

the GREEN SHEET



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The Whole and Its Parts

By Kevin Lindstrom, MSCF President

I'm not much for catchphrases, jargon, or consultant-speak. Anytime someone utters "synergy," "paradigm shift," "put it in the parking lot," or the like, my blood pressure goes up.

At the risk of triggering a hypertension episode, I'd like to offer the following catchphrase for your consideration: the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. More specifically, I offer that phrase for your consideration in relation to the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU).

Is the whole (the system) greater than the sum of its parts (the campuses)? I suggest the answer we all need to get to, via our collective efforts in the near future, is "yes."

What I will tell you is the parts are pretty impressive. Our campuses have long histories of meeting the unique needs of the communities and students we serve. Our faculty have built and modified curriculum and delivery as a reflection of technology, best practices, and constituent needs. The degree to which our campuses have evolved is often overlooked, but it is very real nonetheless. For an illustration, simply think back to how your campus looked, what your



curriculum was, and how it was delivered 10 years ago. All things considered, we have a very valuable set of campuses (parts).

Sometimes it's more difficult to see the worth of the whole. Many wonder, "What's a MnSCU?" Critics see little value in a system that oftentimes doesn't seem much like a system. Campuses and constituents are often at odds with the system office, compete with one another, and don't talk to each other nearly as much as they used to. The system seems to possess so much potential, with the majority of it unrealized.

So, how do we realize the potential of the system? Some are willing to suggest that it be done at the expense of the campuses. These

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2015 MSCF Officer Election Results

**Vice President for
Technical Education**



Norm Halsa
Northland College –
Thief River Falls Campus

**Vice President for
Liberal Arts**



Darci Stanford
South Central College,
Faribault Campus

Secretary



Gregg Wright
Rochester Community
& Technical College

A Summer Reading List

By Damon Kapke, MSCF Vice President for Liberal Arts

For MSCF faculty, summer has always been a time of renewal and professional enrichment. For some, it is about having new industry experiences, developing skills with emerging technologies, and gaining additional certifications. For others, it is about reinvigorating teaching materials, redesigning courses, and improving the student experience in online education. It is hard work but key to being a professional educator.

To all of that, I would like to suggest a couple of additional areas of

study and reflection, namely labor issues and higher education issues. Gone are the days when we teaching faculty can only concern ourselves with our disciplines or areas of expertise. We must concern ourselves with attacks on the rights of working people, local and national politics, and organized higher education reform agendas.

With that in mind, I would like to offer the following reading list containing works that I plan to read or reread this summer. These resources should be available



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Program Closures

By Norm Halsa, Vice President for Technical Education

When we are down to the last few technical programs and have trimmed liberal arts to a minimum, will we still need administrators?

Looking at the program closures and courses being eliminated, one wonders when this will end.

Working in the vocational technical side for over 35 years, I have seen many program suspensions and closures. Most of those programs are never re-opened.

The expense of any of these actions is very troubling. Suspensions and

closures trigger expenses outlined within our contract, plus all state agencies have to fund all of the unemployment benefits for the folks non-renewed or laid off. With that in mind, is it really feasible to close a revenue-generating program?

Colleges offer many excuses as to why programs are eliminated. Most include a lack of credits sold, meaning a lack of students. The first question that comes to mind, then, is who is responsible for the recruitment and retention of students? Maybe the focus needs



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Staff Transition

By Sara Ford, MSCF Field Staff

Greetings MSCF members,

As some of you already know, I am leaving MSCF in order to take a position doing policy and training work for Education Minnesota. I was an MSCF member at Inver Hills Community College for 10 years, and I've been field staff for MSCF for six.

When I was hired as an English instructor in 1999, I thought the public two-year college system was the cornerstone of American democracy, and I was elated to get a good job at Inver Hills. Our colleges were the places, I thought, that students of every background—regardless of income, ethnicity, country or language of origin, work history, race, military experience, age and religious affiliation—could take real, productive steps toward lives of meaningful economic, political and academic contribution.

And I still believe that. However, even as my belief in the importance of our two-year colleges has deepened, I am acutely aware of the losses we've suffered over the past 16 years, losses that have had devastating implications for our students and for the people who no longer have access and will, therefore, never be our students.

During these years, tuition has skyrocketed as public higher education has plummeted on the list of priorities for the state's Legislature, locking out who knows how many students and burdening others with overwhelming amounts of debt. Counseling positions have been cut so dramatically that we can no longer claim that students

in crisis will have the support they need on our campuses. We have campuses with no librarians and, therefore, no access to critical academic tools such as interlibrary loan and information literacy instruction by qualified faculty. Faculty wages have stagnated and out-of-pocket costs increased, reducing our ability to attract and retain great teachers.

Our victories over these past 16 years are measured mostly in terms of what we have been able to hold onto, thanks to the hard work and sacrifice of our leaders and members who have volunteered their expertise and time. Members have gotten more involved than ever before in political campaigns, helping to elect legislators who have helped stop the bleeding. Bargaining teams have had the support they needed from members to hold firm at the table through some extraordinarily difficult circumstances. Chapter leaders have kept members informed and engaged.

But as you all know, even greater challenges are coming at us, and they are coming with the force of a freight train. The current and very real threat to developmental education is one that threatens to permanently close even more doors on students who need access the most. We will see more threats to our hiring practice language, the language that demands that 70 percent of the work being done in our classrooms be done by people with ongoing employment, which is the only reason the colleges have not adopted the widespread



practice of staffing classrooms primarily with contingent faculty. We will experience more well-funded, slick and sometimes invisible firms like McKinsey & Company come to Minnesota to undo the public good that our colleges provide. Indeed, sometimes I wonder whether the public two-year college mission will survive.

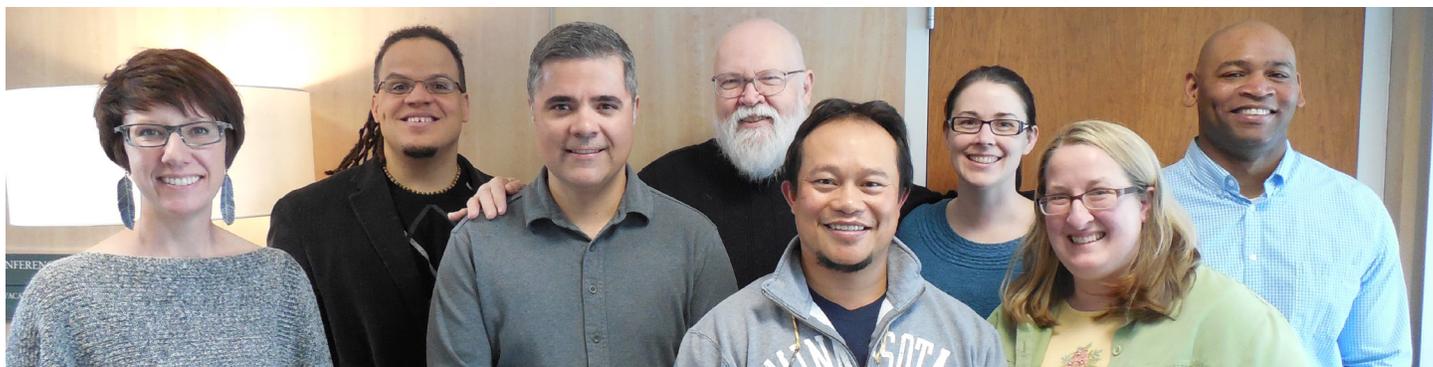
But I do know this. If any group of faculty can counter such threats, MSCF can. In the past two decades, most statewide contracts for two-year faculty have crumbled, ceding outrageous ground in the areas of shared governance rights, wages, hiring practice language, tenure/unlimited status, health insurance benefits and retirement plans. But MSCF has held firm. If you are a two-year college faculty member, and you are going to fall from the sky to a U. S. state to teach, you are very lucky if the winds blow you to Minnesota. We are still standing, and there is nobody in a better position than the 4,600 faculty members who make up MSCF to defend every student's right to affordable, accessible, and high quality higher education.

2014-2015 Racial Equity and Diversity Committee

The MSCF Racial Equity and Diversity Committee was approved as an official MSCF standing committee at the 2014 Delegate Assembly. Since then, the committee has met throughout the academic year and most recently attended the Nellie Stone Johnson Scholarship Dinner on March 26. All of the committee members were deeply moved by the

students who spoke at the dinner as they related personal stories of how the scholarship helped them through their academic career. Committee members also commented about the power of one person, Nellie Stone Johnson, herself. The scholarships are also available to faculty who may have lost their job and are going back to school to be re-trained in

a different field. Members were pleased to find themselves among a diverse group of labor-friendly attendees. It was fascinating to hear from the younger generation who come from families who believe in the labor movement and see how those beliefs are being passed down from generation to generation.



The Whole and Its Parts *continued from page 1*

folks call for “centralization” and “commonality,” completely devaluing the uniqueness of our campuses. It seems they want to increase the value of the whole by reducing the value of the parts. That’s fundamentally flawed thinking.

Better solutions will maintain, or even enhance, the value of the parts, while putting those parts together in a way that maximizes the whole. Those solutions likely won’t come easily or quickly, and they certainly won’t come via catchphrases or consultants. Instead, they will start with good-faith planning, conversations, and engagement. When needed (and it will inevitably be needed), the process and its participants will be

pushed beyond their comfort zones. That push best comes from within, but we should all know that it will come from the outside if we don’t push ourselves.

The consequences for not achieving better solutions are already present. Out-of-state interest groups are at the capitol trying to dictate curricular changes via legislation. Their efforts completely ignore the developmental needs of our most at-risk students. Their attitude is, “They were going to fail anyway.” The special interest groups are primarily interested in enhancing the statistics related to their proposals, at the expense of the most vulnerable students. This is part of a recipe for the creation of a permanent underclass, and these

groups are trying to use our system as a key ingredient. If that doesn’t serve as a wake-up call, I don’t know what will.

As Charting the Future conversations begin at our campuses this fall, we all have a big challenge and a big opportunity. The opportunity is to make the whole better than it’s ever been, to the point that it’s greater than the sum of the parts. The challenge is to fit the parts together in ways they’ve never been together before, while not compromising their fundamental worth. If we get it right, we’ll have something really special. If we don’t, we’ll all have cause for high blood pressure.

Caring and Sharing, Not Fair Sharing!

By Kent Quamme, MSCF Treasurer

At the recent AFT/NEA Higher Education conference, we had the opportunity to attend a couple of sessions where David Strom, General Counsel for AFT, and Alice O'Brien, General Counsel for NEA, presented. One of the main topics of these sessions was concern regarding the Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association. The Supreme Court will more than likely decide this spring whether or not to hear the case in the fall of 2015.

The people behind Friedrichs v. CTA are hoping to overturn the Abood v. Detroit Board of Education ruling from 1977 that allowed states to require public employees pay union dues. These dues are known as agency fees, or as we refer to them, fair share fees. The case states that requiring faculty to pay agency fees violates their freedom of speech and association rights since some of the money goes to lobbying efforts. They are even claiming that collective bargaining is lobbying since the unions are negotiating for money and better working conditions with the legislature by way of their state employer.

What would this mean for MSCF? If the court hears the case and rules in favor of Friedrichs, MSCF would lose approximately 1,200 fair share faculty. This equates to around \$220,000 lost in dues that is used in negotiations, in release time for local chapter presidents and grievance reps, state officer release time, chapter rebates, membership activities, etc.

Instead of waiting to see what happens in the Supreme Court with Friedrichs v. CTA, we need to be proactive. We need to go out and promote the benefits of being a member of MSCF. Our master agreement is one of the best in the nation and we need to make sure all of our faculty know. We need to personally visit with all of our new as well as the experienced faculty and let them know what we have done and can do for them. Seek out that new adjunct English instructor and let him know he has the academic freedom to teach his classes because MSCF cares about his effectiveness as an instructor. Find that new Electrical Technology instructor and get her involved in the shared governance



or academic standards councils as a member. Invite the temporary part time Engineering instructor out for coffee and explain that because of the union, she is paid pro rata on the salary table the same as the unlimited full time faculty. Visit with the 20 year Chemistry instructor and let him know that we will have his back when administration doesn't want to follow the rules. The one-on-one contact will make all the difference in making MSCF stronger and more effective.

With all of the good MSCF has done for us, we need to share it with others, not "fair share" it with others.

A Summer Reading List *continued from page 2*

through your college library or local public library. If you are unable to find them locally, you may want to request them through inter-library loan or ask that they be purchased as part of a local collection.

- Degrees of Inequality: How the Politics of Higher Education Sabotaged the American Dream, by Suzanne Mettler
- Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education, by Henry A. Giroux
- Strike Back Using the Militant Tactics of Labor's Past to Reignite Public Sector Unionism Today, by Joe Burns
- There is Power in a Union: The Epic Story of Labor in America, by Philip Dray
- The Violence of Organized Forgetting: Thinking Beyond America's Disimagination Machine, by Henry A. Giroux
- The Zinn Reader: Writings on Disobedience and Democracy, by Howard Zinn

March 27, 2015

MSCF Board of Directors Meeting Motions

1. Motion and second from the Executive Committee that the Board of Directors approves the 2015-2016 MSCF Budget and MSCF portion of Dues.
2. Motion and second from the Executive Committee that the Board of Directors approves the 2015-2016 MSCF Meeting Dates as submitted.
3. Motion and second from the Elections Committee that the Board of Directors hereby certifies that Darci Stanford is elected Vice President for Liberal Arts, Norm Halsa is elected Vice President for Technical Education, and Gregory Wright is elected Secretary of MSCF.
4. Motion and second from the Executive Committee that the Board of Directors hereby confirm Darci Stanford's appointment to the MSCF Negotiations Committee.
5. Motion and second from the Executive Committee that the Board of Directors approves establishment of a committee to review the MSCF organization structure and make recommendations at the 2016 Delegate Assembly.

March 27, 2015

MSCF Delegate Assembly Resolutions

1. Be it resolved that the Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF):
 - MSCF will aggressively defend the instructional rights of faculty in the developmental realm.
 - MSCF subject matter faculty design and implement any Developmental-ABE partnerships.
 - MSCF will advocate for the development of a new ABE model on our campuses, designed with significant input from and taught by credentialed faculty. (Hennepin Technical College-Brooklyn Park) Carried.
 2. Be it resolved, that the Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF) instructors shall have the right to explore e-Learning tools for course design and assessment, and to choose those most appropriate for their purposes. (MSCF Technology/eLearning Committee) Carried.
 3. Be it resolved, that the Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF): The contract should include more specific language regarding load calculation: Article 11, Section 2. Add language to paragraph two: When making assignments for faculty who have a combination of credits and contact hours a conversion from credits to hours (1.33) or hours to credits (.75) is done on a course by course basis then totaled to determine total load. The calculation which results in the higher amount of salary will be used. Full semester load is either 15 credits including converted hours or 20 contact hours including converted credits. Article 11, Section 7 Add language after the third sentence to reflect the conversion language in Article 11, Section 2. (Inver Hills Community College) Ruled out of order because it directs the bargaining team.
 4. Be it resolved, that the Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF) will extend a formal thank you to Dr. O'Brien, both for what he has contributed to higher education in Minnesota and for the praiseworthy manner in which he has made these contributions. (North Hennepin Community College-Brooklyn Park)
- Note: This was processed as a Courtesy Resolution and did not move forward. There was general consensus that it would be better for individual faculty to send thank you notes to John O'Brien.

March 27, 2015

MSCF Delegate Assembly New Business

Constitution and By-Law Amendments

The Constitution and Bylaw proposed amendment.
Ed Schones.

Lindstrom explained that this proposal has elements involving both the Constitution and the Bylaws. Consequently there will be two votes on each of the elements of the proposal.

Discussion on the Constitutional Amendment regarding one vice president.

Motion to amend the Constitution to combine Vice President of Technical Education and Vice President of Liberal Arts into one Vice President position. Schones/Belanger.

Motion to suspend debate. Wrenn/Stirling. Carried.

Vote on the motion. Failed.

Discussion on voting for MSCF officers at the Delegate Assembly.

Motion to amend the Constitution to have the elections at the Delegate Assembly. Schones/Christian.

Motion to suspend debate. Wrenn/O'Donnell. Carried.

Vote on the motion. Failed.

As a result of the failed Constitutional motions, the consequential proposed amendments to the Bylaws were not considered.

December 5, 2014

MSCF Board of Directors Meeting Motions

1. Motion and second from the Executive Committee to approve the 2015 Constitutional Officer Election Process. Carried.
2. Motion and second from the Executive Committee to approve the 2015 Legislative Goals. Carried.
3. Motion and second from the Executive Committee that holiday honoraria of \$500 be awarded to field staff and office staff. Carried.
4. Motion to approve the 990 for 2014. Long/Spradlin. Carried.
5. Motion to approve the MSCF Financial Policies. Gustafson/O'Donnell. Carried.
6. Motion to approve the Executive Committee Members-at-Large to review the MSCF General Policies. Christian/Stanford. Carried.

Program Closures *continued from page 2*

to be in the marketing of programs. Lately, there is a perception that the program completers end up in low paying jobs. While a student's first job may be low paying, in many cases, wages increase significantly over five years. Has the educational training provided opportunity for a graduate to become an entrepreneur after the "paying of dues" in a start-up (lower pay) position?

A lot of vocational technical programs were designed as low enrollment, high cost training opportunities. Colleges had adequate funding that was fenced to

ensure that the programs provided industry with trained employees. Unfortunately, the concept of low-enrollment, high-cost programs does not fit the funding model of MnSCU today, even though the need for these programs still exists.

The cancelling of classes within the liberal arts offerings is also troubling. If we eliminate all but the classes that are core to an AA or AS degree, are we truly representing a liberal arts education? There seems to be an attack on the liberal arts within our colleges. This trend needs to change. We need to expand our

offerings to attract more students.

Administration needs to examine all aspects of cost reduction. Closing revenue-generating avenues that are cyclic and high cost is the easy way out. But is it the correct way out? Has there been a sustainability program in place to concentrate on issues in the years prior to closing programs or class cancellations? Have the unrestricted net assets been used to avoid program closure? These are just a few of the questions needing answers.



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Upcoming Meeting Dates

Board meeting
September 11, 2015
December 4, 2015

**Delegate Assembly
& Board meeting**
April 8, 2015