

the GREEN SHEET



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The Official Publication of the Minnesota State College Faculty

JANUARY 2010

System Planning



by Greg Mulcahy,
MSCF President

The MnSCU Board of Trustees created an Ad Hoc Committee on System Planning that has scheduled four public meetings around the state. The meetings center on three questions. 1. What are the most significant changes/challenges affecting public higher education in Minnesota? 2. How can the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities add value and better meet your needs now and in the future? 3. Given the fiscal and demographic challenges facing post secondary education, what should the system's priorities be for the next five to ten years?

These are good questions. I'll take them in sequence.

The most significant challenges affecting higher education in Minnesota are lack of will and failure of vision. The lack of will is manifested in the state's unwillingness to pay for public higher education at the legislatively mandated 67% public share. This leads to galloping tuition increases and a scarcity that covers, perhaps deliberately, other failures. It reflects a political climate in which politicians are unwilling to pay for what they get or get what they pay for and pander to the public with phony "no new taxes" refrains. Politics is, perhaps, ever thus, but the political culture of the state has moved from a legitimate concern to see public dollars are efficiently spent to a crabbed, reductionist vision that nothing can be afforded.

This political culture includes the failure of vision. Minnesota went from being a relatively poor, agrarian state in 1940 to a relatively affluent, cosmopolitan state in the 1970s. This transformation was fueled in no small part by

investment in public higher education. The future of this state will depend on the availability and quality of its public education. The simple, though often ignored, fact is almost every aspect of life in Minnesota is positively impacted by strong public higher education and investment in it by the state and its citizens. If you want proof beyond my assertion about Minnesota's history, take a look at the national results of the investment in higher education via the original G.I. Bill.

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities can add value and better meet needs by creating a climate of rigor and expectation for students in its institutions and the state. Too many students arrive at college unprepared

and without any concept of what to expect. MnSCU should encourage and foster an environment of academic rigor at every institution, and students should come to higher education with the expectation they will receive a challenging, enriching education. Likewise, MnSCU should be a leader in empowering the K-12 system to better prepare students and universally raise academic standards. If students come prepared and engaged, efficiencies, including economic efficiencies, will be the fortunate byproduct of that preparation and engagement.

The system's priorities for the next five to ten years should be academic

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The system's priorities for the next five to ten years should be academic excellence and access... Every student should be offered the opportunity for success and guaranteed the experience of academic challenge whether in a technical program, general education program or major, college or university.



Contract Compliance Revisited (Again)

by Kevin Lindstrom,
MSCF Technical Vice President

Hopefully you've heard our ongoing discussions about the importance of contract compliance. Contract compliance is a theme that runs throughout our faculty rights and bargaining efforts. It's the primary reason we appoint and compensate chapter grievance representatives. It's why we've conducted "contract compliance visits" to a number of campuses in recent years. This isn't the first time the topic has been broached in the pages of the Green Sheet.

Despite these discussions and efforts, we still have room to improve. As I've visited numerous campuses this year, I've come across some practices that simply don't square with contract language. I'm convinced that these practices are not the function of bad intent or neglect. Rather, it seems the most common reasons for the problems are misinterpretation of contract language or not checking long-standing practice against contract

language (the "we've always done it that way" phenomenon).

As a member of the bargaining team, I can tell you that having our members work outside the contract erodes our position in negotiations. As a former faculty rights committee chair, I can tell you how aberrant practice at one campus can get leveraged against other campuses. As an officer in the union, I can tell you how having individuals and/or campuses working outside the contract violates the very principles we stand for.

I believe it's time to start viewing contract compliance as a campus-wide team effort. Sure, chapter grievance reps have primary responsibility, but it's in everyone's best interests to assist with the compliance effort. As you serve on campus committees and contemplate changes in college policies and practices, stop to consider if the work your committee is doing fits within contractual parameters. As you make decisions about how you do

your daily work, stop to consider if your choices fit within the contract.

At the December board meeting, I challenged board members to take this team view of contract compliance. I gave them a copy of a checklist of compliance items that had been provided to grievance reps earlier in the year. I asked them to go back to their campuses, discuss the checklist with the grievance reps, and offer to help in the compliance effort. I encouraged them to start by focusing on three specific areas: class size, combined classes, and reasonable credit equivalence.

I hope each of you will take up the challenge to be part of the team approach to contract compliance. If you'd like a copy of the compliance checklist, contact me, and I'll get one to you. Maybe you can use it as a discussion item at a chapter meeting or within your department. As always, if you have questions or need assistance, contact the state office. We're part of the team, too.

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System Planning

excellence and access. Every student should come prepared, but those who do not should be offered serious, intensive, time-limited opportunities for remediation and/or development. The system should provide genuine, extensive, focused student support that emphasizes student responsibility. Every student should be offered the opportunity for success and guaranteed the experience of academic challenge whether in a technical program, general education program or major, college or university.

The system should also abandon some of the phantasms that haunt contemporary discussions of higher education. The permanent faux crisis culture that demands, and attempts to pass for, innovation yet never meaningful innovates to improve anything is best left to its inevitable grave. The dirty little secret every academic type knows

is you can make more money and get better conditions by flogging your book and consulting package around the crisis du jour than you can teaching real students things worth knowing. Likewise, it's time to accept that technology is a tool, not a savior. Given the system is the 8th or 5th largest in the nation, depending on how you measure, isn't it time to develop our own models with our own experts to leverage internal expertise and quit looking to consultants to show us the way?

Finally, the much-promised revolution, like all much-promised revolutions, isn't coming. Higher education will and must evolve. I'm making perhaps the most radical proposal of all—let's hasten that evolution with a return to a vision of academic excellence.

Leadership



by Joe Juaire
MSCF Treasurer

We are constantly reminded of the dire economic situation our state faces, but in spite of this, leadership or rather a lack thereof is the greatest deficit our colleges face. Leadership is a commodity that is in much shorter

supply in Minnesota public higher education than proper funding. Strong, forward-thinking leadership is of paramount importance, especially during times where funding is limited, to insure that short term deficits are not covered by long term decisions with grave consequences for the future.

Bureaucratic management is all too often confused for leadership in our system. Faculty are the life blood of any educational institution and the sole source of revenue generation in our colleges. We have been hired because we are examples of the best and brightest our respective disciplines have to offer, and, as such, we do not need to be managed by bureaucrats, but rather encouraged, supported and led by true leaders that share our vision and passion for higher education. There are a few exceptional presidents at the helm of some of our colleges who have a grasp of this concept and have therefore gained the respect and admiration of their faculty, but they are truly the exception rather than the rule.

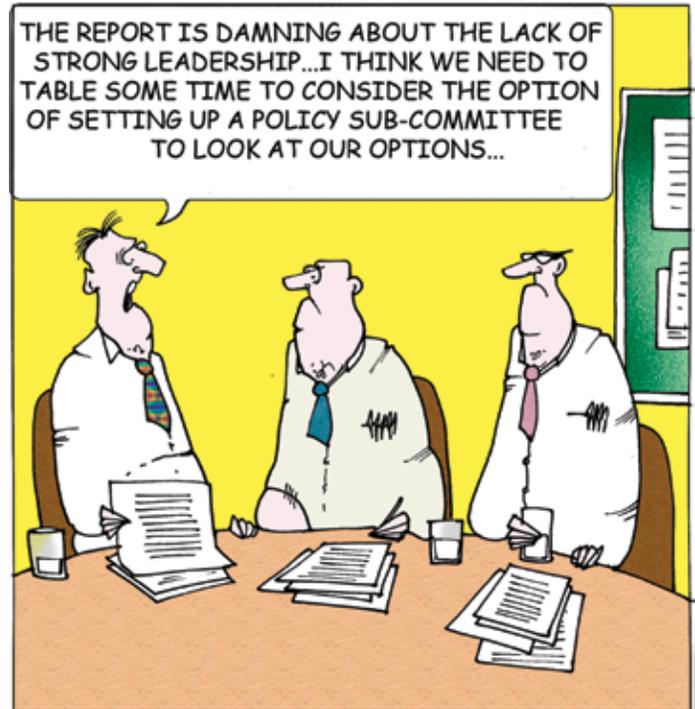
MnSCU has successfully cultivated an environment where bureaucratic job preservation has taken on more

importance than the overall mission of effectively educating the citizens and future workforce of Minnesota. In this dysfunctional system, loyalty is valued more than competence. It does not take a Rhodes Scholar to see why this is counterintuitive to faculty whose sole function is to define, evaluate and reward competence on a daily basis.

Faculty are constantly evaluated by the students we serve. We use this information to adjust our work to achieve maximum effectiveness. This is a customary means of improving performance in service institutions, yet there is no similar vehicle for faculty to evaluate administrative leadership. The only apparent means the system employs to quantify administrative effectiveness is economic efficiency. In the artificial economy our public institutions operate under, this is a marginal indicator of effective leadership at best.

When the dearth of leadership at a college has become intolerable, the hue and cry from faculty has been dismissed by the Board of Trustees and the Office of the Chancellor as the normal rumblings of disgruntled

employees rather than seen for what it truly is, the desperate plea from well educated people, skilled at evaluating performance, that they require better leadership. Unfortunately, in a system where loyalty is the only accepted currency, a Ph.D in Educational Administration apparently trumps the



collective higher education degrees and professional work experience of the entire faculty.

The sad fact is that leadership is in short supply everywhere, and maybe this is the best our poorly funded educational system can hope to attract. Then again, if I had a six-figure job for life with minimal accountability, I might have a different perspective entirely.



MSCF is an affiliate of
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AFT Leadership Conference

Washington D.C.
November 20th-22nd



by Derek Fox,
Itasca Community
College

Last month I attended the AFT Higher Education Special Leadership Conference in Washington D.C. The conference was designed to bring knowledgeable leaders from established educational unions across

the country and inexperienced members together in one forum to discuss the current issues that face most unions in higher education. The conference attendees were from small two-year colleges and systems as well as large four-year university systems.

As one can imagine, the unions in attendance were represented by a variety of contracts, and each campus or system had issues that made their situation distinctly different. From the outset, it appeared that there were to be three main topics for the conference: encouraging union activism, defining and dealing with specific contractual issues (i.e. ration of full-time to contingent faculty and contingent faculty compensation) and how to handle those contractual issues during bargaining process. It appeared that many of the unions were closely affiliated with AFT in their initial organization and when they negotiated their initial contracts, whereas the MSCF has grown and sustained in the absence of exten-

sive support from the AFT. From my perspective, most of the unions at this conference do not have the expansive history, the engaged base, and the mature contract that MSCF faculty take for granted. The MSCF contract already has strong language regarding the full-time to contingent faculty ratio and the compensation of contingent faculty, so while there was a great deal of information provided regarding how best to approach such problems, much of it is not relevant to our current situation.

Perhaps the most beneficial part of the conference was hearing from fellow conference attendees, especially the faculty, and their struggles with their respective administrators and negotiating bodies regarding contract language and contract negotiations. While listening to other faculty members discuss their issues, some of which were quite egregious, I was constantly reminded of the quality of our contract and its strong language and just how that might pull us through the next round of bargaining, especially looking ahead to even deeper cuts to our system.

We got a helpful summary of the AFT's efforts on Capitol Hill. The AFT has been actively engaged with legislators regarding the disbursement of stimulus funds. They have been working with congress to make sure that higher education receives their fair share of the stimulus package, but it seems as though the states are responsible for how the stimulus is dispersed. The AFT is also stressing

the importance of Higher Education in the event of a second stimulus package. If Congress decides to go with a second stimulus bill, the AFT has been assured that the bill will be more favorable toward higher education.

The conference did provide me with a helpful reminder that we are not alone in our struggles with the variety of challenges we face in Minnesota. A session on collective bargaining was directed by Perry Buckley, president of the Cook County College Teachers Union in Illinois and Donna Swenson, president of the Central New Mexico Employee Union. In this session, the attendees sat down with experienced negotiators to discuss negotiating techniques and outcomes. This might have been the most insightful part of the conference because I was able to hear how unions smaller and larger than ours bargain with their administrators and their boards of trustees. Regardless of the size of the union or system, the faculty that I spoke with are facing similar budget cuts and attacks on contractual language that MSCF may be facing going into the next bargaining round.

Overall, what the conference offered me was a broader lens through which to see our union at this particular moment in time: we have contract provisions that other systems and faculty groups would sacrifice a great deal to get, and those provisions are worth fighting for both as we insist upon contract compliance on our individual campuses and as we face the next round of negotiations.

Motions Carried at the December 4, 2009 Board of Directors Meeting

1. Motion from the Elections Committee to approve the 2010 Constitutional Officer Election Process as amended.
2. Motion from the Legislative Committee to approve the 2010 MSCF Legislative Goals.
3. Motion from Legislative Committee to send a letter of support for Rukavina to Education Minnesota.

Date Reminders

January 18 – February 18, 2010

Nominations for MSCF President & MSCF Treasurer are open

March 19 & 20, 2010

Education Minnesota Representative Convention at the Sheraton – Bloomington

March 31, 2010

MSCF Officer Elections

April 16, 2010

MSCF Delegate Assembly and MSCF Board Meeting at the Doubletree Park Place – Minneapolis



Time For Organizing, Uniting And Political Involvement

by Rick Nelson,
MSCF Legislative Chair

The Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF) must get politically active in order to hold the legislature and the governor accountable and to insist that they honor their commitments to funding higher education.

We have given you a lot of data through recent mailings, emails, and website postings regarding why we need to get involved. That information, along with the need to have our voices heard, should be reason enough for our members to turn out at precinct caucuses and accept the challenge established by the MSCF Legislative Steering Committee. The Minnesota legislature and the governor have failed to honor their decade-old commitment to fund two year colleges and 66% of the actual cost for a student attending, leaving the student responsible for 34%. The state now funds less than half of what it costs to educate a student, leaving skyrocketing tuition and stagnating faculty salaries to make up for the difference.

The current economic turmoil presents us with challenges. But with challenges come opportunities. The opportunity is the ability to determine what the future holds for the working people, for faculty, and for our organization. We must improve our political involvement and unite together so that we can share our values and what it means to belong to MSCF.

These times call for us to step up and lead. We must ask every union member these questions:

- Are you ready to answer the challenge?
- Are we in a position to defend what we do, how we do it, and why our classroom standards matter?
- Are we in a position to identify and take advantage of these opportunities across the state with our members?

These are questions that we ALL face and need to determine what we will do as individuals.

With that in mind, the MSCF Legislative Steering Committee has adopted the following goals as a challenge to our membership: Get involved with election 2010 and beyond. Have our voices heard in the office of the governor and the Minnesota legislature.

You can check our website for additional talking points to utilize when attending precinct caucuses or talking with legislators. For instance, too many voters and legislators are unaware that MnSCU schools produce more than:

- 92% of the state's auto mechanic workers
- 89% of the state's construction graduates and workers
- 89% of the state's law enforcement graduates
- 82% of the state's nursing graduates
- 41% of the state's business graduates

These are workers that will build our economy and strengthen our communities.

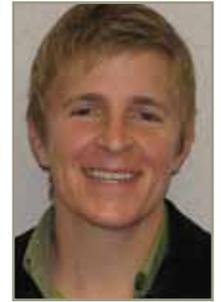
The bottom line is that higher education in MN must remain within the financial reach of students, and we must employ faculty members who are committed to making a difference to improve the state of Minnesota. The state must provide adequate resources for that to happen. However, for that to happen we need you, our members, to attend precinct caucuses and be involved in election 2010.

Your expertise and energy in the election campaign is needed! Are you willing to take the challenge that is before all of us and unite, organize and be involved?



Contract Talk: Summer Rotation

by MSCF Field Representatives Kari Ann Cruz and Sara Ford



Every year questions surface regarding summer rotation, and we currently have a grievance heading to arbitration on the matter. With many new administrators at our colleges, it's important to take the opportunity for you to follow through and ensure administration has complied with the contractual language.

Summer rotation lists are established in each credential field for unlimited faculty based on seniority. If a faculty member holds more than one credential field, then he/she must select one rotation list prior to the end of fall semester of each academic year. Once the rotation list has been updated for each credential field and renumbered accordingly, then the unlimited full-time probationary faculty members are added to the bottom of the list.

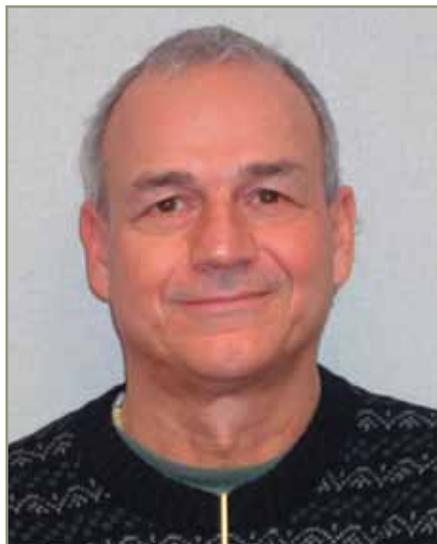
After the rotation lists are set and administration selects the courses to be offered, the rotation begins. Faculty at the top of the first rotation list can select up to nine credits or two courses, whichever is greater. If courses are still available, the

second faculty member on the list can again select up to nine credits or two courses, whichever is greater, and so on down through the rotation list until all the courses have been selected. If additional courses are still left over, then the process continues to the second list of faculty who hold the credential field, have taught in the credential field in the last two years, but did not select it for their primary summer rotation claiming. Third, courses remaining are assigned to faculty who hold the credential field and have not taught or held an assignment within the last two years. The fourth list consists of all unlimited part time faculty who hold the credential field on a seniority basis, including unlimited

part-time probationary faculty. Courses remaining will be assigned to the fifth list, which includes unlimited faculty who do not hold the credential field, but have taught or held an assignment in that credential field in the last two years on a full-time equivalency basis. Finally, when courses have gone through all the rotation lists, they can then be assigned to, temporary faculty, adjuncts, or other applicants, respectively.

If you have any questions about summer rotation on your campus, please contact your chapter grievance representative. Any corrections or changes should be done prior to the start of summer sessions.

Introducing Our Newest Field Staff Member



Please welcome Tom Johnson, the newest MSCF/Education Minnesota Field Staff. His most recent position was executive director of the Texas Faculty Assn. based in Austin, TX. Tom worked with: SEIU 32BJ as a consultant; at the Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations as labor director in the Buffalo, NY office; with the United Steelworkers in various positions, usually involving strategic campaigning, communications and organizing; as a managing editor and writer/photographer with the United Mine Workers; as a staff writer for SEIU Union magazine; as well as various campaigns as a consultant and freelance writer.

Prior to his union involvement, Tom held a variety of jobs as a laborer, taxi driver, writer, English and writing instructor, sawmill and slaughterhouse laborer, just to name a few. He earned a B.A. in Liberal Arts at Northwestern University in 1971 and Masters in Writing at Columbia College (Chicago) in 1987. He has published poetry, fiction, and nonfiction in numerous publications in the U.S. and abroad.

"I am really looking forward to coming home to the Midwest and working with the great team at MSCF and our colleagues in Education Minnesota," said Johnson. "I apologize in advance for asking a lot of dumb questions as I learn the ropes."

OFFICIAL NOMINATION FORM



- 1** Only MSCF members (not fair share, non-members) can be nominated as candidates for MSCF office.
- 2** Nominations are open from 9 a.m. January 18, 2010 to 3 p.m. February 18, 2010.
- 3** MSCF members (not fair share, non-members) may self-nominate, or nominate another MSCF member with written permission from the nominee.
- 4** Mark the box (below) next to the "officer position" for which this nomination is intended.
- 5** Nominations may be submitted only on this form. Nominations submitted by any other means will not be valid.
- 6** The nomination form must be filled in completely and must be signed by the nominee, and nominator if applicable.
- 7** Nomination forms, original only, must be received by hand delivery or U.S. mail in the MSCF office (55 Sherburne Ave., St. Paul 55103) no later than 3 p.m. on February 18, 2010.
- 8** At the time the nomination form is submitted, the nominee may submit a Personal Statement using page two (2) of this form, as part of the nomination process. No other personal statement form will be accepted.

President

(Term is from July 1, 2010, to June 30, 2013)

Treasurer

(Term is from July 1, 2010, to June 30, 2013)

Complete this box if you are nominating another faculty member.

Print Name

Signature

Nominee — Print Name

Nominee — Signature

Date

College/Campus

Credential Field (Assigned Field / License Area)

College Phone

Home Phone

Home Address

OFFICIAL NOMINATION FORM CONTINUED...

Personal Statement

If a personal statement is submitted, it is limited to 100 words or less and must accompany the nomination form. In the event that a personal statement exceeds 100 words, only the first 100 words will be printed.

If submitted, the personal statement will be printed one time in an official MSCF publication, word for word, with all punctuation/spelling/grammar exactly as submitted. It will also be posted on the MSCF website from March 1, 2010 through March 31, 2010 www.minnesotastatecollegefaculty.org.

PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY

Signature

Return to: 55 Sherburne Ave., St. Paul 55103
Attention Election Committee