

# MSCF Minute



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## Community Starts With You

by Mindy Travers, Saint Paul College faculty member and Emerging Leaders College participant

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The March 22nd Emerging Leaders session began at the State Capitol for a public union alliance rally and wrapped up at the Eastside Freedom Library to discuss racial equity and labor unions. The Library's mission is to inspire solidarity, advocate for justice, and work toward equity for all. We had the privilege of meeting Co-Executive Director Peter Rachleff, who discussed his work and the important role that unions can play in it. Members of the MSCF Racial Equity and Diversity Committee also got a chance to shape the discussion. Monica Erling and Chuck Lyons led a conversation about the role and influence of race and unions throughout our country's history. Gretchen Long also discussed organizing.

One topic that struck me was the 1968 Memphis Department of Public Works strike. 1,300 African-American sanitation workers walked off the job after two of their members were crushed by their dilapidated garbage truck. Martin Luther King Jr. joined the workers to fight for equal rights and humane worker treatment, and it was here that he delivered his "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech.

"We've got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn't matter with me now, because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life — longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over, and I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land. So I'm happy, tonight. I'm not worried about anything, I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord." — *the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.*

He was assassinated the next day.

As we approach the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that speech and of King's death, I am grateful to be reminded that in that address, King touched on an idea: No movement is about just one person. Progress towards equitable treatment for all workers comes from how we draw together as a community.

The Emerging Leaders College has connected me to a number of people over the last

year, all working towards the same goal. MSCF, ultimately, is a community of people. We are united by our profession and by our commitment to delivering high-quality public education. A strong collective voice is the only way to ensure that our faculty voice is heard and valued on our campuses. But our voice is under attack.

Sitting in on just a single legislative hearing made it apparent that many legislators are working to move ahead laws to weaken our union. After public unions packed the room and sat for hours, the legislators delayed their anti-union agenda item, hoping that our vocal support would just go away. It was an example of how anti-union forces rely on member apathy and the fog of bureaucracy to get their measures through. We must react with a movement built on strength through community.

Our community starts with you. MSCF is a collective voice for maintaining and improving two-year college education in our state. Get to know the faculty on your campus, spend time with them, and strengthen your bond. We are working hard to do that at St. Paul College, and I hope the same thing is happening at your campus. Difficult days may be ahead, but I know that

together we will achieve solidarity, justice and educational opportunity for all.

Together,  
Mindy

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Timothy Loney, Century  
James Nalen, Century  
Lauren Zappa, Century  
Hannah Riddle de Rojas, DCTC  
Duane Johnson, Fond du Lac  
Torri Lattimore, Hennepin-BP  
John Watkins, Hennepin-EP  
Jackie Austin, Inver Hills  
Jennifer Parker, Inver Hills  
Troy Ertelt, Lake Superior  
Lisa Robinson, Lake Superior  
Yao-Chung Chang, M State-FF  
Kimberly Wick, MCTC  
Jessica Warren, No. Hennepin  
Dorthey Ikegwuani, No. Hennepin  
Naa-Adjeley Dromoh Ablorh, No. Hennepin  
Bridget Brooks, Northland-EGF  
Thomas Clement, Northland  
Andrea Gohl, Rainy River  
Theresa Enstad, Ridgewater  
Jodi Holleman, Ridgewater  
Michael Mangan, Rochester  
Ashley Saari, Rochester  
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Gabriel Dybing, SE-Winona  
James Elvidge, SE-Winona  
Jonathan Powell, Winona  
Roni Reiter, St. Cloud  
Timmy Shay, St. Cloud  
Beth Harrison, St. Cloud