

MSCF Connection Stronger Together



President's message

MSCF President, Matt Williams

Colleagues,

Hopefully by now you've seen some of the [news coverage](#) of the end of the claims process related to the workload arbitration settlement.

While we'll be unpacking this experience for some time, I want to share with you some immediate thoughts. The total dollar amount generated is large enough that it grabs people's attention. Underneath that number, though, are the over 700 individual, 1 on 1 meetings we held with faculty. This number is unprecedented, and I believe will be the most significant part of this endeavor long after the settlement payments have been processed and paid out.

What I heard in many of those conversations was a deep love of the work we do, but also a growing concern about the future of our profession. For my part, these conversations occurred within several larger contexts: another year of inadequate funding from the state, the continued rise in student debt among faculty, a rise in tuition for our students, and this Equity 2030 initiative coming out of the system office.

Having these conversations and listening to the concerns of faculty reaffirmed my sense that for too long educators across this country have been invited to believe that only their own sacrifice can be what lifts students up. We've been asked to work longer hours outside of the classroom, shoulder more duties, surrender our professional expertise to outside parties, and accept minimal wage growth all in the name of doing what's best for students. For our sacrifice, what have our students been given? They've been given less institutional support, a degraded educational experience, and higher tuition. When students finish their educational journey, many will do so pulling the anchor of student debt into an economy that was never set up to work for them in the first place.

Friends, it's time to start asking who is really benefitting here. What are we to make of all the shiny new "innovations" administrators have pushed over the past several decades? Did MOOCs save higher ed? Did mastery based education in the 90s usher in richer learning environments? These "innovations" that came from above were actually just a new spin on a very old theme: make workers do more for less and take skill and professionalism out of the job. Did any of this fundamentally alter the situation for students?

The truth is: no. These administratively driven innovations did not produce the miracle results they always seem to promise. Where any ground has been gained has been through true pedagogical innovation created and driven by professional educators working in their classrooms. What these from-the-top reforms and innovations have done, however, is offer administrators, policy makers, and the elite leadership class a comforting illusion that you can walk away from the commitment to fully fund education and everything will be okay.

Well, I'm over it. Things are not okay. I refuse to accept the narrative that for students to succeed, faculty must suffer. I reject, and frankly find offensive, the idea that when faculty fight for decent wages and working conditions, that students will lose. Educators are highly skilled in juggling multiple things at the same time; we can take care of ourselves and take care of others at the same time.

More importantly, we don't have a choice, especially considering rising tuition, lagging working conditions for faculty, top-down education reform initiatives, and divestment in public funding are all deeply intertwined. I don't believe we can say full funding for higher education is a dream we can wait for, especially when waiting for it will come at both our expense and at the expense of our students.

No one else can take on this fight the way MSCF can. As we pivot from this workload arbitration win to the "what's next," you can expect to hear more about how we intend to build our capacity and prepare to be the strongest voice for the future of public higher education in Minnesota and across this nation.

Things to know

Education Minnesota Foundation grants

The Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is the major source of grant funding through the union that is open only to active members. The foundation offers grants for professional development, classroom projects and scholarships for members pursuing National Board Certified Teacher status. To learn more about the Education Minnesota foundation, [click here](#).

Take action

we've built a very simple survey to help identify people ready to have a conversation about action. You can fill it out [here](#).

United Educators Foundation grants and scholarship programs

United Educators Foundation's mission is to generate and provide contributive funding and resources that advance educational initiatives, and support charitable causes within the educational communities United Educators Credit Union cooperative serves. To learn more about United Educators foundation and its grants and scholarships, [click here](#).

Important Dates:

MSCF Executive Meetings

Nov. 15

Jan. 10

Feb. 21

MSCF Board Meetings

Nov. 15

Feb. 21

Apr. 3 - Delegate Assembly

Education Minnesota Rep. Convention

Apr. 24 - 25

Update from the Technology/e-Learning Committee

The 2019-20 academic year brings key technology initiatives to campuses across the system. The Technology/eLearning Committee is watching these

Faculty Forum: Workload Settlement Update

In May of this year, we finally reached a settlement with Minn State resolving our unfair labor practice lawsuit. The lawsuit was a result of the MinnState

issues closely and serves as the voice of faculty in conversations with system administrators.

The Technology/eLearning Committee is chaired by Kari Frisch (Central Lakes) and includes Andrew Aspaas (Anoka Ramsey-Cambridge), Rahul Kane (Century) Mary Petrie (Inver Hills), and Amy Jo Swing (Lake Superior).

One of the technology issues is the Quality Improvement Process (QIP), which asks each campus to evaluate its efficacy in many areas, including online course design, delivery, and student success. We are attuned to the dangers of distinguishing "online" teaching as inherently different than classroom teaching; there are national trends toward mechanizing online curriculum that threaten the academic freedoms. Our committee will monitor how QIP unfolds and address faculty questions or concerns.

Recent legislation requires Minnesota State colleges and universities to develop at least four Z-degree pathways by Fall 2020. A Z-degree has no textbooks costs, using OER texts, instructor-created materials, or library/campus resources. The system office has awarded funding to ten campuses developing Z-degrees. We'll monitor as this process unfolds.

Another issue is the ability of faculty to customize navigation bars in D2L. There is inconsistency across the system, with some faculty able to customize and faculty on other campuses unable to customize. There is system-office interest in consistency in D2L across all campuses. We will provide a faculty perspective championing academic freedom and prioritizing student success.

There are many other elements of teaching and technology that our committee addresses but perhaps our most important role is hearing from MSCF members about technology concerns and needs on your campus. We look forward to conversations across the system this and a stronger understanding of faculty needs for technology and teaching.

failing to abide by the terms of an arbitration we won in Spring of 2016 clarifying how workload should be calculated for certain categories of work. Immediately following the settlement, we began meeting with faculty to re-calculate workload and identify claims for the 2016/17 and 2017/18 school years. The deadline for submitting those claims was October 31. Join us this coming Friday, November 15 at 6 p.m. **Everyone is welcome to join via GoTo meeting.**

We'll present the results of the claims process so far, plans for the 2018/19 school year calculations, and discuss additional issues surrounding workload that have come to light through this process.

[Please RSVP](#) by Wednesday, November 13, 2019.

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.
<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/330296949>

You can also dial in using your phone.
United States: [+1 \(646\) 749-3112](tel:+16467493112)

Access Code: 330-296-949

Join from a video-conferencing room or system.
Dial in or type: 67.217.95.2 or inroomlink.goto.com
Meeting ID: 330-296-949
Or dial directly: 330296949@67.217.95.2 or 67.217.95.2##330296949

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