

# MSCF Minute



An electronic publication of the Minnesota State College Faculty

## Contingent Faculty

by Gretchen Long, MSCF Secretary

Contingent faculty, faculty who teach term to term with little job security or stability, make up over 1/3 of the faculty teaching at two-year colleges in the Minnesota State system. They are essential members of our college communities who make significant contributions to students and colleges. Almost 1/4 of MSCF members are contingent faculty; they are essential members of our union who provide valuable insight and service.

Many unlimited faculty began their careers as contingent faculty and may remember some of the challenges they faced. Instability, insecurity, and isolation are just a few. However, regardless of whether we spent time as a contingent faculty, we all know that our teaching conditions are intricately tied to our students' learning conditions, and the more we improve conditions for all faculty, the better the learning opportunities we'll be able to provide for all students.

At the most recent faculty forum, we had great discussions about the ways in which MSCF members have worked to improve conditions for contingent faculty as well as possibilities for addressing

issues that remain. I encourage you to listen to the full forum – click on the icon to the right – but, in the event you don't have two hours, consider implementing some of these ideas on your campus.

- Make sure all faculty know their contractual rights. Contingent faculty are covered by many of the same provisions as unlimited faculty, especially those related to academic freedom. Sharing the "[What's in My Contract](#)" brochure is an easy way to do this.
  - Create a contingent faculty position on your local executive committee to facilitate communication and connection among all faculty.
  - Consult with contingent faculty in your department about the impact of departmental policies and procedures.
  - Invite your contingent faculty colleagues to social events and consider alternative times when they might be able to participate.
- Consult with contingent faculty on SGC initiatives that would enhance contingent faculty conditions, for example Service Awards, creating UPT positions, recommendations for the timing of teaching offers.
  - Participate in our [Campus Equity Week](#) action on October 31. While our contingent faculty share in many of the benefits our unlimited faculty receive, this is not the case in the rest of the country where more than 75% of higher education faculty are contingent, often working for barely minimum wage with no access to benefits. **Wear a sticker to start a conversation** on your campus about the value of our contingent faculty and the importance of protecting and improving working conditions for all contingent faculty.

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### CONGRATULATIONS!

Congrats to Fergus Falls who has reached 100% membership reaffirmation, Mesabi Range who has reached 98%, and Anoka Tech who has reached 90%. Wow!

### REGIONAL MEETINGS

Regional meetings have begun! In addition to providing updates on bargaining, membership, and future planning, the sessions will provide plenty of opportunity for addressing topics of attendees choosing. If you would like to submit topics for discussion or questions prior to the session, please email them to [kevin.lindstrom@edmn.org](mailto:kevin.lindstrom@edmn.org).

### INSURANCE OPEN ENROLLMENT

[Insurance open enrollment](#) starts October 26 and runs through November 8. By now you should have received both a mailing at your home address and email information from your local HR office. Of particular note this year is open enrollment availability of both short-term disability and optional life insurance. Questions should be directed to your local HR office.