

# Inter Faculty Organization

BEMIDJI - MANKATO - METROPOLITAN - MOORHEAD - SOUTHWEST - ST. CLOUD - WINONA

## *Faculty Update Newsletter*

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### IFO PRESIDENT'S COLUMN: COMMUNICATIONS 101

by [Don Larsson](#), *IFO State President*

It has never been more vital for faculty members in higher education everywhere and for the IFO and its members in particular to understand the need for communication and to understand its many forms, the difficulties that communication may present, and the costs that may come when communication fails. Following are examples of how the IFO is working to communicate for, through and with our faculty members.

#### **“Faculty Forums”**

Two months ago, [in my column](#) for the December 2011 *IFO Update*, I wrote about how Chancellor Rosenstone had begun to lay out his Strategic Framework for MnSCU and its colleges and universities and how the IFO expected that we would engage with the System Office in the “deep conversations” that the Chancellor called for.

On January 18, the MnSCU Board of Trustees voted to replace the former MnSCU strategic plan with the [three basic goals of that Strategic Framework](#). This week, you should have seen an email sent by the Chancellor to all state college and university faculty members asking them to participate in a series of “Faculty Forums.” Due to a series of missteps and misunderstandings by all parties, for which I must accept partial responsibility as your President, there has been ongoing confusion about what these forums represent. To clarify the IFO’s position, we have already issued the following response to the Chancellor’s email:

*The IFO expects that your local Faculty Association and campus administration will work through your established processes to establish a means for dealing with any recommendations that might come out of these departmental/programmatically conversations. We also expect that faculty will be advised of any implications regarding their intellectual property rights for such recommendations. The IFO upholds the principles of academic freedom and the contractual right of departments and individuals to make recommendations on a range of matters, as described in Article 20, Section A, Subd. 5 of the contract.*

If you have any questions or concerns about how your campus is addressing these “Faculty Forums,” please contact your local Faculty Association.

### **Ongoing “Deep Conversations”**

The IFO remains committed to engaging with Chancellor Rosenstone, the System Office and our campus administrations in fulfilling our mutual goal of improving higher education through shared governance.

Last week, the IFO Board of Directors held an hour-long, off-the-record conversation with Chancellor Rosenstone and Michael Dougherty, Vice Chancellor for Advancement. We had a cordial but frank discussion that marks an important step for all of us in understanding each other better. The Chancellor and the Board agree that such informal conversations should continue from time to time, but that they will in no way replace our more formal relationships through Meet & Confer sessions and the councils and committees through which your IFO representatives participate in shared governance on the system and campus levels. No matter what our differences, when we understand each other better, the better we can work together for the benefit of the faculty, our students and our universities.

### **Reaching Out and Reaching Within**

As I have reported before, the IFO is working harder than ever to engage with other groups with whom we share common interests. One example is the nation-wide [Campaign for the Future of Higher Education](#), where Jeff Kolnick (Southwest) serves as the IFO’s representative on the national Steering Committee. See his report below for further details about the organization and upcoming actions and initiatives.

Although the IFO has managed to remain a strong, effective and efficient independent faculty union for many years, we know that we cannot work alone in the current political climate. As in previous years, we are sending representatives to national conferences of the [American Association of University Professors \(AAUP\)](#) and the [National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining and the Professions](#) at Hunter College in New York. Recently, the IFO has been invited by the [Minnesota State College Faculty](#) (MSCF, represented MnSCU’s 2-year college faculty members) and the [University Education Association](#) (UEA, representing faculty members at UM-Duluth and UM-Crookston) to attend national conferences on higher education. Both conferences will take place in Chicago at different times in March, one hosted by the [National Education Association](#) and the other by the [American Federation of Teachers](#). (MSCF and UAE are both affiliated with [Education Minnesota](#), which is a combined affiliate of NEA and AFT.)

We expect that our attendance and participation at all of these events will widen our understanding of the rapidly changing national climate for higher education and the outright attacks that we all face. In addition, though, the IFO is looking at itself. As previously reported, we have established a Committee on Contingent Faculty to gain a better understanding of the issues and concerns faced by Adjunct and Community Faculty, Fixed Term Faculty, and Non-Tenure Track Faculty members in our bargaining unit. In addition, we are once again sending representatives to the annual North American Conference of the [Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor \(COCAL\)](#).

Finally, at last week’s IFO Board meeting, lead IFO researchers Debra Peterson and Colleen Greer (Bemidji) reported on the results of a campus climate study sponsored by the IFO’s Feminist Issues Committee, Multicultural Issues Committee, GLBTA Issues Committee and Benefits Equity Committee. The researchers’ report will be presented to the sponsoring equity committees for their consideration of the next phase of the study. The IFO will have our own “deep conversations” about this report and its implications before and after the results of that study are released to the membership in the near future. The report deals not only with the climate for equity issues in

the MnSCU System Office and on the state university campuses but in the IFO itself. It will challenge us to take a hard look at ourselves as an organization and to see that we live up to our own standards and the values we espouse. Debra, Colleen and the other faculty members who worked on and facilitated this study deserve everyone's thanks, in addition to the thanks owed for their typical hard work and support to IFO Director of Grievance and Equity Issues Pat Arseneault and Legal Assistant Tiffany Nelson.

### **Support/Apply for the Nellie Stone Johnson Scholarship**

One Presidential duty that I have enjoyed quite a bit is being on the Board for the Nellie Stone Johnson Scholarship. This scholarship was established in honor of Nellie Stone Johnson, the first African American woman elected to public office in Minnesota and a tireless crusader for minority rights, women's rights and higher education. Your students, your friends' families and even your own families might qualify for this scholarship for minority students from union families attending MnSCU colleges and universities. See [the scholarship website](#) for more information. In addition, the annual Nellie Stone Johnson Scholarship Silent Auction and Fundraising Dinner will be held the evening before Delegate Assembly begins. The IFO and the Multicultural Interests Committee have already purchased two tables, and IFO members have contributed silent auction items. See the scholarship website for more information on this event as well.

### **Welcome to Vice Chancellor Knowlton**

Today, Dr. Douglas Knowlton takes office as the newly-appointed Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs in MnSCU. Dr. Knowlton has been serving as President of Dakota State University in South Dakota and has previously been a faculty member and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at UM-Crookston as well as a past member of the Minnesota Higher Education Board (before the formation of MnSCU). We welcome Dr. Knowlton and look forward to working with him through the consultation process that the IFO, System Office and other bargaining units have worked so hard to reform over the last two years.

### **A Personal Note**

Below, you will find information about the upcoming IFO Presidential Election in April, which will be conducted electronically for the first time. As you may already know, I have decided that it is in the best interest of the IFO to withdraw my candidacy for a second term as your IFO President. The two announced candidates—Nancy Black (Metro) and Mark Jaede (St. Cloud)—are both well-qualified and deserve your full attention.

## NOMINATIONS FOR IFO PRESIDENT

At the nominating meeting held February 9, 2012, two candidates were nominated to run for IFO president for the 2012-2014 term. Incumbent Don Larsson has withdrawn from the race. The two nominated candidates whose names will appear on the ballot are:



**Nancy Johnson Black**  
**Metropolitan State University**

**Mark Jaede**  
**St. Cloud State**

To learn more about the candidates, check out the candidate profiles that will be posted on the IFO website starting March 1, 2012. Both candidates will be participating in the candidate forum sponsored by the Feminist Issues Committee at Delegate Assembly on Friday, March 22, 2012, at the Roseville Radisson.

Any IFO members who missed the nominations deadline, but who wish to run for IFO president should notify the IFO General Counsel [Connie Howard](#) in writing. It is too late for additional candidates to have their names included on the ballot. However, write in votes are permitted. IFO members who are announced candidates for IFO president will be invited to submit questionnaire responses for publication on the IFO website and will be invited to participate in the candidate forum at Delegate Assembly.

## THEY ARE AT IT AGAIN - MORE PUBLIC EMPLOYEE BASHING

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

The 2012 legislative session started on January 24th. So far the 2012 legislative session has been like a replay of last year's session, which was marred by partisan gridlock and public employee bashing. Here is a sampling of the bills before this legislative session:

### **"Right to Work" Constitutional Amendment**

Sen. Dave Thompson (R-Lakeville) and Rep. Steve Drazkowski (R-Mazeppa) introduced a so-called "Right to Work" constitutional amendment [H.F.2140, as introduced](#). Despite its nice sounding title, the legislation, which has been enacted in 22 states, would undermine and weaken unions by preventing them from collecting fair share fees to cover the cost of negotiating and enforcing collective bargaining contracts (even though the unions have a legal obligation to represent fair share members in union negotiations and grievances). Under the current Minnesota's Public Employee Labor Relations Act (PELRA), no employee can be forced to join a union as a condition of employment, and non-union members cannot be charged union dues. However, under PELRA, non-union members of a bargaining unit can be assessed a "fair share" fee, but only to cover their proportional share of negotiating and enforcing the collective bargaining agreement. Non-union members cannot be assessed for other costs; for instance, even though I lobby for retirement and health care benefits for the faculty, and to ratify the IFO contract, none of my lobbying expenses are charged to non-union faculty.

The proponents of the RTW amendment claim it will make Minnesota a more attractive place for corporations to locate, and therefore create more jobs and higher wages. The AFL-CIO has produced statistics to counter that argument. According to the AFL-CIO, median annual income in Minnesota is \$31,445, compared to \$26,381 in RTW states. The unemployment rate in Minnesota is 5.7%, compared to 7.5% in RTW states.

Last year, we had enough votes in the House to kill the RTW legislation. We will be surveying legislators again this session to see if we still have the votes to prevent it from going on the ballot.

This year Republicans are advocating a number of constitutional amendments. Constitutional amendments only require a majority vote of the House and Senate to pass and placed on the ballot next fall. Governor Dayton does not have to sign, and cannot veto, a bill for a proposed constitutional amendment. Therefore, the Republican controlled legislature is using this method to circumvent Governor Dayton and submit proposals to the voters that will appeal to conservative voters. Over 30 bills have been introduced proposing constitutional amendments of various kinds.

### **Non-Deductibility of Union Dues**

Rep. Steve Drazkowski has introduced HF2070 [H.F.2070, as introduced](#) to prohibit collecting public employee dues through payroll deduction. The author of the Senate companion bill (SF1607) is Sen. Mike Parry, (R-Waseca). This bill would make it very costly and difficult for unions to collect dues, and thus hamstringing their

effectiveness.

### **Unilaterally Imposed Increases in Healthcare Premiums**

Rep. Drazkowski also introduced HF2069 [H.F.2069, as introduced](#). The bill would require state employees to pay \$90 per month toward the premium for single premium and another \$270 per month if an employee selects family coverage. Currently employees pay none of the single premium and 15% of family premium (which come to approximately \$177.76 per month. The problem with Drazkowski's bill is that in addition to costing faculty a lot of money, it circumvents negotiations. The state public employee unions are currently in negotiations and very near to an agreement with the state on the state healthcare package. We believe these matters need to be worked out at the negotiations table, taking into account the benefits as well as the cost, and we oppose unilateral imposition of rates by the legislature.

### **Ending Career Steps and Promotions During an Extended Contract**

Under current law, if a collective bargaining contract expires (as the IFO contract did on June 30, 2011) the provisions in the contract remain in effect until a new contract is in place. Yet another bill (HF 1974) [H.F.1974, as introduced](#), chief authored by Rep. Drazkowski, and co-authored by Rep. Steve Gottwalt (R-St. Cloud) and Rep. Keith Downey (R-Edina), would prevent any pay increases after the contract expires, including step increases in the contract. IFO does not have any across-the-board automatic step increases like many contracts have; however, we do have "career steps" after the 10th, 20th and 30th year (about 5% of the faculty get career steps each year) and we also have promotional steps from Assistant to Associate, and Associate to Professor (again, about 5% of faculty get promotional steps each year). If HF 1974 becomes law, we would no longer get career steps or promotional steps after a contract has expired.

### **Cuts to Severance Pay**

Rep. Drazkowski has also introduced HF 2143 [H.F.2142, as introduced](#). The bill would consolidate sick leave and vacation pay into a new category called "paid time off" and limit accumulated paid time off to not more than 160 hours (20 days). Currently, severance pay for IFO members is based on unused sick leave, and the most an employee can accumulate is 50% of 1000 hours (or a 62.5 days). If this bill passes, it will severely cut severance pay for most faculty members.

The only good thing I can say about this session is that it is likely to be brief. Because of redistricting, all legislators will up for re-election. The courts will release a new redistricting plan on February 21st. Most legislators will find themselves in new districts with new constituencies. They will want to get home and meet with the delegates to their endorsing conventions, which are usually held in March and April. You can find a list of campus area legislators and their contact information [here](#). Please send your legislators a brief e-mail and tell them to oppose the anti-labor bills listed above.

In November, it will be our turn. We will have a chance to replace some of the legislators who have been bashing public employees.

## MNSCU CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT REQUEST MOVING FORWARD

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

The MnSCU bonding request is moving rapidly through the legislative hearing process. Both the House and Senate Higher Education Committees have heard MnSCU's request to legislature for \$278.7 million to build and repair facilities throughout the system. IFO President Don Larsson testified before both committees in support of MnSCU's request. Larsson urged prioritization on MnSCU's \$110 million request for Higher Education Asset Preservation and Repair (HEAPR) request for money to fix roofs, replace worn out boilers, and improve the energy efficiency of college and university buildings. HEAPR improvements often save

money by improving efficiency and preventing further deterioration of facilities. The bonding bill will be one of the major pieces of legislation this session. Action on the bonding bills now moves to the Capital Investment Committees in both the House and Senate, where they will take the recommendations of many different committees (higher education, natural resources, corrections, etc.) and assemble an omnibus bonding bill for consideration by the entire House and Senate. Chancellor Rosenstone and Vice Chancellor Brian Yolitz have already presented MnSCU's request to the House Capitol Investment Committee.

## IFO ADOPTS ELECTRONIC VOTING FOR 2012 STATEWIDE ELECTION

by [Connie Howard](#), IFO General Counsel

In 2010, the Inter Faculty Organization (IFO) Delegate Assembly directed the Board to select and implement an electronic voting system. In keeping with that directive, the IFO Board has approved the use of electronic voting in the upcoming statewide vote to select an IFO president for the 2012-2014 term and to consider proposed constitutional amendments. BallotPoint, a union shop with over a decade of experience providing election services to labor unions, federal government agencies and professional associations, will serve as the IFO's e-voting vender.

In order to preserve Faculty Association (FA) autonomy, the Board gave campuses the option of using either electronic voting or in-person voting on campus for the upcoming statewide IFO election. All seven campuses have chosen to use electronic voting. In addition, Bemidji, Mankato, Moorhead and Winona will be using electronic voting via BallotPoint for their FA elections. No absentee balloting will be permitted.

By no later than March 10, 2012, BallotPoint will mail voter packets including voting instructions and unique voter credentials by first class mail to IFO members at their home addresses. The unique voter credentials will allow voters to access the IFO ballot. The voter credentials sent to faculty employed on the Bemidji, Mankato, Moorhead and Winona campuses will also allow them to access their respective FA ballots.

The electronic balloting period for the IFO statewide election and for the concurrent Bemidji, Mankato and Moorhead FA elections will run from Monday, March 12, 2012, through 4:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 10, 2012. Voters may change their electronic votes at any time during the balloting period. Only the final vote by each voter will be counted. **Voters should not use MnSCU computers or internet service to vote.**

IFO members who do not receive their voter packets or who have difficulties accessing or submitting a completed electronic ballot should contact the IFO election helpline at [election@ifo.org](mailto:election@ifo.org) for assistance. The help line is staffed from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Faculty who wish to join the IFO and to vote in the upcoming election, must submit a completed membership form to IFO Membership Director Cindy Kellerman by no later than March 27, 2012. Upon receipt of a membership application, the IFO will mail the new member the necessary voter credentials to vote electronically. Individuals who join the union after March 27, 2012, will not be eligible to vote in this election.

## NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

by [Brent Jeffers](#), *IFO Chief Negotiator*

The MNSCU director of labor relations and lead negotiator for the Office of the Chancellor testified at the legislature in support of the progress we have collectively made in Interest Based Bargaining (IBB). The IFO has indicated our intent of seeing the current process through to completion before we move into positional bargaining and apparently there is a commitment from management to do the same. It is not in our interest to pursue economic issues until the Coalition Bargaining on Healthcare is completed. The outcomes and potential changes in the State Health Plan could potential determine our strategy in our opening proposal for positional bargaining. For example, if there is a significant increase in employee paid benefits, we may attempt to recover those cost in increased employer contributions to Healthcare Saving Accounts (HSA) or some other form of compensation. Also, any decrease in the MNSCU contribution to health care benefits, would be available money on the table for faculty contracts and it is in our interest to know the total economic picture before we finalize our opener.

Because Governor Dayton wants the two largest union contracts, AFSME and MAPE, to go to the legislatures during this session for ratification, the health care bargaining is therefore close to completion. The IFO representatives in coalition bargaining did an outstanding job both protecting and pursuing faculty interest. The normal pattern from here forward is that AFSME and MAPE will negotiate their final settlement at their respective tables and the healthcare agreement will serve as the basis for the healthcare articles for other contracts, subject to minor variations negotiated by individual bargaining units. One item that remains unresolved that has long been a contract goal for the IFO is domestic partner benefits and we will continue to push for equity when we move into positional bargaining.

There has been no indication from the Governor that he wants our contract to be ratified during this current legislative session, further evidence that the current process of interest based bargaining is the appropriate strategy at this time.

## ACADEMIC AFFAIRS UPDATE

by [Nancy Black](#) and [Donna Brauer](#), *IFO Academic Affairs Coordinators*

On the legislative front, both the Senate and House subcommittees on education have held hearings on bills that impact teacher education programs in the Universities. The House bill revised current statute to require that students who want to become licensed as elementary or secondary teachers, must pass the Board of Teaching “basic skills tests” (MTLE) prior to being admitted to an approved teacher preparation program. The current requirement is that students “complete” the tests before receiving a license. The new requirement was opposed by MACTE (Minnesota Association of Colleges of Teacher Education) – many of our teacher education programs/departments are members of this group – and they testified in favor of an amendment to give teacher education programs the discretion to decide when a student should take the basic skills tests. In the Senate, the bill was amended to require that the basic skills tests be passed before starting student teaching. These two bills will likely pass their respective chambers and then reconciled during conference committee toward the end of the legislative session. Of concern to us was the lack of a MnSCU representative at any of the legislative committee hearings despite the potential impact of the legislation on the teacher education programs within the state universities.

A legislative audit was performed in late spring and summer 2011 at Metropolitan State University and focused on safe internal controls for fiscal years 2009, 2010, and 2011. The auditors ‘conclusions were that Metro’s controls were generally adequate over major areas but did not comply with three specific findings that had been previously identified in an audit performed in 2002. Of the twelve reported findings, two of those previously reported concern faculty benefits and compensation:

*Finding 4:* Metropolitan State University did not always accurately account for faculty and

administrator leave benefits.

*Finding 5:* Metropolitan State University inaccurately compensated some employees. The university inaccurately paid 2 of 31 faculty members tested. The university underpaid one faculty member \$14,150 because the human resources staff did not include four credits of curriculum development, omitted 1.4 duty days for curriculum coordination, and underpaid an independent assignment. The department also underpaid one faculty member \$1,064 because of errors in recording in fiscal year 2009.

During a subcommittee hearing on January 30, 2012, Vice Chancellor Laura King said that the remediation would be a plan to monitor the operations. She responded that “errors lie in the technology,” and that “a complicating factor is the interface upstream to the state payroll.” In light of this information, faculty would be well advised to check their bi-monthly pay on a regular basis.

## MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE AND BECOME AN IFO DELEGATE

by [Cindy Kellerman](#), *IFO Membership Coordinator & Administrative Assistant*

As the supreme governing body of the Inter Faculty Organization, Delegates set IFO policies, negotiations strategies, dues and budgets for the succeeding two fiscal years as well as deliberate over resolutions dealing with legislative goals. It is through the efforts of all of us working together as union members that we advance our interests and welfare in our contract, our campus governance, and our state universities’ missions. As our seven state universities, the MnSCU system, and higher education around the country face new and accelerating challenges, we need to be able to confront them with a common purpose and a united voice.

There are many ways to be involved in the organization. The Delegate Assembly event is where most of the organization's goals and positions are formed. If you are a member of the IFO, and would like to be a delegate for your campus or submit a new resolution, contact your [local faculty association](#), [Cindy Kellerman](#), Delegate Assembly and Membership Coordinator, or click [HERE](#) for more details. Only IFO members can become appointed Delegates. If you are not a member of the IFO and would like to become involved in shaping the future of our state universities and/or supporting those who are, please fill out a [membership application](#) and your membership card will be mailed to you shortly.

The IFO Delegate Assembly will be held at the Roseville Radisson on March 23-24, 2012. Faculty are contractually released from duty on Friday, March 23.

P.S. If you have an idea for entertainment at Friday's dinner banquet, [email](#) your suggestion.

## IFO HAS JOINED THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The IFO has joined the Campaign for the Future of Higher Education (CFHE), a coalition of college and university faculty associations around the country. CFHE was founded in January of 2011 and is in its infancy. The IFO was present for its birth and is now active in its growth.

In a nutshell, CFHE is committed to becoming the national voice of the faculty on issues and policy discussions concerning higher education. For too long higher education policy has been dominated by administrative, political, and foundation voices like Gates and Lumina and the faculty have been left out of the discourse. The result is that rapid changes are occurring in public higher education that is gutting the system through massive cuts in public funding that threaten both access and quality. CFHE is pushing back and the IFO is joining in the pushback.

The week of April 16 we will be taking part in a National Week of Action in partnership with the U.S. Student Association. Our theme will be broad enough to encompass local actions and needs (something like “Higher Education is a Right, not a Privilege” or “Invest in Public Higher Education” or “Higher Education is a Public

Good not a Private Good”). The IFO Board has endorsed this activity with expectation that each of our campuses will have a media savvy, but easily organized event where local papers and electronic media are present.

Past actions have included Guerilla Theater, teach-ins on higher education policy, photo-ops with balloons and appropriate signs reflecting local needs or CFHE principles, or a panel discussion in the evening with faculty and community and staff allies setting out the need for public investment in higher education.

The idea is to ACT and to have that action coordinated across the state and covered in local and statewide media. If everything goes as planned, this will happen not just in Minnesota, but in California, Pennsylvania, Montana, Nebraska, New York, Virginia, Michigan, Florida, and many other states. The idea is to get the faculty voice into the mix. So get on board and GET ACTIVE in the Campaign for the Future of Higher Education.

The best place to learn about CFHE is from the website: [http://futureofhighered.org/index\\_HEUK.html](http://futureofhighered.org/index_HEUK.html) There you will find an elaboration of the seven principles that guide our thinking and action. <http://futureofhighered.org/Principles.html>

1. Higher Education in the 21st Century must be inclusive; it should be available to and affordable for all who can benefit from and want a college education.
2. The curriculum for a quality 21st Century higher education must be broad and diverse.
3. Quality higher education in the 21st Century will require a sufficient investment in excellent faculty who have the academic freedom, terms of employment, and institutional support needed to do state-of-the-art professional work.
4. Quality higher education in the 21st century should incorporate technology in ways that expand opportunity and maintain quality.
5. Quality education in the 21st Century will require the pursuit of real efficiencies and the avoidance of false economies.
6. Quality higher education in the 21st Century will require substantially more public investment over current levels.
7. Quality higher education in the 21st century cannot be measured by a standardized, simplistic set of metrics.

## GUEST EDITORIAL: GENERATIONAL BETRAYAL

by [Jeff Kolnick](#), *Southwest Minnesota State University*

Recent reports have indicated that accumulated student loan debt now exceeds \$1 trillion and is greater than the nation's combined credit card debt <http://www.usatoday.com/money/perfi/college/story/2011-10-19/student-loan-debt/50818676/1>. In response to this bad news, we hear the usual: we are broke and must adapt to the new normal of diminishing resources and austerity. With the legislature now in session, we have a chance to reverse course on what is a profound generational betrayal of our young people.

I refuse to believe that “we” are broke or that we are living in a period of diminished resources. I am forced to turn to the facts rather than the fantasy that passes for conventional wisdom these days.

America is a richer nation now than it was when I was an undergraduate, 1977-1982. Back in those days, another period of recession and high unemployment (remember stagflation?) my college tuition was much lower. I am from California and began my career at Fullerton Community College where tuition was free.

Did he say free? Yes, free. I paid absolutely nothing for three years of excellent education with outstanding faculty. You can adjust for inflation all you want, but free is free.

After I transferred to UCLA, I paid a whopping \$1,657 for two years of quality education. Imagine, a BA degree awarded from an elite university for less than \$1,700. <http://www.cpec.ca.gov/FiscalData/FeesTable.ASP?Dollars=Actual>.

But that's California you say--a state run by hippies. Well Minnesota also used to have low tuition. According to the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, between 1993 and 2009, a period when per capita income in Minnesota increased from \$22,302 to \$42,549, tuition at the University of Minnesota went from \$3,421 to \$10,756. At State Universities the increase was from \$2,521 to \$6,373 and at two years schools the increase was from \$1,950 to \$4,548. These increases were during a time when the wealth of Minnesota nearly doubled.

[http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/tPg.cfm?pageID=812&1534-D83A\\_1933715A=84d0c2001183a24da48f3b9ce779add2d63f5da9](http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/tPg.cfm?pageID=812&1534-D83A_1933715A=84d0c2001183a24da48f3b9ce779add2d63f5da9)

But heck, that was Minnesota. Was America a richer nation when I went to college? Were we somehow less broke? Of course not. As the chart below indicates, we were a poorer nation by every measure in 1980 than we are now. In 1980, in constant dollars, our per capita GDP was \$25,640 and today it is \$42,204. Looked at another way, the United States is more than twice as rich today as we were in 1970. <http://www.measuringworth.com/usgdp/>.

Year	Real GDP (millions of 2005 dollars)	Real GDP per capita (year 2005 dollars)
1970	4,269,900	20,819.74
1975	4,879,500	22,592.27
1980	5,839,000	25,640.46
1985	6,849,300	28,717.52
1990	8,033,900	32,112.35
1995	9,093,700	34,111.44
2000	11,226,000	39,749.59
2005	12,623,000	42,612.30
2010	13,088,000	42,204.92

So I ask you, where are the diminished resources? Where is this broke nation? To find out who is broke you can visit our state colleges and universities where students are paying super high tuition because my generation has decided to slam the door shut on the very opportunity that allowed me to become an educated citizen.

MnSCU institutions are incredibly efficient. MnSCU appropriations for this biennium are the same in real dollars as they were in 1999; we are educating many tens of thousands more students, and the total cost of educating a student per capita has remained decreased. Consider these facts: in 1999 MnSCU educated 106,827 students at a cost of \$7,114 per student. Today the system educates 158,071 students at a cost of \$6,684 per student. MnSCU is a lean and mean educating machine.

The state's decision to renege on its commitment to paying 2/3 of the cost of a public education began under the Pawlenty administration. As recently as 2002 the state honored the law and only began its generational betrayal under the former governor, a man who, like me, needed and used public higher education to jumpstart his career. <http://www.mnscu.edu/board/materials/2011/june22/fin-06-operbudget.pdf> page 45

It is time to refute the lie that we are broke! WE are not broke! Some of us are broke, some of us are in debt and going deeper into debt. But the United States is a richer nation now than it was 30 years ago, or even 10 years ago. The trouble is that all of the money has gone to the top 5% and those at the top are not as generous today as they were 30 years ago when I got a world class education for \$1,657.

America has the money to rebuild its infrastructure and educate its citizens. In 1955, when we built the interstate highway system and expanded opportunity in public higher education per capita GDP was \$15,128.12 not the \$42,204 it was in 2010 <http://www.measuringworth.com/usgdp> . In those days we acted like a nation that looked out for one another and we prospered together. Today we act more like a pack of wolves, except that wolves do not eat their young.

## 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 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 send us an email by clicking [HERE](#).