

the Green Sheet



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Modest does not mean inconsequential

By Mark Grant, MSCF Governmental Relations/Lobbyist

In what could fairly be described as a tumultuous finish to the 93rd legislative session, the Minnesota Legislature adjourned at midnight on Monday May 20th.

The Higher Education Policy and Finance bill is one of the items of business that managed to pass off both floors well ahead of the midnight deadline. Compared to last year, this year's bill could certainly be seen as modest. A few of the provisions of interest are:

- requiring criminal records not be considered in admissions.
- requiring access to transcripts not be withheld due to debt and adds a prohibition on denying transcripts to incarcerated persons.
- creating protections for pregnant and parenting students.
- revising policies and requirements for accommodating students with disabilities.
- establishing several requirements for the licensure of private career schools, including having a physical presence within the state.
- adding "energy" as an eligible field in the Workforce Development Scholarships program.
- 500k appropriation Minnesota State for a "Kids on Campus" partnership with Head Start for childcare and early learning centers on college campuses.



- transfers \$5 million from the North Star Promise Scholarship program to the Fostering Independence Grant program to help with that program's shortfall.

Modest, however, does not mean inconsequential. Another provision included in the Higher Education policy and finance bill places restrictions on Online Program Management (OPM) companies. As a quick refresher, these are private, for-profit companies that contract with campuses to provide a range of services. In themselves, they are not inherently awful, but there are significant areas of concern for us and our profession. There are currently two OPM contracts in Minnesota – one at Southwest Minnesota State University and one at St. Cloud State University. As MSCF learned more about how these OPMs were playing out on these campuses, particularly at SCSU, we grew increasingly concerned.

The deal SCSU administration initially entered into with the OPM company included development and marketing for five accelerated, online graduate programs. Only one of those programs, the MBA program, was "successful." This success meant an increase in enrollment without an increase in course offerings. Faculty saw their enrollments go from 40 to 60 to eventually over 100. When faculty pointed out that these numbers were unmanageable, the company offered them "academic coaches" – company employees who could assist with class management, communication, discussion facilitation, and grading. All of this in exchange for 50% of the tuition from students enrolled in the program.

Then... THEN, when only one of the graduate programs was "successful" (it is worth noting here that the increases SCSU saw in their online MBA program very closely mirrored the declines the other state universities saw their MBA programs), SCSU administration expanded the contract to include some undergraduate programs as well. President Lindstrom has been talking about this all year as he made his campus visits, but if this is the first time you are hearing this, now is the time your head tilts to the side as the potential impact of this model on our profession hits you.

With OPMs currently existing only on university campuses, MSCF partnered

Modest, continued on page 5

Spring 2024 Delegate Assembly Summary

By Nicole Bietz, MSCF Secretary

The Annual MSCF Delegate Assembly was held virtually Friday, April 12th. We welcomed 25 first time delegates, and 22 chapters had a full slate of delegates. It was the first virtual delegate assembly for some of us as officers and we appreciated everyone's patience and understanding as we navigated this together!

The body processed nine business items at this Delegate Assembly. Thank you to all the delegates who attended and participated in the process. Our Delegate Assembly is a great example of how the democratic process works within MSCF and would not be possible without the thoughtful questions and comments generated by our members.

Below are the actions taken by the 2024 MSCF Delegate Assembly. The proposed bylaw amendments and the action item were also approved by the Board of Directors at the April 13, 2024 meeting. To review an updated copy of our Constitution and Bylaws as well as our Resolutions please visit our website at <https://www.mscfmn.org>.

Constitution and Bylaw Recommendations

The Delegate Assembly recommended three bylaw amendments to the Board of Directors as listed below.

Constitution and Bylaw Amendment #1

Bylaws Article VI – Board of Directors Section 5 – Executive Committee

A committee composed of the Executive Officers of the organization and four (4) At-Large members shall serve as the management arm of the organization. ~~Two (2)~~ One (1) of the four (4) At-Large members will be nominations from the Board of Directors. One (1) At-Large member will be a nomination from the general membership of faculty from historically underrepresented groups. One (1) At-Large member will be a nomination from the Board of Directors or from the general membership of a contingent faculty member (TPT, TFT). One (1) At-Large member will be a nomination from the Board of Directors or from the general membership of a Technical Program faculty member (commonly referred to as "blue" faculty). The four (4) at-large nominations shall be elected for a one-year term by the Board of Directors at its first meeting. The Executive Committee shall be directly responsible to the Board of Directors and, as such, shall provide direction to the Board by recommending specific procedures and actions. The Executive Committee shall have the specific responsibility of approving members and chairpersons to the standing committees subject to ratification by the Board of Directors. The Executive Committee shall also have



the responsibility of appointing members and chairpersons to other groups or task forces as deemed necessary.

The Executive Committee shall have an external audit conducted annually and shall report the results of the audit to the Board of Directors.

Constitution and Bylaws Amendment #2

Bylaws Article I – Membership Section 3 – Dues and Budget

State and national dues will be assessed in accordance with the dues categories and policies of EM, AFT, and NEA.

The MSCF portion of membership dues shall be determined by the MSCF in the following manner:

~~The Treasurer~~ The budget committee shall recommend to the Executive Committee



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the amount of yearly dues required to meet the yearly budget.

The Executive Committee, after discussion and analysis, shall recommend a yearly budget and the dues to the Board of Directors no later than thirty (30) days prior to the Delegate Assembly to allow board members to consult with their local chapters.

The Board of Directors, after discussion and analysis, shall vote to adopt a budget and establish the dues.

No net earnings shall inure to the benefit of any member.

Bylaws Article VII – Committees Section 1 – Standing Committees

There shall be ~~eight~~ nine standing committees. They shall be called the Legislative Committee, the Negotiations

Committee, the Technology and e-Learning Committee, the Faculty Rights Committee, the Academic Affairs Committee, the Racial Equity and Diversity Committee, the Committee on Temporary Faculty, ~~and the~~ Membership Recruitment and Engagement Committee, and the Budget Committee.

Subsection 9. Budget Committee

The Budget Committee shall consist of the MSCF state Treasurer and three (3) to six (6) members approved by the Executive Committee and ratified by the Board of Directors. The committee shall inform itself on issues related to the MSCF budget, dues, spending and finances, and regularly review affiliations and agreements that have a financial implication for the organization. The committee shall advise the MSCF State Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, or the membership at large on such issues as appropriate.

Constitution and Bylaws Amendment #4

Bylaws Article VII – Committees Section 1 – Standing Committees-Subsection 8

Membership Recruitment and Engagement Member Communications and Organizing Committee

The ~~Membership Recruitment and Engagement~~ Member Communications and Organizing Committee shall consist of ~~six (6)~~ ten (10) members approved by the Executive Committee and ratified by the Board of Directors. The committee shall ~~organize~~ plan and conduct statewide membership organizing and recruitment activities and support local organizing and recruitment activities. The committee will provide input and recommendations to MSCF regarding member communications including modalities, tools, frequency, and content. The committee will coordinate with the Legislative Committee, Negotiations Committee, Faculty Rights Committee, Academic Affairs Committee, Racial Equity and Diversity Committee, Committee on Temporary Faculty, and the Executive Committee to identify engagement issues and plan and conduct engagement campaigns.

Resolutions

The Delegate Assembly adopted two standing resolutions and one temporary resolution of the assembly. As a reminder, resolutions that were not submitted 30 days prior to the delegate assembly can be introduced with agreement of 2/3 of the delegates. If adopted, these are considered "Resolutions of the Assembly". All Resolutions of the Assembly are retired the following year unless approved as a standing resolution at the next Delegate Assembly.

Resolution A

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the MSCF opposes the use of the mathematics ACCUPLACER tests for the purpose of mathematics course placement and encourages the Minnesota State system not to use them as part of its course placement procedure.

Resolution B

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the MSCF strongly encourages the Minnesota State system to use the ALEKS PPL mathematics placement test as part of its mathematics course placement procedure.

Resolution 1 (Temporary Resolution of the Assembly)

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Minnesota State College Faculty support all System efforts to reduce class sizes on all campuses to realistically enable Equity 2030 goals and maximize learning for all students.

Action Items

The Delegate Assembly adopted one action item to recommend to the Board of Directors.

Action Item #1

We call on our representatives on the ASA Policy Council and the Joint Committee on Credential Fields to remain vigilant in opposing any weakening of our current credentials.

We call on our local chapters to institutionalize faculty involvement in the hiring process of ALL faculty, regardless of appointment status, to ensure that all faculty hired to teach our courses meet or exceed existing minimum qualifications.

Change your opinions, keep to your principles; change your leaves, keep intact your roots

By Matt Dempsey, MSCF Vice President

There are projects in the works in the Minnesota State system that have the potential to dramatically change the work we do. The title is a Victor Hugo quote that may help guide our work on these projects. Higher education always changes, sometimes slow, sometimes faster but keeping to our principles, maintaining our roots can guide us to positive change.

The three major projects are course placement, developmental education reform, and general education redesign. As I have worked on these it reminded me of the 1990s when the first graphing calculators were changing how we taught mathematics. Mathematics educators who perhaps were more comfortable with a slide rule had to re-evaluate and redesign curriculum because of the disruption from new technology. Looking back, we did change our opinions but remained true to our principles. The concepts of calculus did not change but how students learn those concepts today is very different from the 1970s or 1980s.

Let's take a look at some of the changes we are facing now.

Assessment for Course Placement

While work started prior to 2019 on multiple measures, the pandemic forced us to move away from a standardized test. The easy option to implement was high school GPA but it was done on a college-by-college basis without a common method across the system. Over the past two years, the Assessment for Course Placement Committee (ACPC) has been working to bring back a common placement process for the system and, this past spring, arrived at a compromise that primarily would use high school GPA (HSGPA) but included other options as well. Accuplacer,

the standardized test that had been used for many years, will be used only when HSGPA (or another method like ACT or SAT scores) was not an option. ACPC also kept the option for guided self-placement but added some guidance requiring that there be some actual guidance by trained faculty or staff before the student makes a decision. While this was a big compromise, in the end, the vast majority of ACPC supported the new placement process which went through other Minnesota State councils and was forwarded without opposition.

The HSGPA recommendations are higher than the emergency guidance the system provided during the pandemic. That guidance was sent out quickly with little supporting research nor any faculty input. Now the increase in the HSGPA requirements for placement directly into college level courses is being challenged—outside of the normal process for approving such changes. There are data to suggest that the proposed HSGPA are an improvement over the emergency guidance and faculty opinions seem to support the change as well. This is where we need to keep to our principles—the updated placement process was developed with significant faculty input, it was widely supported in ACPC, and had little formal opposition. While opinions on some of the specifics will vary, we need to uphold the process here and defend the principle that faculty need to lead the process of making changes in curricular and academic matters like this. Should we back down on that principle here, we lose more and more control of the curriculum.

Development Education Reform

Developmental education has never worked as well as we hoped, however it has always been necessary. The current



reform is moving from pre-requisite developmental courses to making those courses co-requisites with a college level course. Certainly, the co-requisite model has shown promise but, as with any solution, won't work for every student. The Minnesota State system has developed significant infrastructure to come up with how to structure co-requisite developmental courses. By itself, that is not an issue. The concern is that the system regularly suggests that only co-requisite developmental courses will be allowed. In 2023, the MSCF Delegate Assembly passed a resolution opposing the imposition of co-requisite only developmental education. Our contract is clear that faculty determine the curriculum through the Academic Affairs and Standards process and a decree on co-requisite developmental courses is squarely in opposition to that principle in our contract. Again, opinions on co-requisite courses vary but we must stand firm on the principle that our contract is clear about how curricular changes are made—by going through AASC at each college and not by some system-wide directive.

Change, continued on page 6

Your Assistance is Requested

By Kevin Lindstrom, MSCF President

The school year just ended, summer is just starting, and we're already looking forward to next year. One of the critical tasks we need to complete is filling out membership in MSCF and system-level committees and workgroups. Please consider this an invitation to become involved by clicking on the QR code to sign-up for a committee. If you'd like more information about any of the committees, either send an email to Molly – molly.adams@edmn.org – and she'll send you a description, or scan the QR code below to view the committee descriptions.



Participation in MSCF and system-level committees is critical work. If you're looking for a way to increase your involvement with MSCF or looking for a way to directly influence policy, practice, and direction at the state level, committee involvement is a great way to have impact. It's also a great way to meet people from across the state and at the system office. Additionally, committee participation is an excellent opportunity to build leadership skills and broaden your scope.



If you have any questions about committee involvement, feel free to give me



a call (763-350-2355) anytime. Thanks for your consideration of this opportunity to represent the union.

Modest, continued from page 1

with the IFO's lead to introduce legislation putting much needed guardrails on these companies as they do business in Minnesota. A quick summary of what the bill/law does:

- Bans tuition-sharing.
- Protects faculty intellectual property rights.
- Bans the OPM from participating in:
 - *curriculum development, design, or maintenance*
 - *student assessment and grading*
 - *course assessment*
 - *appointment of faculty*
 - *faculty assessment*
 - *decision to award course credit or credential*
 - *institutional governance*
- Requires review and approval of any contract or addendum with an OPM

by the Minnesota State System Board of Trustees.

- Creates reporting requirements.
- Enacts disclosure requirements as part of marketing and student interactions.
- Exempts current contracts (a requirement under our constitution) and exempts SMSU adding/subtracting OPM supported programs.

This legislation is the first of its kind in the country and may very well become a blueprint for other states. And the stakes were evident. The OPM company active in Minnesota—Academic Partnerships—added at least a lobbyist a week during the last few weeks of session and really put pressure on legislators and the Governor. Ultimately, the language survived because of the relationships we have developed with the legislators in the House, Senate, and the Governor.

We spend a lot of time talking about the need to build relationships with St. Paul, but

the 93rd legislature stands as an example of the impact of those relationships. Last year saw the largest appropriation to the Minnesota State system ever, which translated into the highest contract settlement in MSCF history. This year saw nation leading legislation reigning in for-profit higher education companies and the Minnesota State payroll system being the target of a 2025 OLA audit.

That's what legislative victories look like—sometimes it takes the form of undeniable progress and sometimes (more often than not) it is strictly defense. I ask you all to keep these things in mind as we enter a summer/fall semester filled with state election politics. You will hear about candidate screenings and door knocking and donating and voting—ALL these levels of engagement are needed by our members if we want to continue to experience legislative victories. Stay tuned and have a fantastic summer.

The College

By Kent Quamme, MSCF Treasurer

The Emerging Leaders College will be accepting applications for the Class of 2025 from now until September 1, 2024. The College was created in the fall of 2016 to educate and foster MSCF faculty leadership across the two year colleges in Minnesota. The College covers topics such as the MSCF contract, the history of MSCF, the roles of various positions in MSCF, organizing and member engagement, and how MSCF works with other organizations within the Minn State system to give our faculty protection and rights so they can do what they do better than anyone else, teach students.

We would like to encourage all faculty who are interested in keeping MSCF strong to participate. New faculty, underrepresented faculty, temporary faculty, senior faculty who are feeling a resurgence in unionism, et al..., should apply. All are welcome!

Chapter presidents will be receiving the application packets this summer in their email and will be asked to forward those packets to members. The College will hold its first session at the end of September. Participants will be notified of the acceptance of their application by September 11 and the first meeting date will be set by September 15. The majority of the sessions will be via Zoom and held on weekdays at 4:00 PM. We look forward to another great class of the College!

Change, continued from page 4

General Education Redesign. Back in the 1990s every college and university had its own general education requirements which complicated transfer. Legislation was passed that required the state universities, community colleges,

The following testimonials are from the 2024 class of the College.

"Participating in the Emerging Leaders College was really helpful to me as a relatively new employee in the Minn State system and as a contingent (TPT) faculty member. I went in with little understanding of the broader outlines of the system and of the contract—the framework that governs our working conditions—and I came out with a deeper grasp of the details that matter for our daily work, longer-term careers, and overall well-being. I feel I can function in the system with more confidence now and I can better advocate for myself and other faculty."

*Beth Weixel – English Faculty,
Anoka Ramsey Community College*

"The MSCF Emerging Leaders College provided an excellent opportunity to explore various topics related to MSCF history, structure, and function. Even as a longtime member I still gained valuable insights and information through the interactive discussions that took place during the sessions, particularly a more practical comprehension of the contract language. Members of state leadership and field staff provided firsthand perspectives and strategies for navigating complex local and statewide issues that also enhanced my knowledge of MSCF and our contract. The College was a beneficial experience



I would recommend to any member looking to better serve and understand MSCF at both the state and local levels."

*Lynette Neppel – Sociology
Faculty, Northland Community and
Technical College*

"Participating in MSCF's Emerging Leaders College gave me a great opportunity to connect with fellow educators striving to develop a stronger commitment to our shared collective organizing efforts. I found that having a sense of our organization's labor history and commitment to advocating for two-year faculty in the state of Minnesota has made me more informed and knowledgeable, valuable assets as I continue to fulfill different leadership roles at my chapter."

*Alejandro Maya – Spanish Faculty
and American Studies Faculty,
Minneapolis College*

technical colleges, and the University of Minnesota to develop a general education core that would easily transfer and so the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC) was developed (yes MnTC predates the Minnesota State system). Until the

recent changes to Goal 7, the MnTC has remained unchanged for 30 years. Gen Ed redesign is a little different than placement changes (where there is a push to modify what faculty have developed) and Dev Ed

Change, continued on page 7

The Nomination Period is Open

The nomination period is open...for the election of the 2024-2025 MSCF Executive Committee At-Large Members!

We need YOU! The nomination period is now open for (4) At-Large seats on the Executive Committee:

- One At-Large position, elected from the MSCF Board of Directors
- One At-Large seat, reserved for an MSCF member of a historically underrepresented group
- One At-Large seat, reserved for an MSCF member who is a contingent faculty
- One At-Large position, reserved for an MSCF member who is a technical ("blue") program faculty member

If you are a faculty from an underrepresented group, a contingent faculty, or a technical program faculty, you are eligible to run for one of the three designated seats. Please consider running for an open seat on the MSCF Executive Committee for the 2024-2025 academic year!

What is the MSCF Executive Committee?

The Executive Committee is the management arm of MSCF and conducts the business of the organization between meetings of the Board of Directors. It determines the organization's budget and recommends the amount of annual membership dues along with other procedures and actions to the Board. It approves members and chairpersons of standing committees, subject

to ratification by the Board, and appoints members and chairpersons to other groups and task forces as deemed necessary. It can call a strike vote upon the recommendation of the Negotiations Committee.

Who serves on the MSCF Executive Committee?

The Executive Committee consists of the four Executive Officers of MSCF (President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary) and four At-Large members. One of the four At-Large members will be a nomination from the Board of Directors. One At-Large member will be a nomination from the general membership of faculty from historically underrepresented groups. One At-Large member will be a nomination from the Board of Directors or from the general membership of a contingent faculty member. One At-Large member will be a nomination from the Board of Directors or from the general membership of a technical ("blue") program faculty member. The four at-large nominations shall be elected for a one-year term by the Board of Directors at its first meeting of each academic year.

Who can run?

Any MSCF member in good standing who meets the criteria associated with each At-Large position, as described above, can run for an At-Large Executive Committee position.

How do I nominate myself or someone else?

- Members of MSCF may self-nominate.

- A member of MSCF may nominate another member, with her/ his written permission (a "yes" via email is fine).
- Email the nominee's name and contact information to mscfelections@edmn.org
- No nomination form is required.
- All nominations from the general faculty membership must be received by **Noon on Monday, July 29**.

What if I am nominated?

- All nominees will be asked to attend the in-person board meeting on August 2, where the election will take place.
- Board members will vote for all four At-Large Executive Committee positions.
- The MSCF Secretary will inform the Board of Directors who has been nominated for each position and will take additional nominations from the floor for the three positions that may come from the Board of Directors.
- Nominees will be given the opportunity for brief candidate speeches to the Board of Directors meeting.
- Members of the Board of Directors will vote for the At-Large Executive Committee positions. Votes will be weighted according to the provisions in Article VI, Section 3 of the MSCF Bylaws.

Questions

Please direct all questions regarding the Executive Committee At-Large Member election to mscfelections@edmn.org.

Change, continued from page 6

reform (where the system keeps trying to force curricular decisions) in that the committee seems to have a great deal of freedom and there is significant faculty input. General Education redesign has the

potential to impact more disciplines than placement or dev ed and, for that reason, faculty need to keep informed and provide feedback when requested. Again, we need to stand on the principle that curriculum

is directed by faculty. While this may lead to some difficult conversations and differing opinions, as the title says, we may have to change our leaves but we must strive to keep our roots intact!



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MSCF Board Meetings

August 2, 2024
December 7, 2024
April 5, 2025

MSCF Delegate Assembly

April 4, 2025