January Board of Directors meeting and will present findings and recommendations for consideration at that meeting.

A big concern since the Janus decision has been falling membership numbers and that brings with it the problem of lower dues income. The workgroup has been discussing ideas of how to alleviate this issue. Some of the ideas for the membership to consider would be limiting the budget to no more than 120% of the projected dues. Another would be smaller incremental dues increase each year rather than a large increase every few years. MSCF needs to determine what we value and do we need to change how we run the organization and spend within our current dues income or do we continue with our current system and increase dues to fit those needs. I am sure many of you have more ideas and we would love to hear them. Please bring those ideas to your board member so they may be brought to the board of directors meeting for discussion.



All of these discussions must have a component regarding membership. As we have said at numerous meetings, membership recruitment must include all of our members. It is not one person's job and the more people involved, the greater the strength of MSCF. I know it sounds obvious, but I will state it anyway. The larger the membership, the larger the dues income. The larger the dues income, the more MSCF can protect its members' rights. MSCF belongs to all members and to keep it relevant, current, and strong, we need all of us working on membership. We need all of us fighting for MSCF.

Contingent Faculty Hiring Hall-Member Benefit Reminder

Calling all Contingent Faculty Members! Make sure you are signed up for the MSCF Members-only Hiring Hall. The Hiring Hall assists contingent faculty in accessing work and serves as a resource for campus administrators looking to fill positions. Once a semester, we send chapter presidents

and local HR departments our Hiring Hall list of temporary faculty members who are currently teaching in the MinnState system and who have indicated an interest in teaching for their college.

If you are a contingent faculty looking to find work on other campuses, sign

up today! Visit <https://www.mscfmn.org/hiring-hall> to sign up. If you have questions, please contact us at mscf@edmn.org.

The deadline to sign up for spring is April 30.



MSCF Day at the Capitol 2024!

By Mark Grant, Governmental Relations/Lobbyist

Minnesota State College Faculty's 2024 Day at the Capitol is Thursday March 7th. As we have in past years, we will have a dinner and messaging session the evening of the 6th.

You have all heard a lot over the last several months about the power of our collective action. We just completed a bargaining session that brought a historic settlement—due in large part to the member actions we engaged in during the negotiations process. But as I have brought up in the past, I think it is fair to say the foundation of our contract settlement was laid at last year's Day at the Capitol. We introduced ourselves to a largely new legislature and made sure they knew who we were and what we did for our students, our communities and the state. Our advocacy resulted in a session that saw:

- A record investment in Minnesota State. This made the record investment in MSCF possible.
- An increase in the employer contribution to IRAP participants. This amounts to an additional 2.75% raise for close to 70% of our faculty.
- And we got the legislature out of the contract approval process.

The relationships you established and nurtured last year paid real dividends and now is not the time to let up. The fiscal landscape is different this year, but we are going in focused on ongoing investment, protecting academic freedom, and improving benefits—like pensions and tuition waivers. Our continued success is directly tied to our level of engagement at the Capitol.



Please register below and plan on joining us in March.



Election 2024: Constitutional Election for MSCF Vice President

By Zack Sullivan, Elections Committee Chair

On December 8, 2023 the nomination period closed for the 2024 Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF) Constitutional Officer Election. The nomination period for Vice President adhered to the timeline and rules developed by the MSCF Elections Committee. The rules and timeline were approved by the MSCF Board of Directors on October 27, 2023. An election was to be held online using the ElectionBuddy system February 28 - March 5, 2024.

The Elections Committee received one nomination for the incumbent Vice President Matt Dempsey. Since his candidacy was uncontested, we will no longer require a Constitutional Officer Election in 2024. Per the MSCF Constitution and Bylaws, the

Elections Committee will bring a motion to the Board of Directors to declare Matt Dempsey the winner of the Vice President election. We thank Matt for his commitment to leading and serving MSCF!

MSCF remains a strong union because of active member participation in the democratic process, both within our union and in the broader political environment. The Elections Committee encourages all members in good standing to nominate themselves (or willing fellow members) for future constitutional officer elections. Please do not hesitate to contact the Elections Committee with questions or suggestions regarding our elections processes.

Lastly, please make sure we have your personal email address on file for future elections. If you were able to participate in the recent Tentative Agreement (TA) vote, you should be good to go. If you are new to MSCF or have changed your personal email address, please provide updated information to mscfelections@edmn.org.

We thank you for your participation in the recent (and successful!) TA ratification vote and your future participation in MSCF Constitutional Elections.

MSCF Elections Committee:
Zack Sullivan (Chair)
Erica Stene Winkler
K.C. Hanson

Union Member Scholarship Resources

Robert G. Porter Scholars Program

This AFT program offers four 4-year, \$8,000 post-secondary scholarships to students who are dependents of AFT members, as well as 10 one-time \$1,000 grants to AFT members to assist with their continuing education and/or fund their proposed ideas to strengthen and grow their union.



Nellie Stone Johnson Scholarship Program

This program provides financial assistance to racial minority union members and their families who wish to pursue an education at one of the colleges and universities of Minnesota State. The program honors Nellie Stone Johnson, a long-time member of the system's board.

Scholarships ranging from up to \$1200 for part time and up to \$2500 for full time are given each year to students enrolled in community or technical college, along with undergraduate and graduate programs.

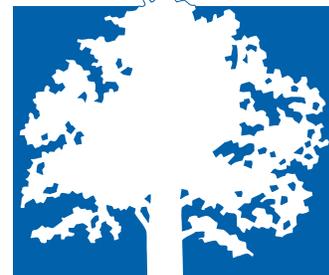


Education Minnesota Foundation Professional Development Grants

Professional Development Grants are intended to support faculty in acquiring new skills and knowledge to use in their work. Both individual and group applications are accepted.

Faculty may request up to \$3,000 for individuals or \$2,000 per person for groups of 2-6 members. The spring deadline is Friday, April 5, 2024. For more information visit www.mscf.org and visit "grants" on the "member's only" section.

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MSCF Board Meetings

August 3, 2023
October 27, 2023
January 26, 2024
April 13, 2024

MSCF Delegate Assembly

April 12, 2024