

the GREEN SHEET



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What's next?

by Kevin Lindstrom, MSCF President

As I pause and reflect for a moment, it seems like my first year as MSCF President has flown by. Each day brings new issues and challenges, to the point where it seems like we spend the majority of our time putting out the latest fires. In many ways, that's the nature of our work. On the other hand, we need to give careful consideration to what's next for MSCF. My hope is that the summer months allow us time to begin work on initiatives that will lead us into the future. Along those lines, here are three topics that I believe are of particular importance:

Membership

Simply put, we need to increase our membership rate. Specifically, we need to focus on our temporary part-time faculty (contingent faculty, in national terms). A look at our membership numbers shows that the vast majority of our full-time faculty are MSCF members. Another look shows that far less than 50% of our contingent faculty are MSCF members. That is a troubling dynamic.

Nationally, the discussion regarding contingent faculty has gained more and more attention recently. Locally, the Star Tribune published a Sunday front page article on the topic. The focus of the discussion tends to be on how contingent faculty experience low wages, little or no access to

benefits and little hope of future full-time employment. When the Star Tribune reporter called to ask me about these trends, I told her that, while those trends exist nationally, they don't hold for contingent faculty represented by MSCF. Our contingent faculty are paid from the same salary schedule and have access to almost all of the same benefits as full-time faculty, and have realistic opportunities to move into full-time positions.

Treating our contingent faculty on par with our full-time faculty has long been a MSCF value. We need to get this message to our contingent faculty and ask them to support the organization that supports them. This summer we need to develop a plan to get that message out in the most effective way possible.

Communication

MSCF represents faculty in discussions about key issues every day. We have groups and individuals engaged at the system level in matters of importance to faculty. There's a long list of issues we've addressed on your behalf over the past year. For example, did you know that I recently had a very interesting conversation with system leaders about the prospect of a Bachelor of Applied Science degree? Of course you didn't, because I didn't tell you. That needs to change.



The Green Sheet has served MSCF and its predecessor, MCCFA, very well over the years. Unfortunately, with only two or three editions each year, the Green Sheet doesn't provide us the space necessary to cover all the topics we should. With its publication timelines, the Green Sheet also isn't particularly effective when we need to get information to you in a timely manner. Finally, the Green Sheet is fairly expensive to produce and mail.

It's time for us to move to an electronic publication that is produced on a regular basis. I don't know exactly what that will look like (God help us all if the creative stuff is left to me), but I know we've got people in our organization who can come up with a great design concept. Let's identify those folks and get them to work this summer, so we

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Troubling Credentials for Concurrent Enrollment

by Norm Halsa, Technical VP and Gregg Wright, MSCF Secretary

MSCF has long maintained that our concerns regarding concurrent enrollment are Rigor, Curriculum and Credentials. MnSCU has generally agreed that high school teachers should be credentialed to teach a college level course. However, MSCF recently became aware that MnSCU has allowed high school teachers who have a master's degree in Education (not in-field) to receive a "Special Expertise" credential.

This is troubling for two reasons. First, Special Expertise by Board Policy is for specialized courses for which advanced degrees are generally unavailable. The intent of the policy is for teaching courses such as the Lakota language. Since there are no master's degrees available in Lakota it would make sense to use a Special Expertise credential. Using Special Expertise to credential someone in math, English, speech or history is a misapplication of the Board Policy. Second, MnSCU agrees that high school teachers should be credentialed, but then undermines that

by applying the special expertise credential when it is not appropriate to do so. This "sleight-of-hand" credentialing puts MnSCU's standing with the Higher Education Commission at risk and diminishes the value of all credentials.

Additionally, our courses' transferability depends upon other colleges and universities accepting that the courses meet college-level standards, including credentialing. If MnSCU wants to meet HEC standards, then credentialing must be the same for all who teach a course. MSCF and MnSCU must uphold the same standard for all or there is no standard.

MSCF will continue to work with MnSCU and Education Minnesota to insure that concurrent enrollment instruction meets the standards of rigor, curriculum and appropriate credentials. The practice of using Special Expertise as a catch-all to credential high school teachers must come to an end.

Trust Faculty

by Kent Quamme, MSCF Treasurer

Faculty are hired based on their credentials and in-field knowledge, correct? When we hire an automotive or psychology instructor, we are hiring someone who knows his or her field and knows what is best for students. This knowledge manifests itself in various ways, in the classroom, in social settings, in the office, and in curriculum design.

Faculty are the most important part of the curriculum-design process and thus should have the most influence in the composition of their curriculum. Administration should and does have a voice in what programs/degrees are being offered at any particular college, but ultimately, faculty are the experts and should design the curriculum in a way that will best prepare the student.

This is where the Academic Affairs and Standards Council makes its debut. The language in the Master Agreement emphasizes the agreement from both bodies "... that the faculty hold the critical role in academic decision-making at the colleges." Another section of

language states, "A faculty member shall serve as chair of the council." These statements are keys to the purpose and process of productive AASC meetings.

Starting with the role of the chair, she or he needs to conduct the meeting in a way that is conducive for work to be completed. The chair needs to be impartial yet firm. Everyone on the council has an equal amount of say in each discussion. Similar to the "Round Table" of Arthurian legend, no one has more power or influence than the person next to them. Faculty should not feel intimidated or afraid of administrative repercussion when speaking on matters of curriculum. It is the chair's duty to ensure that this open dialogue takes place in an orderly manner.

"Faculty hold the critical role in academic decision-making." This is where the faculty's expertise and credentials play a major part in curriculum. If program faculty determine the need to change curriculum, it should be changed. They are making the decision based on their content

knowledge, and through the use of the advisory committee. The Academic Affairs and Standards Council should trust in that knowledge base. The same should hold true for liberal arts faculty. When a department determines that curriculum needs updating, AASC should defer to their expertise. It is always up to the collective faculty members in the program or in a general education department to come together with the plan for changes that will benefit the students and the college.

If necessary, faculty members of the AASC should caucus prior to the scheduled meeting to discuss curriculum being proposed from various areas and to prepare to go into the meeting with a unified stance. Remember, administration will stand together, and we as faculty need to also.

AASC is a perfect venue to show solidarity and support for our colleagues and deferring to their expertise as faculty is an excellent way to show that support.

So trust our faculty.

Summer Engagement for Future Success

by Rick Nelson, MSCF Governmental Relations Steering Committee Chair

As we head down the homestretch of the spring semester, we would like to thank each of you for forwarding the notes and putting out the action alerts when necessary to keep our members informed of what's happening in the State Legislature and Governor's office. We appreciate all the contacts you made to encourage your legislators to support funding for higher education this session.

Without trying to shift gears too fast, we also need to be aware that campaign season starts this summer and lasts until next fall. This election will be very important to our membership, student body, and the entire MnSCU system. Staying active in the political process will ensure visibility and good rapport with our elected officials.

At the delegate assembly we outlined some of the activities that MSCF is going to be encouraging local faculty leaders to organize in conjunction with students and their colleges. For now, let's each focus on doing 3 of the activities listed below over the summer in order to be visible to our legislators and to help elect pro-public education candidates.

We all remember what happened when we woke up in 2010. We were less than 6,000 votes away from having a right-to-work state just like Wisconsin. We hope you'll talk about ways to stay active in the political process at your final chapter meetings, if they haven't happened already.

Thank you all for a job well done this year. Look for an update regarding a list of fall activities we can undertake, and stay engaged this summer. We must continue to elect education-friendly constitutional officers like the governor and for all 134 seats in the House of Representatives.

Individual Campaign Volunteer Options

- Walk in a parade for a candidate you support
- Put up a lawn sign in your yard
- Pass out leaflets in a parade or drop literature in neighborhoods
- Volunteer at local campaign headquarters
- Host or help plan a candidate fundraiser
- Attend a candidate forum and speak on behalf of candidates who support public higher education
- Offer to proofread or edit campaign materials for your candidate
- Join a campaign captain from MSCF and do one day of door knocking/lit dropping to help a candidate who supports higher education & collective bargaining
- Wear your candidate's button, t-shirt, or cap
- Talk to your neighbors about higher education funding and why we need more state support
- Draw up a higher education fact sheet to share with your campus and community. Make it local, tell your story!
- Write a letter to the editor explaining what candidate you support & what they can do for higher education in your area
- Host a meet-and-greet with your candidate at your home or a local coffee shop
- Encourage others in your local chapter to get active in campaigns
- Help out on a voter registration drive on your campus
- Put up lawn signs around your community for your candidate

What's next? *(continued from page 1)*

can roll out an electronic publication when school starts in the fall.

Concurrent Enrollment

I've heard more about concurrent enrollment than any other topic this year. This is a realm full of opportunities and threats. Regardless of whether you choose to focus on the potential positives or potential negatives, the fact is, concurrent enrollment is here to stay and is likely to expand. We need to be right in the middle of all conversations

about concurrent enrollment. After all, it's our work they're talking about.

If you were at our recent Delegate Assembly, you heard me talk about the concurrent enrollment "big three": curriculum, rigor, and credentials. You also heard me say that we need to stop undercutting each other on these critical matters. If we don't uphold standards in concurrent enrollment, frankly, I don't know who will.

There's so much more to talk about regarding concurrent enrollment.

I'm committed to engaging our leadership group in conversations this summer about concurrent enrollment and how we can most effectively engage and inform our membership on this topic. Maybe we'll use that new electronic publication to get things started.



MSCF

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MSCF Meeting Dates for 2014-2015

Board Meeting Sept 12, 2014

Delegate Assembly & Board Meeting Apr 17, 2015

(Please note the change in date for the Delegate Assembly)