

Inter Faculty Organization

BEMIDJI MANKATO METROPOLITAN MOORHEAD SOUTHWEST ST. CLOUD WINONA

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TENTATIVE CONTRACT SETTLEMENT REACHED WITH MNSCU

by [Nancy Black](#), IFO State President and [Brent Jeffers](#), Chief Negotiator

Dear Colleagues:

We are pleased to inform you that shortly after midnight on Sunday, January 13, 2013, we reached a tentative settlement agreement with Minnesota State Colleges and Universities for the contract ending June 30, 2013. We believe that this is the best contract we can get given the present financial circumstances in Minnesota.

Our negotiators, Donna Brauer, Oscar Flores, Matt Hyle, Jeff Kolnick, Del Lygren, Roland Specht-Jarvis, Gary Starr and Jeff Ueland, led by Chief Negotiator Brent Jeffers, worked relentlessly on your behalf in more than 70 meetings to secure an agreement that honors the IFO Delegate Assembly resolutions to the extent possible at this time. IFO staff Connie Howard and Tiffany Nelson were invaluable during this prolonged process. The tentative settlement provides economic benefits to adjunct and community faculty as well as full-time faculty. These are the first across-the-board increases or step improvements seen in more than three and a half years.

Here are the economic highlights of this settlement:

- 2.2% across the board salary schedule enhancement, effective fall 2012
- 1 step (2.4%) increase for all returning faculty on the salary schedule
- 1 step added to top of professor salary schedule, effective fall 2012
- \$1,258 (up from \$1200) per credit minimum rate for adjunct/community faculty, effective fall 2012
- Adjunct/community faculty minimum rate set at 3.6% of Instructor Step 1 rate effective fall 2012; tying rate to salary scale step will result in automatic increases for adjuncts/community faculty as the value of Instructor Step 1 increases in future contract negotiations
- Increase in minimum salaries by rank, effective fall 2013
 - Assistant Professor - Increased from no minimum to Professor Step 4 (\$51,059/year)
 - Associate Professor – Minimum increased to Professor Step 9 (\$57,477/year)
 - Full Professor – Minimum increased to Professor Step 16 (\$67,841/year)
- Permanent continuation of 2-step career increases at years 11, 21 and 31
- Continuation of \$1,300 per FTE Professional Study and Travel Funds for FYs 2012 and 2013

The IFO Board will make a recommendation on the proposed settlement and set a date for a faculty vote at a special meeting on January 21. The details of the contract will be posted on the IFO web page (www.ifo.org) and will be presented at on-campus informational meetings. If the contract is approved by the IFO membership, it goes on to the MnSCU Board of Trustees for a vote, and then on to the legislature and governor for final ratification before it can take effect.

We commend the negotiators for their skill and diligence and thank the faculty for their patience. This has been a long and difficult round of negotiations, but we finally see light at the end of the tunnel. Stay tuned for more detailed information that will be coming to you shortly.

We will begin negotiations for the IFO/MnSCU Master Agreement for 2013-2015 almost immediately. Both sides have agreed to take up domestic partner health benefits before any other contract discussions as it was a major disappointment in the proposed 2011-2013 contract. Best wishes to you as we start off this new semester.

NEW LEGISLATURE CONVENES TO FACE BIG CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

by [Russell Stanton](#), *IFO Director of Government Relations*

New Faces in New Places

The Minnesota Legislature convened on January 8th. This is a very different legislature than in the last legislative session. Forty-two of the 134 members of the House, and 23 of the 67 members of the Senate, are newly elected, bringing fresh perspectives to the process. Majority control has shifted from Republican to DFL in both the House and the Senate, bringing with it entirely new leadership and committee chairs. For a complete listing of the new membership and leadership, and their contact information, click here:

<http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinfo/leginfo/electdir12.pdf> .

New Higher Education Committees

The membership of the legislative committees has been substantially reshuffled. This is particularly true of the higher education committees. Nine of the 13 members of the Senate Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee are new to the committee, including the chair—Sen. Terry Bonoff (DFL-Minnetonka). Ten of the 15 members of the House Higher Education Finance and Policy Committee are new to the committee, which will be chaired this session by Rep. Gene Pelowski (DFL-Winona). There are three members of the Senate committee who represent state university campuses: Sen. Kent Eken (DFL-MSU Moorhead), Sen. Kathy Sheran (DFL-MSU-Mankato) and Sen. Jeremy Miller (DFL-Winona). Seven of the members of the House committee represent state university campuses: Chair Rep. Gene Pelowski (DFL-Winona), Vice Chair Zachary Dorholt (DFL-St. Cloud), Rep. Kathy Brynaert (DFL-Mankato), Rep. Sheldon Johnson (DFL-St. Paul Metro), Rep. Ben Lien (DFL-Moorhead), Rep. Kim Norton (DFL-Rochester), and Rep. Chris Swedzinski (R-Southwest). Click here for a complete list of the higher education committee members:

http://www.senate.mn/committees/committee_members.php?ls=&cmte_id=3065

<http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/comm/committeemembers.asp?comm=88016>

New Political Dynamics

The DFL controls the House, Senate and Governor's office. This is the first time in 22 years that either party controlled all three entities. This should help overcome much of the gridlock that has gripped state government in recent decades, causing rancor, special sessions, government shutdowns, and the inability to address many of the big problems confronting the state. It also creates accountability—DFL'ers can no longer blame the Republicans for the failures of state government; they own it all, and are responsible for the outcomes.

Big Issues Confront Legislators

- **Budget Balancing.** Ever since the legislature cut tax rates in 1999 and 2000, the state has faced budget shortfalls in all but the best of times. The political inability to raise new revenue has meant recurring budget crises, accounting gimmicks that shift costs into the future, borrowing, and often deep budget cuts to areas like higher education. MnSCU institutions received \$5 million less in state appropriations in FY 2013 than they did

in FY 1999—despite the fact that inflation has been 37.8% since 1999, and enrollment has increased by over 40,000 students. The DFL is inheriting a \$1.1 billion budget shortfall left by the last legislature, and the shortfall is twice that if there is even a modest adjustment to cover inflation. The DFL has a chance to raise revenue to finally fix the structural deficit, but it is going to require some courageous votes by legislators, many of them new, to raise taxes. IFO will be pushing hard for progressive tax increases to raise revenue and begin restoring the deep cuts to higher education in the last decade.

- **Gay Marriage.** A second controversial issue the legislature will face is gay marriage. Last fall Minnesota became the first state in the nation to defeat a proposed constitutional amendment prohibiting same sex marriage (which had passed in 32 other states). The constituencies that defeated the constitutional amendment (and probably picked up a number of legislative seats for the DFL in the process) are still organized and will push for the kind of full marriage equality which nine other states already have. However, while the marriage amendment was defeated substantially in the metro area, on the Iron Range and on college campuses, there were at least 16 DFL seats in which the amendment restricting marriage passed. This will be a tough vote for some rural DFL'ers. This will probably require some Republican cross-over votes to pass. The Senate DFL Majority Leader's proposal to simply make the constitution harder to amend in the future is not likely to go very far in satiating the constituencies that worked very hard to defeat the marriage restriction amendment. Legislators will probably delay action on the marriage issue until around March so it doesn't detract from the pressing issue of budget/tax reform. IFO will continue to push for full marriage equality as the most effective way to get equal contractual benefits for our members who are in same sex partnerships.
- **Health Care Reform.** Over the next two years, many of the provisions of Obamacare will kick in, and this will have enormous impacts on the state budget and on state health care policy. A top priority of the new DFL majorities will be setting up a new health care exchange to create access to quality health care policies and competition to hold down health care costs. The explosion of state health care costs, due in large part to the aging population of the state, has chewed up an ever larger segment of the state budget in the last decade, and getting control of those costs is vital to the funding of other areas of the budget, such as higher education.
- **Employee Collective Bargaining Contracts.** During the last session there were relentless attacks on public employee compensation and collective bargaining rights. Not a single public employee collective bargaining contract was approved, and the AFSCME and MAPE negotiated agreement were voted down by a Republican-controlled committee during the interim. With DFL control, public employee unions are expecting the attacks to stop and the proposed contracts that were agreed upon at the bargaining table to be passed. AFSCME and MAPE will be submitting their contracts to the full legislature within weeks. Other unions, including IFO, are pushing hard to wrap up negotiations and get an agreement before the legislature as soon as possible. Since the contracts are so long overdue, negotiations will have to begin almost immediately for the 2013-15 contracts.

HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS DRAW SCRUTINY WITH POSSIBLE FUNDING IMPLICATIONS

by [Russell Stanton](#), *IFO Director of Government Relations*

Across the nation there has been growing criticism of the growth of administration and mid-level bureaucracy within higher education. This issue took on particular relevance earlier this month when the Wall Street Journal ran an article on administrative "bloat" at the University of Minnesota, which had added more than 1000 administrators since 2001. According to the article, the U of M had the highest administrative costs of the nation's top 72 high research institutions.

Legislators are livid at not only the growth in administration at a time when tuition and fees have been soaring, but also about the difficulty in tracking administrative expenses at both the U of M and MnSCU. The legislative ire is likely to have funding implications for both higher education systems.

Rep. Gene Pelowski, the new Chair of the House Higher Education Committee, could not be angrier about the situation. In a recent *Politics in Minnesota* article, he was quoted as saying “We have higher tuition across both systems, and there is a fee for just about everything. What we have is historic debt for students. We are pricing students out of a higher education.” Pelowski plans a thorough audit of systems—including spending, salaries, and reserve funds. He does not plan to hear a higher education funding bill until he gets answers—which could take months.

Pelowski is not alone in his criticism—Senate Higher Education Chair Terri Bonoff has also called for more scrutiny, and Republican leader on the committee, Sen. Jeremy Miller (R-Winona) has complained that it is very difficult to track administrative spending with information provided by the U of M and MnSCU.

The focus on administrative bloat could not have come at a more unfortunate time. Over the last year we have made great progress in educating legislators about the underfunding of higher education. Last fall we helped elect some talented new legislators who are strong advocates for better funding for higher education, and several of these new legislators managed to get on the higher education funding committees. House Speaker Paul Thissen has frequently mentioned the need to fund early childhood and higher education as caucus priorities. The focus on administrative growth in higher education is likely to create ongoing negative press over the next several months, at a time when we are competing with the constituencies of other segments of the budget for limited state dollars. This looked like the session we would turn things around—but unfortunately, we are already on the defensive.

IFO has been concerned that too much of the systems resources go into mid-level and top administrative overhead, and not enough to the core mission of the system of instruction. In the past several years, the IFO has successfully convinced legislators to create a separate line item for central office expenditures so they could control the growth. That resulted, according to MnSCU, in a reduction of central office positions. However, that is difficult to track, because the central office constantly redefines what the “central office” or “Office of the Chancellor” really means, and they place system level employees off-site to claim they are not central office employees. The legislative concerns about transparency appear to be valid.

The danger of the current bad publicity is that the public, press, and even many legislators do not make a distinction between the U of M and MnSCU, or between the administration and the faculty. The bad publicity simply lowers support for funding of higher education, which hurts all higher education constituencies—including faculty and students who have made big sacrifices in recent years to control state costs.

We need to counter the bad publicity with important facts:

- The faculty are not the cause of tuition increases. Tuition increased 15% in the last four years at a time that most faculty members received no salary increases. We have lost hundreds of faculty positions in recent years due to downsizing. The 15% increase in tuition was caused primarily by declining funding from the legislature. Appropriations to MnSCU institutions have fallen from about \$549 million in 1999 to \$545 million in 2012—but inflation has been about 37% and FYE enrollment has increased by about 47,000 students since 1999.
- Per student costs for educating students have actually been falling at MnSCU institutions.
- MnSCU institutions are not the U of M—and we shouldn’t be punished for their sins. State universities are extremely efficient institutions and have held costs to students to very low levels. The average full time tuition for a student at MnSCU state universities this year is \$7,658. This compares to \$13,526 at the U of M, and \$33,373 at four year private colleges. In percentage terms, state university students pay only 56.6% as much as U of M students, and 23% as much as private colleges. This is mainly due to very low instructional costs at state universities that have kept tuition low by comparison.

On the IFO web page you will find links to the contact information for campus area legislators and members of the House and Senate Higher Education Committees. Please write to your legislators and encourage them to support funding for higher education.

MEMBER CLARK JOHNSON RUNS FOR THE LEGISLATURE

by [Russell Stanton](#), IFO Director of Government Relations



Clark Johnson, a faculty member at MSU-Mankato and a long-time member of the IFO's Government Relations Committee, is seeking the DFL endorsement to run for an open legislative seat in House District 19A. The seat was vacated by Rep. Terry Morrow (DFL-St. Peter), who resigned to become head of the national Commission on Uniform Laws. The district includes parts of Mankato, North Mankato, St. Peter, and surrounding rural areas. Many faculty and students live in the district.

Governor Dayton has set February 12th as the date for the special election. The DFL endorsing convention will be held next Saturday, January 19th. There are three people seeking the endorsement: Clark Johnson; Karl Johnson, an area farmer; and Robin Courier, an area teacher. All have agreed to abide by the endorsement.

The Republicans have endorsed Allen Quist, a very conservative former legislator and a frequent candidate for higher offices, such as Congress and the Governor. Quist is a farmer.

Johnson said his goal in the legislature would be to work for a long term stable approach to the budget—no more accounting gimmicks or borrowing from school districts. Said Johnson, "I want to assure everyone in this state has access to high quality public education, owning a home, and working at a job that can support a family.

The IFO Political Action Committee has endorsed Clark Johnson. Clark's mail address is 720 Lake Street, North Mankato, MN, 56003. His e-mail address is: Clarkjohnson4mn@gmail.com. His phone is [507-381-5011](tel:507-381-5011)

JANUARY 25, 2013 VERIFICATION DEADLINE FOR DEPENDENTS ADDED DURING OPEN ENROLLMENT

by [Patrice Arseneault](#), IFO Director of Grievances & Equity Issues

January 25, 2013 Verification Deadline For Dependents Added During Open Enrollment

By Patrice Arseneault, Director of Grievances and Equity

As part of the Dependent Eligibility Verification Audit of dependent health and dental insurance coverage for state employees mandated by the 2011 state legislature, **faculty and other state employees who added dependents to either health or dental insurance coverage during the 2013 Open Enrollment process are required to verify the eligibility of newly added dependents.** Note that even if you were simply adding *dental* coverage in 2013 for dependents that were already covered by *health care* coverage for 2012, you are still required to resubmit verification documentation.

The initial deadline to have the verification documents to the State Employee Group Insurance Program (SEGIP) for dependents added during Open Enrollment was December 20, 2012. However, faculty and other state employees who did not provide the required documentation by the December deadline have been provided a 30-day appeal period (which ends on January 25) in which to provide the documentation. **The documents verifying the eligibility of dependents for which you have added health care or dental coverage during the 2013 Open Enrollment must be received by the SEGIP office by January 25, 2013**, as no additional documentation will be accepted after that date. If SEGIP does not receive your verification documentation by January 25, 2013, your dependents will not be added to your health care and/or dental coverage in 2013.

Faculty who added dependent health care or dental insurance coverage during Open Enrollment should make sure that

SEGIP has received your verification documents. If you did not receive confirmation from SEGIP or have questions about whether you are required to submit documentation you should call SEGIP today to inquire about the status of your dependent coverage.

CONTACT US

The IFO Faculty Update is published and distributed by the [Inter Faculty Organization](#). If you need to contact the Inter Faculty Organization, our mailing address is 490 Concordia Avenue, Suite 125, Saint Paul, MN 55103, or you can reach us by phone at 800/325-9644 or 651/227-8442. You can also send us an email by clicking [HERE](#).