

MSCF Minute



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What Matters is What We Do Next

by Gretchen Long, MSCF membership recruitment and engagement committee chair

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One thing is clear from this year's election results. The balance of political power, at the state and national level, has shifted. We can hope the agenda we've seen in the past of attacking labor rights and educational access won't continue, but "hope is not a strategy". If you listened to President Lindstrom's remarks to the Board of Trustees last Wednesday, you also know there is more than one kind of power. Over the summer, we engaged in exercising our collective power, and that power, in the form of hundreds of letters and signatures, forced substantial changes in the LTFS recommendations. However, we cannot let up. Now, more than ever, we need to continue building and leveraging our collective power in creative, strategic, and inclusive ways.

Consider that attacks in the form of challenges to agency

fees and collective bargaining rights, cuts in state funding, privatization of student loans, threats to our current contracts, and campus climates dominated by fear and anxiety are now very real possibilities. It's scary and overwhelming, but we know the power of our collective voices and actions.

On December 2, membership chairs from each chapter will gather to share with each other, to learn from each other, to strategize on how to best address the issues and challenges, and most importantly, find ways to support each other. Together, we'll grapple with questions such as: What goals should we be pursuing? What actions can we take to move us towards those goals and support others? How can we collaborate in more effective ways? How are our issues, individual, local, and state, connected to the broader issue

of educational justice? How can we build our collective power around our shared concerns?

This gathering, the first for our membership chairs, is an exciting next step. But this isn't the beginning of our work, and it won't be the end. That's why I encourage you to begin conversations on your campuses around the same questions. What are your shared concerns? What partnerships do you have that you can build on? How can you contribute? Ultimately, our collective power resides and will grow where our members are – on our campuses. But the work of building that power can't rest with one or two individuals on each campus.

We don't yet know all the ways in which the shift in political power will play out on our local campuses, but we can be sure it will. And we

can be sure countering it will require each of us, to borrow Vice President's Stanford's phrase, "realiz [ing] there is a difference between showing support and being actively engaged in support." Countering it will require all of us to actively engaging in building our collective power. We can hope for the best, but we also need to act. Together we need to plan and engage in actions that strengthen us, sustain us, and prepare us for the challenges ahead.



The Eastside Freedom Library

Invites you to a conversation

ACADEMICS AND ACTIVISM TODAY

Panelists will discuss how current labor and social struggles guide their campus and community organizing, public history initiatives, teaching, and mentoring. They will also explore the role of research and scholarship in social change.

Saturday, December 3, 1-3pm

Eastside Freedom Library – 1105 Greenbrier St. Saint Paul, MN 55106