

the GREEN SHEET



VOLUME 9, ISSUE 1

The Official Publication of the Minnesota State College Faculty

OCTOBER 2008

Pay, Dues-Shortfall, Starvation and You

by Greg Mulcahy,
MSCF President



This fall at one of the largest two-year colleges, several dozen faculty members did not receive their pay. At the same institution, there were payroll problems last summer. Let me state emphatically my understanding that the college employee handling the payroll was not to blame as that employee repeatedly requested training to ensure faculty would be properly paid.

The college is experiencing great turnover in faculty, staff and administrators. MnSCU, recently cut again at the Office of the Chancellor, does not have overwhelming resources to assist the colleges, even as it struggles to maintain coherent day-to-day operations. And so, without resources or accountability, the system failed.

Similarly, the State Department of Finance failed to withhold union dues from faculty checks on the September 12, 2008 check. The explanation for why this happened involved an upgrade to a computer system. MSCF staff worked heroically to fix the problem by increasing the withholdings over subsequent pay periods. While this eases some of the

inconvenience for our members, a better remedy would have been to have the system work the way the system is supposed to work.

MnSCU's priority should be teaching students and making the conditions and wages for those who teach students at least adequate. Everything else should have to wait.

Now the State is talking about a one billion dollar budget shortfall and MnSCU is revisiting its budget request process. No doubt things will be difficult for MnSCU and faculty if there is a significant shortfall. MSCF will not support a request that does not honor the needs of two-year faculty, though as I write this, the draft

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Membership and Solidarity

by Joe Juairé, MSCF Treasurer

As we enter into a new round of contract bargaining this year, the need for solidarity in the ranks of faculty on each of our campuses is critical. It is essential that every veteran faculty member on each campus approach new faculty (part-time and full-time) to explain the rights and academic freedoms our contract provides and ask them to join MSCF. Please do not assume that someone else has already done this, for it is better to have this message delivered several times than missed altogether.

Your historical perspective of our contract and the rights it guarantees is vital information for these new members as they start their careers on your campus. Tell them why you joined and what aspects of membership matters most to you. Relay how the union has helped you or your colleagues when it was needed most. Explain the dues structure so that they don't assume that they are members just because dues are being withheld from their



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Pay, Dues-Shortfall, Starvation and You

MnSCU request does not. Once again we are headed into a difficult bargaining in difficult times with too little resource available.

We face real problems, as the examples illustrate, with demographics, technology, and funding. A result of the increasing turnover in faculty, staff, and administrative personnel is a loss of institutional memory and a consequent loss of efficiency in delivering services. Technology and funding, or the lack of funding, are related at both MnSCU and other state agencies. There's never enough money for technology so inadequate technology keeps getting patched up and ultimately, good money follows bad.

Of course, we're all state employees, and we're in an important political year, and politics has had a big role in creating these conditions. Years ago, right wing lobbyist Grover Norquist began talking about "starving the beast." The beast was government, and the idea was to starve it of resources until it disappeared or very nearly disappeared. Norquist simply — and rather crudely — but I'll spare you the rest of the metaphor — described a philosophy that has influenced federal governance under the Reagan, and, at least, nominally, the two Bush Presidencies. Likewise, under the Pawlenty no new taxes pledge, we're seeing its

results in Minnesota. There's no better place to watch it close up than at MnSCU, but that doesn't make watching it pleasant, or, after a time, even interesting.

What one sees is not increased efficiency as the system is compelled to make the improvements to counter alleged formerly wasteful spending, but, instead, basic functions like training, payroll, and technology failing as the system becomes increasingly inefficient as it tries to continue to

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provide system necessities and initiatives without clearly prioritizing what is essential and what is not. MnSCU's priority should be teaching students and making the conditions and wages for those who teach students at least adequate. Everything else should have to wait. Doing many things badly for all perceived constituents and in the service of the academic fads often described in these pages is not going to save this system. Politics might, but not the current politics in this state.

Remember to vote.



MSCF is an affiliate of
Education Minnesota,
NEA and AFT.

The Green Sheet is published four or five times a year by the MSCF. Authors include MSCF officers, faculty members and staff.

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Motions passed at the September 19, 2008 Board of Directors meeting:

1. Motion from the Executive Committee to approve the 2008-2009 committee appointments as submitted. Appointments were ratified.
2. The MSCF Board recommends that the \$40,000 allocated for regional social events be divided up with a set dollar amount per member among the local chapters.
3. MSCF believes all PSEO courses, including concurrent enrollment, must have the same content and rigor of the equivalent college course.
4. The MSCF Board recommends that the leadership of MSCF move forward to purchase a building with final approval of the purchase agreement reserved for the Board.

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Membership and Solidarity

pay. Most importantly, present them with a member application and ask them to fill it out.

Our contract guarantees that faculty members control the academic affairs and academic standards of our colleges. It also assures that faculty members have an influence in the governance of these institutions. Your mentorship will prepare new faculty for their future role on the committees that ultimately determine the academic rigor and vitality of

each of our colleges and the entire system.

Each of us has an obligation to pass on to the future generation of educators the knowledge and tools necessary to maintain and further our contractual rights. To that end, the most important instruction we deliver this year may in fact be to our new colleagues and the future of quality higher education in Minnesota depends upon commitment to delivering this message loud and clear.

TRA or IRAP by Anne-Marie Ryan-Guest, MSCF Vice President – Liberal Arts

Most of us don't begin our careers with the end in mind. Within the first year of teaching (State Statute 356.214) you have a one-time, irrevocable decision to make regarding a financial retirement option. Does one select TRA or IRAP?



TRA — is a defined benefit plan that provides you with retirement benefits for your life based on your high-five average salary, years of allowable service, and age at retirement.

IRAP — is a defined contribution plan that provides you with a retirement benefit based on investment choices you have made over your career — including your contributions, MnSCU's contributions, and the investment earnings for the funds you select.

I will caution you that one size does not fit all. To the right are some attributes of each option.

New employees are automatically enrolled in IRAP. If a faculty member wishes to enroll in TRA they must notify human resources and enroll within their first year of teaching.

A Supplemental Retirement Plan, or SRP, is mandatory following two years of full-time service regardless of whether you participate in IRAP or TRA. The investment options are the same as those under IRAP and based on the MSCF 2007-09 faculty contract. Employee and employer contribution is \$2,500.

If you are a faculty member that came to us from Minnesota K-12 or public positions where you were a part of PERA, your previous years of service are important. Please point this out to your human resources representative.

Still looking for more information? Be sure to catch one of the webinars for new faculty on either Thursday, October 23rd from 4:00pm—5:00pm or Friday, October 24th from 9:00am—10:00am.

Selecting a Retirement Plan

When you select TRA:

- Contributions are pre-tax dollars
- You are vested and eligible for a benefit after only three years
- Minimum age of withdrawal is 55
- Investments are made by the State Board of Investment
- At retirement you are guaranteed a lifetime pension benefit.

When you select IRAP:

- Contributions are pre-tax dollars
- You are immediately vested
- If you leave the system you can have your funds transferred to another tax-sheltered account
- You make the investment decisions
- At retirement pension is based on account value from your investment decisions and market fluctuation.

Why Me?

by Mark Grant, Dakota County Technical College

Why should I as ...a faculty member...a union member ...a union representative... get involved in a campaign to help fund a legislator? Why should I talk to a legislator regarding funding for public higher education?

Our Legislators and our Governor, bound by the Minnesota Constitution, have a responsibility to fund health and human services, transportation, health care, K-12, among many other aspects of daily life. Within these aspects is the responsibility to fund public higher education. Funding public higher education is part of doing the right thing to ensure our future in the state of Minnesota.

Why, then, should we be involved in helping Legislators make good choices in funding public higher education? A few of the many good reasons are listed to the right.

We need to inform the Legislators about the importance of public higher education and how the lack of funding prevents us from doing our job well. We need to tell them about the rationale of academic freedom and copyright issues. If we do not keep them informed, common course numbering, degree requirements, a reduction in pension, and possibly a reduction in benefits could be put into effect. If there is another budget cut, there could be some push to take back some of the salaries and benefits we currently have in our contract.

Our Legislators and our Governor need to know about our issues. This is a fact regardless of what side of the legislative aisle you are on. As we move forward during the campaign cycle and beyond, we hope you will ponder these thoughts and take an opportunity to become engaged in the legislative process.

If we don't stand up for public higher education, who will? We need to stand up and have our voices heard.

1. We all know that money does not grow on trees.

Our Legislators and our Governor need to be persuaded to fund public higher education with the money that is at their disposal.

2. Regardless of your party affiliation, it all comes down to priorities.

Over the past decade, the priority of public higher education has declined dramatically. There was a slight upward change in the 2007 legislative session where we reversed the downward trend that started in the late 1990s. This positive change was due in part to members of MSCF and other organizations getting involved and actively campaigning for and talking to Legislators who would stand up, speak for and support public higher education.

3. Education of our Legislators is important.

Many times Legislators have said to our members, "I didn't realize you did that", referring to all the work involved in public higher education. These Legislators need to know how many hours we spend in and out of the classroom. They need to know that we meet with students, that we work on curriculum and develop new instructional models for the classroom. They need to know that we work on campus-wide committees to help our students reach their full potential.

We need to inform the Legislators about the importance of public higher education and how the lack of funding prevents us from doing our job well...If we do not keep them informed, common course numbering, degree requirements, a reduction in pension, and possibly a reduction in benefits could be put into effect.

e-Learning Conference

by Sheryl Barton, Riverland CC

Last fall I had the great opportunity to attend an academic, world conference on E-Learning in corporate, government, healthcare, and higher education in Quebec City, Canada. The main speakers included faculty from places like River Falls, WI to Malaysia. Sessions included major presentations, moderated short papers, and poster information about coping with copying and pasting in an online course, online adolescent literature courses, practices in improving student learning with a variety of instructional methods, and many other pertinent topics. I had the opportunity to meet a person from the U of MN that gave me a link to a rural health website and learned about software that creates crosswords and word searches. I thought that was a wonderful method to meet various learning styles, so I incorporated them into one of my online medical terminology classes last spring.

The conference was very informative to any faculty member who teaches online courses. I enjoyed being there, learning, and feeling like I was not alone when it comes to the struggles with online courses. The analogy between online and on ground learning became amazingly apparent. The more a student participates, the better the student will do.

The opportunity to attend that conference or any conference comes from our collective bargaining agreement – Article 17, Section 1 and 2 detail faculty development funds. Each gets \$250 for each FTE faculty position. The distribution of those funds is determined by a local chapter's committee. Only 1/3 of those funds can be carried over to the next academic year. Find your committee's chairperson, know your college's procedures, and spend the funds.

Find a conference to attend. Attend a major conference from a professional association or a small discipline-related conference. Your professional development plan (PDP) is entering its third and final year this fall. Detail a conference you attended or participated in as part of or in addition to those outcomes or for professional accreditation. There are many ways to find out about upcoming conferences and a number of online resources. Faculty development funds are like muscles – use 'em or lose 'em, so spend yours.

The opportunity to attend that conference or any conference comes from our collective bargaining agreement...find your committee's chairperson, know your college's procedures, and spend the funds.

Insurance Alert: For All SEGIP Health Insurance Participants

Watch your mail during early October regarding a new benefit for all active SEGIP health insurance enrollees. Due to better than expected performance in the SEGIP health insurance reserves, all SEGIP participants will be provided with a \$250 Health Reimbursement Account to offset allowable medical expenses. This additional benefit will be coordinated with your Health/Dental Expense Account (per ARTICLE 13, Section 20). All enrollees will be receiving a debit card that may be used when paying for allowable expenses. This new benefit is scheduled to commence on January 1, 2009. Members are urged to read all future advisories regarding the benefit since there will be expiration/forfeiture deadlines that will impact the utilization of the benefit.

Visit our new website: www.minnesotastatecollegefaculty.org



Contract Talk



by Kari Ann Cruz and Bill Haring, MSCF Field Representatives

We'd like to welcome back everyone and hope the new academic year is off to a good start. In every issue of *the Green Sheet* there's an opportunity for us, as your MSCF Field Representatives, to comment or update members on various contractual language.

Salary Schedule Placement Article 13, Wages

Newly hired faculty, as well as temporary part-time faculty members with five or more credits, go through the initial salary placement process to be placed and paid off the salary schedule. There are two components to the salary schedule, columns and steps. The evaluation of column placement requires official transcripts to be provided to the employer for verification to reflect the amount of preparation for which credit is given. Credit for full-time teaching experience and/or relevant work experience is granted on a one for one basis according to the aggregate sum of experience. There are step limits in the amount of previous experience that will be granted for each column.

Current faculty can apply for a column change on the basis of additional education, training and/or experience acquired after the original placement or a previous column change.

Whether you are newly hired or a current faculty member, the process of salary schedule determination is handled through the College Faculty Salary and Credentialing System, <https://spp.mnscu.edu/>. Placement on the salary schedule must be challenged within 30 working days of receipt of official notification of the salary schedule placement.

Paid Leaves Article 14, Leaves of Absence with Pay

New full-time faculty members are credited with twenty days of sick leave allowance. This is an allotment to cover the first two years. Upon the beginning of the third year, an additional ten days of sick leave allowance will be credited. Sick leave may be taken in full or one-half day increments.

Up to five days of bereavement leave may be requested per incident for members defined as the immediate family. Additional days may be approved by the college administration and sick leave may be taken for bereavement of a friend.

Each full-time faculty member is credited at the beginning of each year two personal leave days as long as the total accumulated personal leave days do not exceed ten. Three personal leave days can be used in a semester, and an additional fourth and fifth day can be used with prior approval. Personal leave may be taken in full or one-half day increments.

All part-time faculty accrue leave on a pro-rata basis. Faculty who accrue on a fractional pro-rata basis can also use the leave on a fractional basis other than the full or one-half day increments.

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MEETING DATES FOR 2008-2009:

Friday, December 5, 2008

Board of Directors meeting

Friday, April 17, 2009

Delegate Assembly and
Board of Directors meeting

To register on Election Day, bring to the polls:

- MN driver's license with your current address *OR*
- Old photo ID + utility bill in your name (acceptable bills: gas, electric, water, phone, TV)
- If you don't have either, go with a neighbor who can vouch that you live in the precinct

For information on where to vote, how to register, what your rights are, or how to deal with a problem, call the...

VOTER HOTLINE: 1-866-OUR-VOTE

You Have the Right to Vote November 4th.

*Voting is your right and your responsibility.
Don't give it up, and don't let it be taken away.*

For information on • Where to vote • How to register • What your rights are • What to do if you have a problem

Call the VOTER HOTLINE:
1-866-OUR-VOTE

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Sabbaticals

Article 17, Professional Development

A reminder that the timeline to apply for a sabbatical has changed in this current 2007-2009 contract. Applications for requesting a sabbatical leave for the following academic year must be submitted to either the College President or designee between October 24 and November 15 (formerly November 24 and December 15). The notification of either an approval or rejection of a sabbatical is due to the applicant no later than January 15 (formerly February 15).

Seniority

Article 21

Seniority rosters are posted every academic year by November 1 and requests for recalculations must be made within thirty calendar days after they're posted. Make sure to check your seniority roster for accuracy and to contact your chapter grievance representative with any questions.

One final thought:

Every decision that impacts public higher education in Minnesota is a political decision. If faculty expect MSCF to have a fighting chance at the bargaining table in the future, the election of pro-public higher education candidates to public office is imperative. Please do everything you can to be involved in Election 2008, and take your family and friends to the polls with you on Tuesday, November 4, 2008! Have a great year!!

Being conversant about your rights under the MSCF Contract and as a union member of MSCF is very important. Ignorance or apathy is not an excuse for not exercising your rights under the contract. Delays in asking important questions when you have a job-related or discipline-related issue may abrogate your rights to a remedy or solution to your issue. Whenever you have a concern, question, or issue, you should contact your chapter grievance representative immediately. If your chapter grievance rep does not have the answer, the resources of the MSCF field staff and officers are only a phone call or an e-mail away.

MSCF has a long history of advocating for its members and has been diligent and vigilant in negotiating, securing, and maintaining contract provisions that collectively represent the best interests of faculty statewide. Although not perfect, the MSCF Contract continues to be one of the strongest collective bargaining agreements in the country for higher education faculty.

Ensuring future success to improve and defend that contract involves (at least) two things: 1) chapter members working with their chapter grievance reps and leadership to see that all provisions of the contract are followed; and 2) MSCF members, through their chapter leadership, informing and working with MSCF staff and state officers to enforce the contract and advocate to defend the rights of all members.

Education Minnesota recommended candidates for Minnesota House of Representatives *(as of 9-1-08)*

01A...Dave Olin	23A...Terry Morrow	46A...Michael Nelson
01B...Bernie Lieder	23B...Kathy Brynaert	46B...Debra Hilstrom
02A...Kent Eken	24A...No Recommendation	47A...Denise Dittrich
02B...Brita Sailer	24B...John Branstad	47B...Melissa Hortman
03A...Tom Anzelc	25A...Tim Siebsen	48A...Sharon Lawrence
03B...Loren Solberg	25B...David Bly	48B...Jim Abeler
04A...John Persell	26A...Kory Kath	49A...Ted Butler
04B...Larry Howes	26B...Patti Fritz	49B...Jerry Newton
05A...Tom Rukavina	27A...Robin Brown	50A...Carolyn Laine
05B...Anthony Sertich	27B...Jeanne Poppe	50B...Kate Knuth
06A...David Dill	28B...Linda Pfeilsticker	51A...Shawn Hamilton
06B...Mary Murphy	29A...James Jensen	51B...Tom Tillberry
07A...Thomas Huntley	30A...Tina Liebling	52B...Kate Christopher
08A...Bill Hilty	30B...Andy Welti	53A...Paul Gardner
08B...Tim Faust	31A...Gene Pelowski	53B...No Recommendation
09A...Mark Altenburg	31B...Ken Tschumper	54A...Mindy Greiling
09B...Paul Marquart	32A...Grace Baltich	54B...Bev Scalze
10A...Greg Stumbo	32B...Lee Carlson	55A...Leon M. Lillie
11A...No Recommendation	33B...Kim Kang	55B...Nora Slawik
11B...Mary Ellen Otremba	34A...Marcia Krueger	56A...Julie Bunn
12A...John Ward	35A...Sue Bruns	56B...Marsha Swails
12B...Al Doty	35B...No Recommendation	57A...Karla Bigham
13A...No Recommendation	36A...Dave Laidig	57B...No Recommendation
13B...Al Juhnke	36B...Beverly Topp	58A...Joe Mullery
14A...Rob Jacobs	37A...Shelley Madore	58B...Augustine Dominguez
14B...Larry Hosch	37B...Phil Sterner	59A...Diane Loeffler
15A...Joanne Dorsher	38A...Sandy Masin	59B...Phyllis Kahn
15B...Larry Haws	38B...Michael Obermueller	60A...M. Anderson Kelliher
16A...Gail Kulick Jackson	39A...Rick Hansen	60B...Frank Hornstein
16B...Steve Andrews	39B...Joe Atkins	61A...Karen Clark
17A...Jim Godfrey	40A...Will Morgan	62A...Jim Davnie
17B...Jeremy Kalin	40B...Ann Lenczewski	63A...Paul Thissen
18A...Eric Angvall	41A...Kevin Staunton	63B...Linda Slocum
18B...Dean Urdahl	41B...Paul Rosenthal	64A...Erin Murphy
19A...Jim Bakula	42A...Maria Ruud	64B...Michael Paymar
19B...Chris Brazelton	42B...Jerry Pitzrick	65A...Cy Thao
20A...Mike Bredeck	43A...No Recommendation	66A...John Lesch
20B...Lyle Koenen	43B...John Benson	66B...Alice Hausman
21A...No Recommendation	44A...Steve Simon	67A...Tim Mahoney
21B...Robert Skillings	44B...Ryan Winkler	67B...Sheldon Johnson
22A...No Recommendation	45A...Sandra Peterson	
22B...Rod Hamilton	45B...Lyn Carlson	

This independent Expenditure is prepared and paid for by the Education Minnesota PAC, 41 Sherburne Ave., St. Paul, MN 55103 in support of the above named candidates. This material is not approved by the above named candidates, nor are they responsible for it.