

The UPDATE

*Newsletter for the
faculty of the seven
Minnesota state
universities.*

Fiscal Year 15- No. 1
August-2014

Bemidji ♦ Mankato ♦ Metropolitan ♦ Moorhead ♦ Southwest ♦ St. Cloud ♦ Winona

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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Everyone to Reap Benefits from the Contract Agreement (Tentative)

BY JIM GRABOWSKA IFO PRESIDENT, grabowska@ifo.org

On behalf of all IFO staff and your colleagues who work to make your university a great place to be, welcome back to a new academic year!

While many of you took some needed time away from the classroom, other colleagues and all IFO staff were hard at work planning for the coming year, solving problems and, in the case of your negotiating team, arriving at a tentative agreement with MnSCU management. Purely in terms of economics, this settlement ranks second in IFO history. Be sure to thank your negotiators for all their hard work.

You can find the new salary grids, a summary of the contract changes and the text of the language changes at <http://ifo.org/contract-benefits/contract/contract-settlement-13-15/>.

The IFO Board of Directors has voted to recommend ratification of the proposed 2013-2015 contract.

Everyone represented by the IFO will reap some benefit from this new agreement, should it pass. We will be the first state employee union to have 6 weeks of paid parental leave as part of our contract; adjunct & community faculty will receive raises similar to

those of tenure-track colleagues; professional development dollars will continue; career steps will remain in place and there will be new steps at the top of the scale, in addition to well-deserved raises for all of our continuing faculty. Faculty entering the system on a probationary line next year will receive a 3-credit workload reassignment. This and the parental leave have been negotiating goals for nearly 20 years.

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IFO PRESIDENT'S FALL CAMPUS VISIT SCHEDULE:

- Metropolitan – 8/15, 2:30 p.m., MEC Building, Room M2700
- Winona – 8/19, 8:30 a.m., Kryzsko Commons
- Mankato – 8/20, 8:30 a.m., Heritage Room, CSU 101
- St. Cloud – 8/20, 3:30 p.m., Cascade Room, Atwood Memorial Center
- Southwest – 8/21, 12:00 p.m., CH217
- Moorhead – 8/22, 12:00 p.m., CMU Ballroom
- Bemidji – 8/25, 4:00 p.m., Room TBD

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Everyone to Reap Benefits from the Contract Agreement if Passed (continued from page 2.)

Your Faculty Association Presidents spent several hours reviewing the details of the new agreement and have already planned, or will have very shortly, two informational meetings on the new agreement. I urge you to attend one, to ask questions and become informed about all the changes in preparation for balloting, which will take place the week of September 8th, ending at 4 p.m. on the 12th. Voting will only be open to people who are full members of the IFO. If you are not a member, you can join at www.ifo.org. You must be an IFO

member by noon on September 2 in order to vote on this tentative agreement, so if you are not sure of your membership status, please contact your FA President.

At the same time that we vote on the new contract, you will also be asked to vote on an amendment to our Constitution that will add a member from Metropolitan State to the IFO Board. Details on this amendment can be found on the IFO website, through the link titled "[Notice to Members: Proposed Amendment to the IFO Constitution.](#)"

Each eligible voter will receive a packet in the mail providing credentials and voting instructions. Voting packets will be mailed on Friday, September 5, 2014. Once you receive your packet, you will be able to vote at work or home, or anywhere you can access the election website. **You may use your university computer to vote.**

The IFO is effective because of its members and our excellent staff. We need you to be involved: attend one of the meetings on the contract, vote, and have a great year!

CONTRACT ✓ VOTE

Voting on Contract Ratification and Constitutional Amendment

BY DONNA LYNN BLAKE, CONTROLLER, blake@ifo.org

An election by electronic ballot will be held to decide two matters:

- Whether to ratify the proposed 2013-2015 contract (proposed contract details available on the IFO website at <http://ifo.org/contract-benefits/contract-contract-settlement-13-15/>);

and

- Whether to amend the IFO Constitution to add a second member from Metropolitan State University to the IFO Board of Directors (proposed amendment details available on the IFO website at <http://ifo.org/metro-amendment-language/>).

When is the election?

The election website will be open from September 8, 2014 (beginning at 12:01 A.M.) through September 12, 2014 (ending at 4:00 P.M.).

Who can vote?

Only full members of the IFO union are eligible to vote in this election. If you are not currently an IFO union member and want to vote in this election, the IFO must receive your membership application by NOON on September 2, 2014. You may apply for IFO membership on line either at <http://ifo.org/join-ifo> or by clicking on the "Join IFO, Click Here" link at the top of the IFO home page at www.ifo.org.

Voting on Contract Ratification and Constitutional Amendment (continued from page 2.)

How can you determine if you are a member of the IFO union?

On your paycheck stub is a “union deduction” item. If it says “IFO,” you are an IFO union member. If it says “IFO FS,” you are not a member. If you have any questions, contact your faculty association office or send an email to the IFO membership coordi-

nator Donna Lynn Blake (Blake@ifo.org) to check your membership status.

The electronic voting

Each eligible voter will receive a packet in the mail providing credentials and voting instructions. Voting packets will be mailed on Friday, September 5, 2014. Once you receive your packet, you will be able to vote at work or home, or anywhere you can

access the election website. You may use your university computer to vote.

If you are an IFO union member and you do not receive your voting packet at your home address by Thursday, September 11, 2014, contact Donna Lynn Blake at the IFO (Blake@ifo.org).

Voting closes at 4:00 P.M. on Friday, September 12, 2014.

New Amendment Up for a Vote

BY DONNA LYNN BLAKE, CONTROLLER, blake@ifo.org

A new constitutional amendment on Article VIII was approved for a membership vote by the 2014 Delegate Assembly as follows :

Article VIII: IFO Board of Directors

Section 1. Membership: The IFO Board of Directors shall consist of the IFO President, the presidents of the local Faculty Associations and director(s)-at-large from and elected by each local Faculty Association according to the following limits:

Bemidji	2
Mankato	3
Metropolitan	2
Moorhead	2
St. Cloud	3
Southwest	1
Winona	2

Explanation: The current FA board member representation numbers were established in April 1977. Since that date, Metropolitan State's faculty has grown to the third largest faculty among the seven campuses. While Metro State in no way wishes to ask for any

reductions for representation from other campuses, it is clear this growth has led to the need for an additional board member for Metro State to reflect this change. Passage of this amendment will increase the IFO Board by one member. Metro State's membership rate is also among the highest in the system. Since high membership rates are key to the IFO and its future, reflecting the growth and high membership rates at Metro with an additional Board member is clearly needed. Fairness dictates that Metro State should be allowed a second Board representative, as other campuses with fewer members already have.

(According to the IFO Constitution, this proposed amendment may be adopted by a majority affirmative vote of the IFO members voting and a majority affirmative vote on a majority of the campuses. **The vote will be held in conjunction with the contract ratification vote on Monday September 8th through Friday, September 12th):** <http://ifo.org/metro-amendment-language/>



IFO Sponsors Retirement Workshops

BY RUSS STANTON, IFO DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, stanton@ifo.org

New/Newly Tenured Faculty Retirement Workshops

All new faculty members have one year from the date of hire to select either the Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) or the Individual Retirement Account Plan (IRAP) as their basic retirement plan. The decision a faculty member makes can mean the difference of thousands of dollars per year in contributions, and hundreds of thousands in retirement income, and is irrevocable unless a faculty member receives tenure. The choice can also dramatically affect portability of retirement benefits if a faculty member changes jobs. While both TRA and IRAP are good plans, they are designed for very different career patterns, and the plan that best fits a particular faculty member will vary depending on past pension coverage and/or anticipated future employment.

If a new faculty member has previous service under a Minnesota defined benefit plan such as the TRA, the Minnesota State Retirement System (MSRS), or the Public Employee Retirement Association (PERA), the default plan they will be covered by if they don't make a choice is TRA. For most new faculty members, who do not have TRA, MSRS, or PERA, the default plan if they do not make a choice is IRAP.

Because of legislation the IFO succeeded in lobbying through the legislature a few years ago, newly tenured faculty in IRAP get a second one year window of opportunity to switch to TRA.

To help faculty members sort out which plan is best suited for them, I conduct workshops on each of the campuses each fall. At the workshops, I compare the IRAP and TRA plans feature by feature, explaining the differences in contributions, vesting, portability, risk, early retirement penalties, and withdrawal options. I also go over

supplemental retirement, and the Tax Sheltered Annuity and Deferred Compensation plans, and explains the differences between the Traditional and Roth versions of those plans.

In addition to the workshops, I will meet individually with any new or newly tenured faculty member to go over their particular retirement concerns. To schedule an individual appointment, simply contact your local faculty association president or office. <http://ifo.org/support-contacts>

The workshops and individual appointments are free. IFO does not sell or endorse any products or services. The workshops are simply a service to the membership. A schedule of the times that I will be on each campus can be found by clicking [here](#).

Workshops for Faculty Nearing Retirement

The deadline for faculty to give notice of retirement in order to get certain retirement benefits, such as the final year two-step increase and the early separation incentive, is October 15th for a retirement to be effective after the academic year and before the start of the next academic year. Faculty seeking to enter phased retirement or the Annuitant Employment Program next fall must also submit their letter of application by October 15th of this year.

During September and early October, I will be conducting workshops on each of the campuses. The workshops cover a variety of retirement related subjects, including:

- The final year two step increase for giving early notice
- The Early Separation Incentive

Continued on next page.



IFO Sponsors Retirement Workshops continued.

- Severance pay
- Supplemental Retirement
- TRA acceleration and annuitization options
- The tax free Health Care Savings Plan
- Phased retirement and the Annuitant Employment Program
- Retiree healthcare options
- Paid up life insurance options
- The impact of the new IFO/MnSCU contract agreement on retirement benefits

I will also meet with any faculty member who wants to discuss his or her particular retirement concerns. You can schedule an individual half hour appointment with me by calling your local faculty association president or office ([link](#)). Again, the workshops and individual appointments are free. IFO does not sell or endorse any products or services. Click [here](#) for the dates that I will be on each campus.

MEMBERSHIP

IFO Member Dues and Fairshare Fees Information

BY DONNA LYNN BLAKE, CONTROLLER/MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR, blake@ifo.org

FY15 IFO member dues and fairshare fees payroll deductions will start for most faculty on their 9/19/14 paycheck. If you don't have a union deduction taken from this paycheck, you should see one start in the next few paychecks. If not, please contact me at blake@ifo.org.

You may also choose to pay your member dues or fairshare fees in one lump sum by mailing in a check payment for the full amount of your dues/fees by September 1st to the following address:

Inter Faculty Organization
Attn: Membership
490 Concordia Avenue, Suite 125
St. Paul, MN 55103

The FY15 member dues and fair share fees rates that were approved by the

IFO Delegate Assembly can be found on our membership webpage at www.ifo.org/membership-information. Most full-time and part-time faculty will have 16 payments deducted and adjunct and community faculty will have 3 payments deducted. If you have any questions about when your deductions will start or stop, or what amount will be deducted, please contact me at blake@ifo.org.

If you would like to join the union, you can sign up for instant membership by using our convenient online membership application found on our membership webpage (link shown above), or by clicking on the "Join IFO" link at the top of the home page www.ifo.org. Please note that you must join the union by noon Tuesday, September 2, 2014, if you want to vote on the contract.

If you would like to check on the status of your membership, you can contact me at blake@ifo.org.

IFO MEMBER ID CARDS

All faculty that have joined the union should have received an IFO member ID card when they joined. If you did not receive a member ID card, please let me know. New members who have recently joined should allow 1-2 weeks processing time for their new member ID card to arrive. If you have had a name change and would like a new member ID card, or have misplaced your original member ID card and would like a replacement card, please contact me at blake@ifo.org.

JOIN TODAY

To join the union, you can sign up instantly by using the convenient online membership application found on the membership webpage www.ifo.org/membership-information, or by clicking on the “Join IFO” link at the top of the home page www.ifo.org. To check on the status of your membership, contact Donna Blake at blake@ifo.org.

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](#).