

Inter Faculty Organization

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Don Larsson and Roland Specht-Jarvis Seek IFO Presidency

Update Special Edition

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On Tuesday, April 13, 2010, the IFO will elect a new statewide IFO president. Each campus will conduct its own election—so [contact your local faculty association office](#) if you have questions concerning the time and location of voting on your campus. [All polls must close by 4:00 p.m.](#) All IFO members are eligible to vote.

Rod Henry, the current IFO president is not seeking re-election. Thus far, Don Larsson of Minnesota State University, Mankato and Roland Specht-Jarvis of St. Cloud State University have announced their candidacy.

Below are statements from each of the candidates giving their backgrounds, goals, and positions on the issues.

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[Don Larsson](#)

[Roland Specht-Jarvis](#)

Don Larsson

Dear IFO Colleagues,

I am a candidate for state IFO President this year. I will be visiting each of the state university campuses in the coming weeks, and this document is a way of introducing myself ahead of time. I know, however, that I will not have the chance to meet many of you face-to-face, so I hope that you will contact me with your own questions by email. I would appreciate your support in the April election.

WHO AM I?

I was born in 1949 in Presque Isle, Maine (almost as cold as International Falls). I was raised in Manchester, Connecticut, near Hartford. I am the son of a teacher and a machinist for Pratt & Whitney Aircraft, who could in that era afford to send my brother and me to private colleges whose tuitions are now among the most expensive in the country. I understand the frustrations of families like my own who now wonder how they will afford to send their own children on to higher education.

My undergraduate education was at The George Washington University in the District of Columbia, just a few blocks from the White House, during the turbulent years of 1967-1971. An opponent of the Vietnam War, I nonetheless found myself after graduation in the Army, where I served as a Correctional Specialist at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, until the summer of 1973.

In 1973, I began my graduate education (M.A., Ph.D.) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where I came to love the Upper Midwest. In 1975, I joined the UW Teaching Assistants Association—the first T.A. union in the country—because of its commitment to teachers' rights and the quality of our students' education. State law did not allow the TAA to bargain for wages, but in 1980 we went on strike to protect those principles. After five weeks on picket lines and without pay, we lost.

In Fall 1980, I started my first full-time university teaching job at UW-Eau Claire, which restored my faith in public higher education. That spring, I applied for a tenure-track position in the English Department at what was then Mankato State University, and I have been here ever since. I have been an IFO member for all that time too because of our own union's commitment to teachers' rights and the quality of our students' education and because of our Faculty Association's evolving role in shared governance at our campus.

At Mankato, I have served as the Director of our small Humanities Program and as Chair of our large English Department. I have served on many university committees, including many years on the Faculty Association Executive Committee. I have served as FA campus Vice President, and I have now been President of the Mankato Faculty Association for nearly three years.

I became even more sharply aware of the changes in American higher education that are now rapidly accelerating when I co-directed Mankato's self-studies for a focused visit in 2000 and for the 2006 re-accreditation visit by the Higher Learning Commission. In 2002, intrigued by the changes that were underway in the HLC, I became a member of the Commission's Peer Review Corps. I have since participated in four accreditation team visits to colleges and universities outside Minnesota and served as a consultant to three other universities in their accreditation efforts.

I understand very well the incredible good fortune that I have had in my life and in my time at Mankato. I hope to continue to justify that fortune through further service to the IFO and the faculty of the Minnesota state universities.

10 OF MY GOALS & PRINCIPLES AS IFO PRESIDENT

- Promote, defend and explain the role of public higher education in Minnesota and the role of Minnesota's state universities. We have been an afterthought—in the media, in the legislature, and even in MnSCU—for far too long!
- Seek partnerships and alliances with students, other bargaining units and other groups that will help the IFO to advance the cause of public higher education and of the state university faculty
- Promote the recognition of the state university faculty as key “stakeholders” in MnSCU and in Minnesota's higher education systems. Colleges and universities cannot exist without students, but they cannot operate without faculty. Administrations at their best provide direction and support for faculty. Everything else is secondary.
- Protect and defend the contract as the rule book for how faculty and administration should work together
- Protect, defend and promote the rights of state university faculty under the contract on each campus and in the MnSCU system, including the right to fair and equitable pay and benefits
- Protect, defend and promote traditional academic principles such as tenure and academic freedom while responding to new needs and demands within a rapidly changing landscape in higher education
- Protect, defend and promote the roles of state university faculty as those who can best understand student needs and create or find the best ways to provide learning
- Protect, defend and promote the rights and roles of state university faculty as creators, researchers and producers of knowledge
- Protect, defend and promote the rights and roles of state university faculty as providers of service to our

local, state, national, global, and academic communities

- For the IFO and for MnSCU, maximize the potential benefits of a statewide system, but give each campus and its faculty members as much autonomy as possible to fulfill their own roles and find their own solutions

SOME LOOMING QUESTIONS AND ISSUES FOR THE IFO

- The projected budget “cliff” of a \$5.8 billion state deficit in Fiscal Years 2012-2013 could be a disaster for MnSCU, the state universities and the IFO. What role can the union play that will best preserve the rights, pay and benefits of faculty while helping our campuses and their faculty members to prepare for the worst? Are there opportunities that the IFO faculty can seize in this coming crisis?
- Long ago, the state of Minnesota abandoned its promise to fund two-thirds of the cost of students’ education in its public colleges and universities. More and more of that cost has been pushed onto the students through higher tuition. It is unlikely that the state will ever return to keep its broken promise. What are the long-term implications of this trend, for students and for faculty?
- High school graduation rates in Minnesota have started to decline and will continue to do so for nearly a decade. At the same time, new groups of potential students have particular needs in preparing for higher education, and they will need new resources and support in order to succeed. What role can the IFO take to help our faculty members prepare to meet those needs?
- There will be ongoing pressure from state legislators, students and system bureaucrats for increasing uniformity and “seamlessness” among MnSCU’s colleges and universities. How are state university faculty and the IFO best poised to help to increase system efficiency and meet student needs while maintaining and advancing our distinctive individual campus identities and missions?
- The role of technology in higher education continues to grow while everyone struggles to keep up with that growth and understand its implications. We have faculty on all of our campuses who are creating ways to use that technology to advance our roles in learning, research and service. How can the IFO help such faculty to provide grass-roots answers to system problems instead of having MnSCU impose system “solutions” to questions that don’t need to be answered?
- In less than two years’ time, Minnesota will have a new governor and a newly-elected legislature and MnSCU will have a new Chancellor. Other state bargaining units (MSCF, AFSCME, MAPE) are gigantic by comparison to the IFO. How can we best make our voices heard and our issues known to these policy-makers?
- MSU Mankato is set to lose 80 equivalent faculty positions in a little over a year, and the IFO will lose those faculty union dues and Fair Share fees. Even if other campuses avoid actual retrenchment, we can still expect that the overall number of state university faculty will shrink in the next few years. This will come at a time when the IFO will need to increase its lobbying and its faculty services. How can the union meet greater demands while its own revenue base is shrinking?

I believe that together we can find answers to these questions!

C.V. available at <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/larsson/larssoncv2010.htm>

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Roland Specht-Jarvis

Dear Colleagues!

Please allow me to introduce myself as a candidate for the IFO presidency. I began my work for St. Cloud State University in 1983, and have remained in the system since that time as faculty, department chairperson, Q7 statewide chair, study abroad director and college dean.

I have witnessed how the deteriorating funding for seven State universities has put stress on the programs and

curriculum, and how the work of faculty members has become more demanding over time. In today's classroom, we are not just professors, but also our own IT specialists, document and image-processing staff, active campus citizens, and mentors to countless students and peers. Despite the excellent work from the faculty, despite the dedication it took to secure new hires, to welcome newcomers and to support their faculty development, we are faced with losing many of them in the announced or expected retrenchment actions on State University Campuses.

I want to make sure that MnSCU and all State universities honor our Agreement, and make decisions that are well-considered and fair, humane and acceptable to those affected, and in the best interest of students and faculty alike. I will visit the campuses in the next few days before the Delegate Assembly and address solutions to some of these challenges. During those visits, I hope to learn from you what your local issues and concerns are, and how I can serve you best.

As IFO president, I expect to address:

- your local needs and concerns
- retrenchment issues, grievances
- protecting the integrity of academic programs
- workload and pay issues; the next negotiations
- solidarity and improved collaboration between smaller and large campuses; maintaining all campuses to provide student access across Minnesota
- lobbying for IFO members at the Legislature
- helping MnSCU to adopt leaner management

Please vote for me and allow me to apply my managerial experience on behalf of IFO members. I have protected and improved faculty working conditions here at SCSU, and bring experience from running a small company, securing substantial external funding in international directorships and on campus, and participating on the State and local levels in grievances and arbitration.

Thank you for your consideration!
Roland Specht-Jarvis

<http://roland-for-ifo-president.blogspot.com/>

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](#).