

MSCF Minute



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Complete Lack of Will

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There is no legitimate reason that we don't have a contract settlement at this point in the process. Sure, it's a complicated landscape and there are a number of competing interests, but that is always the case with bargaining. More than anything else, I believe this round of bargaining has been shaped by a complete lack of will on the part of the system office.

When AFSCME and MAPE settled their contracts back in June, the bar was set, at least to the extent you believe in "pattern bargaining." Given the broader landscape at the time, it seemed reasonable to expect that we could get a similar settlement in fairly short order.

A comprehensive settlement proposal we put on the table on July 26 had financial terms very similar to those of AFSCME and MAPE. The big difference in our proposal was the addition of a third year to the term of the contract. We proposed a 1.25% across-the-board increase in that year. In short, we were saying we were willing to take a discount on the third year in exchange for the security of an extended term.

Somewhere around this time is when the system's lack of

will appeared. They decided they didn't want to settle the contract until the [legislative subcommittee](#) acted on the AFSCME and MAPE contracts. Then they actively worked to undermine the AFSCME and MAPE contracts with the subcommittee. When those contracts were rejected by the subcommittee, the system's will fell further. In the AFSCME and MAPE rejection, the system found the convenient excuse they had been searching for to explain their lack of will. In consideration of the changed landscape, the MSCF team adjusted our approach and began to talk about a different kind of settlement. On December 18 we put a settlement proposal on the table that had less financial value than the AFSCME and MAPE settlements. In consideration of the lesser financial package, we proposed the elimination of bifurcation in department chairs and layoff benefits. We also reduced the across-the-board amount in the third year to zero. Yes, that's right, we offered to take nothing in the third year.

In early December, [IFO settled](#). They got 1.6% across-the-board in the first year and 2.4% in the second year. They also got some additional

professional development funds and a raise in their adjunct range. Finally, and quite possibly most significantly, they got a change in the timing of their career steps. That change, while having relatively little cost in the two-year term of this contract, has significant future financial value.

The IFO settlement, frankly, reduced the system's will even further. It created a 2% and 2% construct in their mind. To date they have shown no will to recognize the value of the IFO career step moves. They have also completely rejected a third year on the term of the contract, even at zero.

We had bargaining dates scheduled for early January. The system office cancelled those. They also suggested cancelling the January 22 and 23 dates we subsequently scheduled. Although we did meet on those days at our insistence, the system showed up completely unprepared (call the bargaining hotline – 651-767-1276 - or click on the picture below to watch a video for more details). When we



Click on the picture for a legislative update from MSCF legislative liaison, Mark Grant. We apologize for the slight background noise and will fix it for future updates.

challenged them on showing up unprepared, they admitted they had no intent of settling on those days. They literally vocalized their complete lack of will.

We left the January 22 and 23 sessions with an agreement to meet again the week of February 19. Early this week I received notice the system can't meet that week, even though they had agreed to do so just a couple weeks ago. It doesn't appear their lack of will is subsiding.

My belief is that the system office hopes its lack of will translates to frustration and subsequent loss of will on our part. Falling for that would be the worst mistake we could make.

Watch for a future Minute article outlining the ways members can become actively engaged in the bargaining process.

