

# MSCF Connection Stronger Together



## President's message

*MSCF President, Matt Williams*

History keeps showing us is that change is caused by groups that can mobilize large numbers of people. What could we do in this world if everyone was involved and active in our union? In this issue, I'm proud to share with you stories from your colleagues at Saint Paul College. Not only did they ask this question of themselves, they took the next step to imagine the answers—and then got to work.

What could we do if...?

It's a simple question asked in many different ways. What could we do about this if everyone was willing to act together? How would it feel to confront administration if everyone in your division was present in the room when you asked? What would the college president say about an unpopular decision in shared governance if they knew every faculty member was either present in the room or had made a point to listen to their response?

In other words, what could we do if we don't have to do it alone?

For this first issue of the MSCF Connection, I am beyond proud to share with you the stories from your colleagues at St. Paul College. Not only did they ask this question of themselves, they took the next step to imagine the answers—and then got to work.

As you read their stories, I invite you to consider issues you're currently facing, both big and small. Maybe you're dealing with an administration that is making random decisions that needlessly disrupt your work without any input from you and your colleagues. Perhaps you're still struggling to catch up after some of your classes were changed or cancelled at the very last minute. Or even though your campus seems to be well run by administration, you're still deeply concerned about the stories you hear from your students about how much they are struggling to meet basic needs outside of school.

Again: what could we do in this world if everyone was involved and active in our union?

This is not always a natural question for academics to ask. We often place our hope in the better argument winning the day that eloquence will move minds and change hearts. We look for evidence, we write papers, we share data in the hopes that our truth will be self-evident to those who disagree. When this doesn't work, we look for fault in our persuasion, our logic, or our timing.

As someone with a background in rhetoric, I understand the desire for a world in which words can make that big of a difference. But what history keeps showing us is that change is caused by groups that can mobilize large numbers of people. From the civil rights movement in the United States to the recent pro-democracy demonstrations in Hong Kong to the walk-in at St. Paul College, true capacity to make change happens as a result of large numbers of people willing to act.

There is a lot of change we as MSCF want to see in this world. If you're reading this and are ready to act—even if you don't know what that action looks like yet—I want to have a conversation with you. I want to understand what motivates you to act and imagine with you what we can do together.

To that end, we've built a very simple survey to help me identify people ready to have a conversation about action. You can fill it out [here](#). While the logistics will be messy, my commitment to everyone who fills out this survey is to find some way to talk with you at some point. It might be coffee or lunch, it might be a small group meeting, and it might even be swinging by your office on campus for a brief chat. As your President, building a foundation of action through these conversations is the most important work I can engage in.

## Things to know

**Window to revoke dues expands to 30 days**  
**This fall, MSCF will expand its dues revocation window from seven days to 30 days.**

The revocation window is the period of time when a current member may revoke their authorization to have union dues deducted from their paycheck. The new revocation window is Sept. 1-30.

### Vice president forum

Get to know the candidates for MSCF vice president! The MSCF Elections Committee will be hosting a vice presidential candidate forum Sept. 24, 6-8 p.m. [Please register](#) if you would like to attend via GoToMeeting or in person.

### 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](#).

### Contingent faculty Hiring Hall

This summer, Minnesota State College Faculty launched a Hiring Hall for contingent members. The process for enrolling in our Hiring Hall and FAQs are listed on our [website](#). Look for an article about this program in the October/November edition of the Minnesota Educator.

### MSCF Racial Equity and Diversity Committee

will be holding regional listening sessions in greater Minnesota. We invite all indigenous faculty, faculty of color and LGBTQ faculty to come, connect and share with one another and the committee.

Fall meeting schedule:

Northeast Region: Friday, Oct. 11, 1-4 p.m. at Lake Superior College

Southeast Region: Friday, Nov. 8, 1-4 p.m. at Rochester Community and Technical College

If you would like to attend, please RSVP by Oct. 9 to [janel.engesser@edmn.org](mailto:janel.engesser@edmn.org).

### Take action

[MSCF coalition builder survey](#).

## Saint Paul College, Forward Together

When an alarming initial HLC report was released over the Holiday break, it was clear that something had to be done. For the next several months, faculty united and worked together to address the HLC concern that we felt needed immediate action. Their action prompted needed change at their college, and changed their perspective on what unions can do.

### What moved faculty at SPC to action

When the initial HLC report was released over the Holiday break, and faculty had a chance to read through, it was clear that something had to be done. For the next several months, faculty united and worked together to address the HLC concern that we felt needed immediate action. This decision did not happen lightly since we all knew the possible ramifications. It was truly amazing to see faculty from all disciplines working together both on and off campus to protect what we

since we all knew the possible ramifications. It was truly amazing to see faculty from all disciplines working together both on and off campus to protect what we all truly believe in! Needless to say, it was a stressful spring semester, but when we all returned this fall, it had the feeling of a fresh start for everyone on campus. This experience is an excellent example of how the strength of our solidarity can bring about change.

*-SPC Faculty Member*

#### **From the decision to act to preparation**

The work on our campus did not involve simply calling for a vote. We engaged a group of about 20 people that worked very hard to reach every MSCF member on our campus with a one on one conversation. There were lots of spreadsheets and meetings and checklists and a significant amount of time spent to track and accomplish this, but in the end we were able to have many personal and sometimes difficult conversations. It was important that faculty knew what was really happening on our campus, and that union leadership had an accurate feel for how we could move forward in the best interest of everyone. Ultimately, we were moving forward with a shared sense of where people stood, what we were facing, and what needed to be done.

*-Mindy Travers*

#### **How a successful action changed faculty at SPC**

Direct and visible action on behalf of the SPC union was a result of mounting frustration, but more importantly it was the result of a team effort that went beyond sharing our discontent in the hallways. It allowed us to forge links among on our faculty body in new and stronger ways and has created a more tangible sense of community. It feels like we found our voice. Going forward, we understand the importance of delegation of duties and follow through from not just one or two people, but a committed team.

*-Maggie Zimmerman*