

MSCF Connection Stronger Together



President's message - It takes a union

MSCF President, Matt Williams

By the time this issue of the Connection arrives in your inbox, we'll be nearing the end of the workload arbitration settlement claims process. (If you have a claim, remember to submit it by October 31st!)

This has been a watershed event for our union, and touched the lives of hundreds of MSCF members and every staff person associated with MSCF for the past decade. While we've told the story many times of how we got here, I want to share with you the names of many of the people behind the story. Without these people, we wouldn't have a story to tell.

First, Ilissa Morrow and Janel Engesser here in the MSCF office. They have been on the front lines of the logistics, making this possible by scheduling the hundreds of one-on-one meetings we've had as well as preparing the documents we've used to ensure meetings were efficient and effective. Next time you call/email or stop by the MSCF office, let them know how much we all appreciate their work.

The journey from initial grievance to arbitration win to lawsuit to successful settlement was made possible because of our dedicated legal team. Jess Anna Glover, Nicole Blissenbach, Cedrick Frazier, and Paula Johnston have all shared their expertise and passion at different points in this journey. Similarly, our field staff—Chip Dykstra, Matt Ryg, and Kari Ann Cruz—have all been instrumental in bringing this along as well out across this state meeting with faculty to assist them with the claims process.

It's important to point out that every name I have mentioned so far is a part of our affiliation with Education Minnesota, the American Federation of Teachers, and the National Education Association. From direct support in terms of staff assigned to MSCF to the financial resources our legal department receives from our national affiliates, being a part of a broader labor community is what made this possible.

The MSCF officers, past and present, have also played an instrumental part in seeing this process through, especially current MSCF Secretary Gretchen Long and MSCF Treasurer Kent Quamme. When a settlement was in sight, we realized the only way we could really make this claims process happen was to commit to heading out and meeting with faculty one-on-one. Given that our officer corps is smaller than it once was, this was going to be a heavy lift, but Gretchen and Kent approached it with a "we can do this" attitude.

I also want to give a special mention to former MSCF President Kevin Lindstrom. It would have been easy to not pursue this matter, to give up when it got rough, or to leave it to faculty to figure things out for themselves as part of the claims process. But as those of us who have worked with Kevin know, that's not how he operates. From day one, he pursued this the same way he did everything else: with integrity and a dedication to our membership that meant he was going to see this through no matter what. We are better as a union for our success in this matter, and much of that is because of Kevin.

As important as the work at the state level was, it's important to understand how much happened on the local campus level. Dedicated campus grievance reps caught this issue back in 2010, and over the past 9 years have been instrumental in keeping the pressure on, helping spread information, and helping us through this claims process. Chapter presidents and other local leaders have helped us coordinate campus visits, helped us make sure faculty heard about the settlement, and in many instances sat with us during our sessions while we went over workloads with individual faculty. I can't thank our local campus leadership enough.

And finally, the most important component: you. Given what it has taken to get to this point, it is clear that individuals advocating for themselves would never have been able to reach a successful resolution in this matter. It took our combined strength as a union to make this possible. Even if you will not have a claim to file, all MSCF members were a part of helping others get compensated for the work they did. At the end of the day, that's what this is all about: working together to help each other. Because of you, we are truly stronger together. Thank you.

Things to know

Education Minnesota Foundation grants

The Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is the major source of grant funding through the union that is open only to active members. The foundation offers grants for professional development, classroom projects and scholarships for members pursuing National Board Certified Teacher status. To learn more about the Education Minnesota foundation, [click here](#).

Take action

we've built a very simple survey to help identify people ready to have a conversation about action. You can fill it out [here](#).

Are you with us?

We are ready to keep pushing. But we need to know you are with us. Because here's the truth: The system office thinks they can say no because they think we're alone. Let's show them they're wrong. [Click here to be counted](#). It will take less than 30 seconds – less time than when you signed your membership card and joined our union.

Workload Arbitration Settlement:

By the numbers...as of this Monday morning we have met with 577 faculty. Identified 202 claims worth up to \$1,004,260.93. Please remember that the final deadline to file claims is **October 31st**. As we move into the final phase of the settlement claims process, we have added several meeting dates in October to make sure we catch as many people as we can: [Register for a meeting here!](#)

Important Dates:

MSCF VP Officer Election

Oct. 28 - Nov. 1

MSCF Executive Meetings

Nov. 1

Nov. 15

Jan. 10

Feb. 21

MSCF Board Meetings

Nov. 15

Feb. 21

Apr. 3 - Delegate Assembly

Education Minnesota Rep. Convention

Apr. 24 - 25

Reflections on the First Session of MSCF Emerging Leaders College, Class of 2020

JoAnn Brandt, Hennepin Tech. - Brooklyn Park, Jason Burrows, Hennepin Tech. - Eden Prairie, Linda Paquette, Hennepin Tech. - Brooklyn Park

Faculty hiring hall brings historic union idea to higher education work

Kieren Steinhoff, Communications Specialist, Education Minnesota



At the Spring Delegate Assembly, we heard of an opportunity to learn more about our contract and how to help build a stronger union on our campuses through the MSCF Emerging Leaders College. Three of us individually applied to be part of this year's cohort.

Our team is from Hennepin Technical College and each of us have recently increased our involvement in our union in response to changes and challenges at the college. As some of you may be aware, Rik Stirling, our long-serving chapter president at the Eden Prairie campus passed away last spring after a devastating, and unexpected, illness. The void after his passing was a bracing reminder of two things: First, we should not take our leaders for granted. Second, we need to build resiliency in our union chapters.

The MSCF Emerging Leaders College is providing our institution with a pathway to expand our base and prepare people ready to lead. From our fresh-eyed perspective, we see this program as doing these things:

- Bringing together faculty from all over the system to learn the in's and out's of our contract from people who have a long history with a deep understanding of its development,
- Providing a forum to discuss and transmit the core values of MSCF, and
- Building the relationships between institutions that strong unions require.

At our first meeting, in addition to meeting MSCF President, Matt Williams, and Education Minnesota President, Denise Specht, we had the opportunity to do the following:

1. Meet a diverse group of almost twenty faculty and started the process of getting to know one another. We learned many of us face similar challenges, some of us face unique challenges, and shared ideas for how past experiences can inform and guide the current responses of others in similar situations. We believe these relationships and conversations make us stronger.
2. We were able to get a first-hand account of how negotiations had gone the previous day. Although Kent Quamme, Chief Negotiator, was still a little raw from enduring the disingenuous conduct of the system's negotiators, it was encouraging to see the passion, dedication, and strategy that is being brought forth on behalf of all of us. This is a concrete example of how the core values of MSCF guide the priorities of our contract negotiations.
3. Lastly, we were able to dig into a couple of key articles of our contract to better understand their meaning and how they impact our work. Different members of the Emerging Leaders College were assigned different articles to present. After some interactive exercises, we were able to discuss how different people interpret the articles or have used the contract language to protect faculty on their campuses.

Overall, the first session of the Emerging Leaders College was a success. We feel the support system as we try to navigate our emerging roles on our own campuses. We now know we are not navigating alone. Our union's knowledge and experience is deep and broad and people are willing to share and grow stronger together. We are resilient!

As a faculty member at Normandale Community College, Robert Frame knows that sometimes a staffing opening gets filled when department chairs or deans ask other faculty, "Do you know anyone?"

That gave Frame an idea.

Hiring halls have been used in labor unions throughout history to share job openings with union members and create referrals for employers. They began, and are common, in the trade unions.

"There is sometimes a need to find possibilities to hire. The hiring hall is designed to be the union making that step easy," said Frame, a history instructor who has studied labor unions as part of American history. "Back to its roots, the connection is the employers let their locals know how many positions they need and the union makes that connection with employees."

Frame is also the chair of Minnesota State College Faculty's committee on temporary faculty and brought the idea of doing a hiring hall for contingent faculty to his union's leadership. It was approved at the union's delegate assembly last spring.

Contingent faculty means staff who are in temporary, adjunct or non-tenure track positions.

"Temporary employment ends up being a long haul for some people. This is an opportunity for our members to find positions to get a more livable level of work," Frame said.

"Even though MSCF is very unique in that we have one contract for both part-time and full-time faculty, stability of work is still elusive for temporary faculty," said MSCF President Matt Williams. "Instead of merely conceding this reality, Robert and other members of the committee on temporary faculty found a way to use their union to address a real issue they faced."

MSCF members who are contingent will now be able to sign up for the hiring hall on the union's website, www.msfcfn.org/contingent-faculty.

Members will fill in their name, credential field, what they have taught or what they can teach, if they are interested in teaching on a campus or an online course, and where they would be interested in teaching.

MSCF staff compile the list and send it out to campuses twice a year. The union sent out the first list this fall.

"We want to make sure people can get signed up but also get it to deans at the right time," Frame said.

On his campus, Frame said there is excitement around the idea. Williams agrees.

"Early reactions have been extremely positive, and what I am most excited about is that it has expanded people's perceptions about what a union can do," Williams said. "Given the sobering statistics about contingent labor in academia across this country, we know we are not done in this area. Can MSCF be an active, national leader in addressing the issues contingent faculty face? Our success with the hiring hall gives me confidence that we can."

The hope is that MSCF chapter presidents on each campus will also have a copy of the list and be in communication with the appropriate deans, department chairs and the campus human resources department to answer any questions and make sure they have the information they need.

"A lot of temporary staff I have talked to are happy that it might get them a better idea of their workload in the future," Frame said.

The committee on temporary faculty is one of MSCF's newer standing committees. Contingent faculty make up a healthy group of MSCF's membership, so creating a committee to make sure their needs were addressed was well-received.

"The hiring hall was a tangible project for our committee to work on," said Frame. "I'm really pleased that it is up and running."