

Inter Faculty Organization

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

Faculty Update Newsletter

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IFO PRESIDENT'S COLUMN: LOOKING FORWARD

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

Dear Colleagues,

This will be my next-to-last *IFO Update* column as your IFO President. We will have one more newsletter going out before the end of Spring Semester 2012; then, on July 1, Nancy Johnson Black will take over as IFO President. (Details of IFO elections results can be found below.)

I want to congratulate Nancy on her election and to thank Mark Jaede for his thoughtful, issues-oriented campaign, as well as for the valuable service that he has provided to the IFO on the Board and Executive Committee for the last several years. The IFO and its faculty members will be facing crucial challenges in the next two years and longer. Nancy will need your support, your participation, your actions and your voices in her new (but not-so-new) role. I ask you all to join me in wishing her the best and working with her to make IFO faculty voices heard.

I have genuinely enjoyed my work for these last two years (aside from a few days here and there), and although it is a cliché to say that I have been honored to serve as President, it is true nonetheless. It has been a privilege to

work for such dedicated colleagues across the state, and I appreciate the support that you have given me in this role. I will leave you this month with my “state of the union” address to the Delegate Assembly that I delivered on March 23.

PRESIDENT’S ADDRESS: THE STATE OF THE UNION
IFO DELEGATE ASSEMBLY 2012
Don Larsson, IFO President

Delegates and Colleagues,

A few things have happened since this Assembly last met two years ago:

- The magnetic field of Minnesota politics has flipped, with Republicans in control of both houses of the state legislature for the first time in four decades
- **But** the voters also elected the first DFL governor in two decades
- The state (sort of) weathered a budget shortfall of nearly six billion dollars after the longest shutdown of state services in the country
- **But** MnSCU was exempted from that shutdown and summer classes continued
- State financing for higher education continued to erode to the point where the cost of higher education in Minnesota is the lowest it has been in a dozen years
- **But** the **price** of tuition has continued to climb as the state has continued to shift its responsibilities on to the backs of the students so that tuition now pays for nearly 60% of the **cost** of their education
- In the meantime, public workers and state university faculty members have faced some of the same political attacks that would strip us of our power and our rights as we have seen in Wisconsin, Ohio and other states
- **But** most of those attacks have been turned back or blunted, thanks in no small part to the efforts of Russ Stanton and of all of you who have responded to the calls from Russ and IFO Action Committee for your emails to legislators and for your presence at the Capitol
- Within our universities, five of our seven campuses have faced retrenchments of tenured and tenure-track faculty members and the further loss of faculty positions
- **But** some of those retrenchments have been reversed, and tenure-track hiring continues, at least in some areas
- All of our universities have been going through major reorganizations, restructuring, “recalibration,” and other changes
- **But** the IFO and our Faculty Associations have continued to fight at the state and local levels to make certain that those changes do not take place without our faculty members’ voices being heard
- The MnSCU System Office has also been going through changes and downsizing for the first time in its history, cutting and combining administrative positions
- **But** the IFO has also lost our connections with some competent administrators who have departed, leaving uncertainty or confusion in their place
- A new Chancellor has brought new energy to his position and new emphasis on the role of the state universities and the role of our programs and our values in what the state still calls “workforce development”
- **But** the single-minded emphasis on “workforce development” still dominates any discussion of MnSCU’s role, within and outside this system, and after several false starts, the IFO and the Chancellor are only beginning to discover how to work with each other
- Our Negotiations Team has slowly but continuously participated in Interest-Based Bargaining with MnSCU administration, achieving a number of small but important language changes that could not have happened through traditional bargaining
- **But** the hard questions that our Team and all of us are bound to face in traditional, “positional” bargaining with have yet to be dealt with, even as most of us have gone for three years or more without a raise.

What then is the state of our union in March of 2012?

I can answer truthfully that the IFO remains amazingly strong.

Even though our salary levels have been eroding for more than three years, we are near the 50th percentile compared to similar institutions nationwide. That's not good enough, and we deserve to see a raise with our next contract, but we have not suffered the salary cuts and furloughs inflicted on faculty members in other states.

Nationwide, only 20-30% of faculty positions are filled by tenured or track-track faculty members. In our universities, tenured or tenure-track faculty account for about 75% of all full-time equivalent positions.

Even though our bargaining unit is one of the smallest state unions in Minnesota, the IFO is recognized and respected in the legislature, in the MnSCU System Office and on our campuses.

Whether through local or statewide meet and confer sessions, through shared governance committee work, or through the grievance process, we have worked effectively to see that the contract is respected and enforced by all parties and that faculty members are given the representation that they deserve.

With a full-time staff of just six incredibly dedicated, talented and hard-working people in our state office and with no increase in dues or fair share fees for more than half a decade, the IFO continues to serve over 3,300 faculty members from Moorhead to Winona and from Marshall to Bemidji. Over the last decade, this organization has also worked to keep its own house in order. In the last year alone, we have given our own Constitution and Operating Procedures their first major overhaul in years. Increasingly, we hold ourselves to the same standards of professionalism, transparency and accountability that we demand of the administrations on our campuses and in the MnSCU System Office.

At the same time, our successes and our strengths hang by a thread—the thread of your interest, your participation and your actions as IFO members. No matter who controls the legislature, no matter who is governor or chancellor or who sits on the MnSCU Board of Trustees, no matter who is President of this IFO—the strengths of this union rest with you—its members. One party or one candidate, one administrator or IFO official may be preferable to another, but we cannot expect that any hero will come to our rescue. We—the members of the IFO—must be our own heroes. In a forest of seven universities and 24 colleges, we must see both the forest and the trees. We all must make the effort to see and understand the particular needs of our own institutions and of our fellow faculty members and workers, but we also have to see beyond our local concerns. We must educate ourselves and understand the demographic, economic and technological changes that threaten to overwhelm us the minute we turn our attention away.

As we all meet in this 19th Delegate Assembly of the IFO for the next two days, I ask you all to remember that we are all here for each other, no matter the size of our campuses, our rank or tenure status, or how we identify ourselves by gender, ethnicity, academic discipline or political affiliation. As we discuss and debate resolutions, as we listen to the candidates for the next IFO President, let us remember that we are here for each other. If we can do that, the IFO will remain amazingly strong. If we forget that, then we will only have ourselves to blame for the results.

DR. NANCY JOHNSON BLACK ELECTED IFO PRESIDENT

Dr. Nancy Johnson Black has been elected to a two-year term as president of the Inter Faculty Organization (IFO) in the union's first statewide electronic election. Black won over Dr. Mark Jaede, the Faculty Association (FA) president of St. Cloud State University. The IFO membership also approved a number of constitutional amendments recommended by the IFO Board of Directors.

Black, who is chair of the Social Science Department at Metropolitan State University, will assume office as IFO President on July 1, 2012. She will replace Dr. Don Larsson from Minnesota State University Mankato.

Black has a long history of service to the union and her university. She served two two-year terms as IFO president from 2004-2008, and



Black has been both IFO Academic Affairs Coordinator and Metro FA Vice Present for the last year. Since Black joined the faculty at Metropolitan State University in 1991, she has served on over a dozen Metro FA committees and task forces.

Black has won numerous awards including the 1995 Outstanding Teacher of the Year award from Metropolitan State University, the 1998 Minnesota Professor of the Year Award from the Carnegie Foundation, and the 2010 Outstanding Contributions to Women's Advancement in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU) and Outstanding Contributions to the IFO by a Woman Member awards. She has published three books and several articles on her anthropological research.

According to Black, who is known for her outspoken advocacy on behalf of faculty and quality education, her number one goal as IFO President will be to improve compensation in order to attract and retain high quality faculty. "Most faculty have gone four years with no cost of living or step increases. We have fallen below average for peer institutions nationwide. This cannot continue or we will lose our best faculty to better paying institutions. The most significant factor in student learning is the excellence of their teachers."

Black acknowledged the state's tight financial situation, but said, "We didn't cause the economic crash, and the state university faculty have done more than their fair share to solve the state budget problem. We voluntarily took a pay freeze, and we have lost hundreds of positions due to downsizing. As the economy recovers, we should share in that recovery."

GOVERNOR DAYTON AND CHANCELLOR ROSENSTONE SPEAK TO THE IFO DELEGATE ASSMEBLY

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

On March 23rd and 24th, 164 delegates gathered at the Radisson Roseville for the biennial IFO Delegate Assembly. The delegates approved an IFO budget, debated and passed resolutions, listened to IFO presidential candidates, and heard from both Governor Mark Dayton and MnSCU Chancellor Steven Rosenstone.

The delegates approved a budget that again called for no dues increases.

The assembly reaffirmed their support for continuing resolutions, and adopted 16 new resolutions to guide the IFO Board, negotiators, staff and standing committees in the next two years. Several of the new resolutions were for improved pay, access to professional improvement funding, and health care eligibility for adjunct faculty. Others dealt with faculty control of curriculum decisions and terms and conditions of employment.

Chancellor Rosenstone spoke briefly about the development of a strategic plan for MnSCU and engaged in a long informal and frank discussion of issues with the delegates present. Much of his discussion centered upon ways to develop more support for higher education from the legislature, the business community, and the public at large.



Governor Dayton received a warm reception from the delegates and during question and answer period, delegates thanked him for his support for higher education funding and collective bargaining rights during the fractious political battles over the last two years. Dayton said he strongly opposed the proposed constitutional amendment on marriage, and said he encouraged state negotiation officials to push for domestic partner benefits in state employee contracts. When asked about the appointment of new trustees on the MnSCU Board, Dayton said the legislature had still not made appointments to the Trustee Selection Advisory Board and he was waiting for the boards' recommendations.



At the Delegate Assembly dinner, several faculty were recognized for their service to the IFO. Bemidji State University faculty members Debra Peterson and Colleen Greer were presented with the IFO Board of Directors' Award for Outstanding Contributions to the IFO by a Woman Member from the Feminist Issues Committee.

The GLBTA Issues Committee presented the James Eric Chalgren Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Advancement of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues to Metropolitan State University faculty members Janet Enke and Anne Aronson.

Darrell Downs of Winona State University was presented with the Monte Bute Award for Outstanding Service to IFO Governmental Relations in recognition for his 17 years of service on the IFO Government Relations Committee, and his extensive work writing guest editorials, attending legislative events, campaigning for candidates, and writing to legislators.

CAMPUS CLIMATE STUDY

by [Deb Peterson](#) and [Colleen Greer](#), Bemidji State University

Phase I of the IFO-supported campus climate study is complete and Phase II has begun!!

In February of this year the IFO equity committees (Multicultural Issues Committee, Feminist Issues Committee, GLBTA Issues Committee and the Benefits Equity Committee) presented the IFO Board of Directors with a qualitative report assessing the climate for faculty on the seven state university campuses related to issues of sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, religion, race, ethnicity, and national origin and offering some preliminary ideas for how to address these issues. The report is a rich document that owes its richness to all faculty who shared experiences and information with us during focus group sessions. In all, 27 separate focus group sessions were held beginning March 2010 and ending January 2011, with faculty participants representing a broad range of experience and diversity.

Many thanks are extended to the equity committee members who made arrangements on the individual campuses and to the faculty who participated in the focus groups. Thanks are also extended to IFO staff Pat Arseneault and Tiffany Nelson for helping to coordinate research and committee efforts during this first phase.

Phase II of this project, which will take place during early fall semester 2012, will be a comprehensive survey of all state university faculty using key concepts from the focus group report. In preparation for that survey, equity committee members on the various campuses have been asked yet this spring to identify central themes or questions from the focus group report for inclusion in the survey. The summer will be spent developing the survey instrument and all other necessary materials. Data will be analyzed late October and early November with a draft report made available to the equity committees for review late fall semester. The full report (focus group and survey results) will be made available in January 2013.

It is a tight timeline, but with your help it can be done. We look forward to further communication on this study.

GLBTA Issues Committee Presents James E. Chalgren Award

by [Aureliano DeSoto](#), *Metropolitan State University, IFO GLBTA Issues Committee member*

At this year's Delegate Assembly, the IFO Statewide Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Allies (GLBTA) Issues Committee awarded the James Eric Chalgren Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Advancement of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Issues to Dr. Anne Aronson (Professor of Writing and Rhetoric in the Department of Communication, Writing and the Arts at Metropolitan State University) and Dr. Janet Enke (Associate Professor of Social Science at Metropolitan State University). The award honors the life and work of James E. Chalgren (1951-2000), who as a graduate student in the Counseling and Student Personnel Program founded the LGBT Center at Minnesota State University, Mankato in 1977, one of the first university centers in the nation to serve LGBT students, staff, and faculty.

The GLBTA Issues Committee choose to recognize Aronson and Enke for their role in the transformation of Women's Studies into Gender Studies at Metropolitan State University from 2007 to 2010, including working with diverse faculty across metro-area institutions, building a significant core of required GLBT Studies coursework into the new Gender Studies program, and fostering the participation of GLBT advisors, GLBT student life personnel, and GLBT faculty in the nurturance and development of the new program. The joint nomination, from 12 resident faculty members at Metropolitan State University, succinctly captured the key aspects of their work:

“Their advocacy and leadership demonstrated through the Gender Studies Major/Minor will have a substantial impact not only on LGBT faculty and students but also in the greater MnSCU community. The Chalgren Award asks that the winner demonstrate through their leadership capacities that they can be a change agent, creating equity and opportunity. Through their research, teaching and leadership in the creation of a new Gender Studies Major and Minor with one of its primary focal points in LGBT Studies, Dr. Anne Aronson and Dr. Janet Enke have given current and future students and faculty the opportunity to become change agents themselves creating a legacy that enriches the LGBT community.”

The GLBTA Issues Committee found itself in substantial agreement with the nomination, and was proud to be able to recognize and honor the work of Dr. Aronson and Dr. Enke in improving the professional life of GLBT faculty and advocating for issues that substantially impact and affect GLBT faculty life at MnSCU institutions.

FIC HONORS UNION MEMBERS AT DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

by [Tamara Berg](#), *Winona State University, IFO Board Liaison to the State-Wide IFO Feminist Issues Committee*

At the 2012 Delegate assembly, the Feminist Issues Committee (FIC) continued its long-standing tradition of recognizing IFO members who have made significant contributions to the IFO on the local and/or state level. Committee Members Laurie Blunsom and Annelies Hagemester presented the **IFO Award for Outstanding Contributions to the IFO by a Woman Member** to Bemidji State University faculty members **Debra Peterson** and **Colleen Greer**.

Since 1984, the FIC has recognized members who have served in leadership capacities and who have advocated within the IFO on issues substantially impacting faculty. This year, the committee unanimously voted to recognize the important work of Dr. Debra Peterson and Dr. Colleen Greer, who have served the IFO in numerous ways, for their work as the lead researchers for the IFO's campus climate study.

Drs. Peterson and Greer, working with the support of the four IFO equity committees—the Multicultural Issues Committee, the Feminist Issues Committee, the GLBTA Issues Committee, and the Benefits Equity Committee—were recognized for their efforts on a research project to assess the quality of the climate for faculty on each campus related to issues of sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, religion, race, ethnicity and national origin. The climate study research project began in late 2008, with Phase I of the project wrapping up in February 2012, and Phase II beginning this spring.

In addition to their work as the IFO equity committees' lead researchers on campus climate, Drs. Greer and Peterson have each served in leadership positions at the local and state level of IFO governance. Colleen Greer has been an active member of the IFO GLBTA Issues Committee for eight years, most recently serving as Committee Chair. Dr. Greer also served as the GLBTA committee representative on the Benefits Equity Committee for four years. Dr. Greer is currently on the IFO Board of Directors, and is a member of the BSUFA Executive Committee. Deb Peterson has served in many leadership positions on the BSU campus, including on faculty senate and the Executive Committee, and is currently serving as the grievance officer. Dr. Peterson also served as an IFO Board Representative, and was the Board liaison to the GLBTA Issues Committee. Dr. Peterson has been a member of the IFO Benefits Equity Committee since 2007.

It is with great enthusiasm and true appreciation that the Feminist Issues Committee and IFO Board of Directors recognize colleagues Colleen Greer and Deb Peterson for their outstanding service to the IFO.

LEGISLATURE NEARS ADJOURNMENT MOST MAJOR ITEMS UNRESOLVED

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

Legislators are returning to the Capitol today, following a ten day break. Originally, legislative leaders planned to adjourn the session by April 30th. When the state budget forecast came out in early March, showing improved state funding, the leaders said they might even be done by early April. Early April has come and gone, and most of the major issues before the legislature are unresolved. Here is where the legislation stands regarding IFO goals:

The Bonding Bill

In even numbered years, one of the major goals of the legislature is to pass a bonding bill to borrow money to build and maintain state buildings and infrastructure. This year, MnSCU is requesting \$278.7 million in bonding appropriations; \$110 million for Higher Education Asset Preservation and Repair (HEAPR), and \$168.7 million for

25 specific building projects. HEAPR projects are for items like roof repairs, boiler replacements, etc., and are the systems highest priority. IFO supports the MnSCU request.

The bonding bill appears to be floundering, and MnSCU's request is not doing well. Back in January, the Governor recommended only \$111 million for MnSCU, of which \$20 million is for HEAPR. The House bonding bill [H.F.2622, 2nd Engrossment](#) is even more disappointing—they proposed only \$56.5 million for MnSCU, of which \$20 million is for HEAPR. The best proposal this year (in terms of MnSCU projects) is the Senate bill [S.F.2577, 1st Engrossment](#) which calls for \$127 million for MnSCU, including \$32 million for HEAPR. [Here](#) is a side by side comparison of the bonding proposals.

Bonding bills require a 3/5 vote to pass (81 votes in the House, and 41 votes in the Senate). Therefore, the bonding bill needs bipartisan support to pass. When the bonding bill was passed out of committee to the House floor, Democrats offered a minority report to increase the funding, particularly for MnSCU, for which they proposed \$170.7 million and \$35 million for HEAPR. The minority report was tabled, but the majority report passed by only a 68-61 vote—far short of the 81 votes necessary to pass the bill. The bonding bill is still awaiting floor consideration, but unless more projects are added, it looks like it will have a hard time getting to votes for passage. The Senate bonding bill is also awaiting action on the Senate floor. Some Senate Democrats are alleging that projects for Democrat districts are not being included in retaliation for their bringing an ethics complaint against Sen. Geoff Michelle of Edina. Regardless of the validity of the allegations, it appears the bonding bill may have a hard time getting the bipartisan support necessary to pass the Senate.

Higher Education Bills

Both the House and Senate Higher Education bills are out of committee and awaiting action on the floor. There is not much to the Higher Education bills this year. Neither bill contains any increases or decreases in operating funds. IFO is supportive of both bills.

The Senate bill [S.F.1573, 2nd Engrossment](#) includes some language requested by students on textbook sales, and sets up a workgroup within MnSCU to study ways to reduce the cost of textbooks for students. It increases the amount of revenue bonds that MnSCU can issue from \$300 million to \$405 million. Revenue bonds are used to build revenue generating projects such as dorms and student unions, and the bonds are repaid by revenue generated by the project. The Senate bill also contains a provision to allow MnSCU to use reserves and tuition to keep operating in case of another government shutdown. During the government shutdown last summer the Governor did allow MnSCU to keep operating, and no one challenged that decision.

The House bill [H.F.2065, 2nd Engrossment](#) has similar provisions on revenue bonding and textbook sales, however the House dropped the provision dealing with keeping MnSCU operating during a government shutdown. The House bill includes an amendment by Rep. Gene Pelowski, and backed by IFO, that would prevent the Board of Teaching or MnSCU from requiring students to pay a fee (estimated at \$300) for a Teacher Performance Assessment that is being used by BOT to evaluate the teacher preparation programs.

Right to Work (RTW) Constitutional Amendment

The proposed RTW constitutional amendment would require unions to represent non-union members of the bargaining unit, but could not charge the non-union members any fees or assessments for the services they receive. The unions, including IFO, vigorously opposed this proposed amendment. The Senate author of the RTW amendment, Sen. Dave Thompson of Lakeville, was successful in getting the bill moved from the Jobs and Economic Development Committee (where it faced opposition) to the Judiciary Committee. Following a huge turnout for the Judiciary Committee hearing, during which approximately 1,000 opponents flooded the halls of the Capitol, the Judiciary Committee passed the bill 7-6, and sent it on to the Rules Committee, which will decide when and if the bill reaches the floor for a vote of the full Senate. Democrats are solidly against the RTW bill. We have three Republican Senators—Sen. Jeremy Miller of Winona, Sen. John Carlson of Bemidji, and Sen. Bill Ingebrigtsen of Alexandria, who are publicly on record as opposing the bill—several others, are uncommitted. We only need one more vote to kill the bill in the Senate. The last we heard, Senate Majority Leader Dave Senjem said he didn't think there were enough votes to pass RTW.

In the House, RTW has still not moved through the committee process. We need five Republicans to join the Democrats to kill the bill. So far we have identified four Republicans opposed to RTW, including Rep. Morrie Lanning of Moorhead, Rep. Tony Cornish of Good Thunder, Rep. Steve Smith of Mound, and Rep. Jim Abler of Anoka. There are also several uncommitted Republicans.

The RTW bills appear to be in limbo at the moment, with not enough votes to pass, but enough support that it may still be brought up in the final days of the session.

Voter Photo ID Constitutional Amendment

The proposed constitutional amendment to require voters to have a government issued voter photo ID passed both the House and Senate earlier this month, and it will be on the ballot this fall. The vote was along straight party lines (Republicans for/Democrats against) except for Sen. Jeremy Miller (R-Winona) who voted against the proposed amendment. Supporters contend the constitutional amendment is necessary to protect the integrity of elections. Opponents (including the IFO) claim it will suppress voting among the elderly, minorities, and students by creating a complicated system that would make same day voter registration, and voting by mail nearly impossible. They point out that there are no known cases of voter fraud by false identification in Minnesota. The only state that has passed a constitutional amendment requiring a government issued voter ID to vote is Mississippi.

Voters will have the final say on this issue.

Pension Bill—In Good Shape for Now

At the start of the legislative session, public employee unions were worried about two sets of issues before the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement (LCPR). The first was ideas being studied to change defined benefit pension plans (like TRA) into either defined contribution plans (like IRAP) or some sort of hybrid of the two types of plans. The second issue was proposals by Rep. King Banaian and others to cut the assumed long term interest rate that the public pension plans would earn on their assets in the future from the current 8.5% to either 8% or even 7.5%.

The proposal to move from defined benefit pension plans to a hybrid plan never made it into the Pension Bill, thanks largely to the efforts of Rep. Morrie Lanning (R-Moorhead) who was the Chair of the LCPR. Lanning promised to hold a hearing on the issue during the interim, but no legislation would be forthcoming this session.

The interest rate assumption was a more contentious issue. Currently the Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) assumes a long term 8.5% rate of return on its \$23.3 billion of assets. TRA is quick to point out that the assumption should be based on very long term periods (30 to 50 years), and its long term rates of return have been exceeding the target. The State Board of Investment returns on pension investments have averaged 8.8% annually for the last 20 years, 8.9% annually for the last 25 years, and 10.1% annually since 1980. What is important to realize in making comparisons between funds nationally is they don't all have the same mix of assets, and have different historical returns. The annualized returns on TRA investments have been about .4% higher than the national average.

The consequences of dropping the assumption from 8.5% to 8.0% are huge. TRAs projected liabilities would increase by \$1.3 billion. Its funding ratio would drop from 78% to 73.5%. Most important to faculty and teachers, the required increase in contributions to keep the fund on course to full funding would be 3.2% of salary! That would be on top of the 2% increase in both employer and employee contributions being phased in to cover the stabilization of the TRA fund that passed in 2010.

Rep. Lanning proposed a compromise on the interest rate issue that would lower the rate to 8% for five years, and then return it to 8.5%. This would give the LCPR five years to observe whether market returns resume their historical pattern, and then they could make adjustments. Lanning's approach has the support of the pension fund managers and 8 of the 10 LCPR members. IFO supports Lanning's compromise.

When the Senate State Government Innovation Committee heard the 2012 Omnibus Pension Bill (HF 2199/SF 1808), it approved an amendment offered by Sen. Ted Daley (R-Eden Prairie) that would have cut the long term

interest rate assumption to 8%. However, following a flurry of lobbying by unions, the Senate Finance Committee voted to remove the Daley amendment, and they sent the Pension Bill to the Floor in the same shape it came out of the LCPR.

If either the House or the Senate vote to put the Daley amendment back in the Pension Bill (or the Banaian amendment that is very similar to the Daley amendment), IFO and other unions will ask Governor Dayton to veto the bill—there is nothing essential in the bill that needs to pass this year.

The Vikings Stadium

The final hang-up of the legislative session has nothing to do with higher education—it is a proposed \$1 billion stadium for the Vikings. There have been several sights and many funding schemes discussed, but none of the proposals seem to have enough traction to pass. This issue could drag the session on to the May 21st constitutional deadline for adjournment.

SEGIP DEPENDENT VERIFICATION AUDIT DEADLINE APPROACHING

Faculty who cover spouses or other dependents under the State's health and/or dental insurance plans are reminded that the State Employee Group Insurance Program (SEGIP) is conducting an audit to verify dependent eligibility for coverage, as required by legislation passed by the state legislature last year. HMS Employer Solutions (HMS), an outside contractor based in Indiana, has been hired by the state to perform the audit.

Faculty members and other state workers have until May 11, 2012, to provide required documentation regarding their enrolled dependents. **Failure to submit required documentation may result in dependent coverage being dropped.**

Your university, MnSCU, SEGIP and Minnesota Management & Budget will not answer questions about the audit or qualifying documentation.. You must contact the HMS Customer Center Monday through Friday between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. at 1-866-832-6622.

Notice of Vacancy IFO ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COORDINATOR

The Inter Faculty Organization is seeking a qualified Minnesota state university faculty member to serve in a **one-half release time (12 credits) position as Academic Affairs Coordinator for the 2012-2013 academic year** to complete the term currently held by Dr. Nancy Johnson Black, who has been elected as state IFO President, beginning her new term of office on July 1, 2012.

This is one of two half-time Academic Affairs Coordinator positions. The second position is currently held by Dr. Donna Brauer (Mankato), who has been reappointed for a full two-year term for 2012-2014. For more information, please click [here](#).

IFO'S FIRST ELECTRONIC ELECTION

The IFO held its first statewide electronic election this spring in response to a 2010 Delegate Assembly resolution calling for electronic voting for union elections. Many thanks to the IFO Presidential Election Committee (PEC) and IFO staff who did a great deal of work evaluating voting systems, selecting a vendor, and working with the vendor and campus Faculty Associations to make the election go as smoothly as possible.

The PEC will continue to operate through next fall as they analyze the 2012 election and look for ways to improve the process before our next election. To that end, IFO members will be receiving an invitation to participate in IFO election survey soon. It is our intention to make the voting process as user friendly as possible while preserving the security of a secret ballot election. Your participation in both the election and survey is appreciated. In the meantime, if you have comments, please email them to election@ifo.org.

CONTACT US

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