

Inter Faculty Organization

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

Faculty Update Newsletter

Volume XXX No. 9

www.ifo.org

April 2008

IN THIS ISSUE

- [Notes from the President](#)
- [Rod Henry Elected IFO President 2008-10](#)
- [D2L Alert](#)
- [Legislative Update](#)
 - [IFO Contract Passes Legislature](#)
 - [Bonding Bill Becomes Law - After Vetoes](#)
 - [Common Course Numbering Bill Fails to Pass](#)
 - [IFO Pension Bills Pass Commission](#)
 - [Budget Balancing Bill in Conference Committee](#)
- [IFO Honors Unions Members' Service to the IFO at Delegate Assembly](#)
- [IFO Seeking One Part-Time Academic Affairs Coordinator](#)

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

by [Nancy Black](#), IFO President

Dear Colleagues:

Congratulations to Professor Roderick Henry of Bemidji State University on his election as IFO President on April 8, 2008. Given his many years of service and contributions both on the Bemidji campus and state-wide, Rod will hit the ground running on July 1, 2008. The IFO is fortunate to have such a capable leader step forward and be elected to this position.

My thanks to all the faculty delegates who attended the 17th Delegate Assembly of the Inter Faculty Organization on March 28 and 29th. From this organization's roots in 1938 when it was a group of loosely allied campus organizations representing the five existing state colleges, we have grown into a united force in higher education in Minnesota with more than 3,500 faculty in our unit at seven state universities. As always, it was a lively session in which a good deal of IFO business took place. Many staff and faculty made this event run smoothly, but I particularly want to express our gratitude to Jeff Ringer, our parliamentarian from St. Cloud State University. Again this year, Administrative Assistant and Membership Coordinator Cindy Finch made this event happen for the organization. Well done Cindy!

I am delighted to inform you that we have successfully completed our search for General Counsel to the IFO. Connie Howard will be joining us on April 21, 2008, and has more than two decades of experience successfully representing unions and individual employees. She was named one of the top 100 women lawyers in Minnesota by *Minnesota Law & Politics* in 2006 and 2007 and also named a "Minnesota Super Lawyer" from 2000 through 2007 by them. Among other duties, she will be monitoring developments impacting higher education and keeping the organization apprised of important matters including, but not

limited to, intellectual property, tenure, performance or merit pay, and trends involving part-time faculty. In addition, she will be serving as primary staff advising the IFO Contract Negotiations team, and along with other staff will be providing training to campus officers. This latter task is especially needed because of the new IFO/MnSCU contract. Staff members Patrice Arseneault and Tiffany Nelson have been shouldering the work of three staff over the past several months, and Connie, Pat and Tiffany will become an excellent team for this organization. We owe an enormous amount of gratitude for the efforts of Pat and Tiffany, and warmly welcome Connie to the staff.

April has been “the cruelest month” this spring. Let’s hope for sunny skies as we head into commencement.

ROD HENRY ELECTED IFO PRESIDENT 2008-2010

In an election held April 8th, Rod Henry was elected to a two-year term as the statewide president of the IFO. He will assume office on July 1st. He will succeed Nancy Black who served two terms as IFO president, and who could not seek a third term because of term limits.

Henry teaches in the Business Administration Department at Bemidji State University. He was Chief Negotiator for the IFO during the last two rounds of negotiations. He has held many other posts within the IFO, including Co-chair of the first Salary Equity Committee and President of the Bemidji State University Faculty Association.

Complete election results are posted [here](#). Rod was unopposed. Those who attended the Delegate Assembly and who heard his tirade against his chief rival, “Nobody,” may note that “Nobody” received only five votes in the election.

D2L ALERT

Faculty should be hearing shortly about the proposed upgrades to D2L. The [IMS Advisory Council](#) is finalizing their communication to you that will include dates in which D2L will be down for approximately 80 hours in early June 2008.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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

IFO Contract Passes Legislature

The bill to ratify five managerial plans and ten public employee union contracts, including the IFO 2007-09 contract, has passed the legislature and is on its way to the Governor for his signature.

Passage of the bill had been held up until March 18th because the MnSCU Board of Trustees had not yet approved the negotiated agreements. Within hours after the Board of Trustees approval, the bill passed the Minnesota House of Representatives by a vote of 128 to 1. In the Senate the bill was held up while the Senate waited for the outcome of the contract vote by the membership of the Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF), the two-year faculty within MnSCU. On April 7th, the Senate gave the bill its second reading and passage, and on April 10th the bill received final passage in the Senate, by a vote of 62 to 2. On April 14th, the House re-passed the bill with the MSCF contract included and sent it to the Governor. The Governor now has up to three business days to sign or veto the bill; if he does nothing the bill becomes law without his signature.

The IFO 2007-09 contract can be found at the IFO web page at www.ifo.org. A spreadsheet comparing the IFO settlement to other state contracts can be found [here](#).

Bonding Bill Becomes Law—After Vetoes

On April 7th, Governor Pawlenty signed the 2008 Bonding Bill into law, but only after he reduced the \$925 million bill to \$717 million by line item vetoing numerous projects throughout the bill.

The legislature had passed a \$281 million bonding authorization for MnSCU. The Governor vetoed six MnSCU projects worth a total of \$47 million, leaving a final MnSCU authorization of \$234,228,000. Among the projects vetoed were a \$4.9 million project at Metropolitan State for classrooms, and an \$8.8 million authorization to purchase the old high school in Bemidji.

The good news is that the \$234 million in projects that passed represents the largest bonding appropriation in history for MnSCU. We can thank the legislature for that—the Governor had originally proposed only \$123 million for MnSCU, and thanks to Sen. Keith Langseth and Rep. Alice Hausman, the authors of the bills, as well as campus area legislators, MnSCU gained \$111 million over the Governor's request as the bill proceeded through the legislature. Please take a moment to [thank legislators](#) for their support of the bonding bill.

Originally the Governor had proposed using \$416 million of the bonding bill to borrow money for roads and bridges. However, when the legislature passed the gas tax and transportation funding bill, and then overrode the Governor's veto on the bill, it freed up hundreds of millions of dollars for other projects. MnSCU was one of the prime beneficiaries of that move.

For an itemized list of the MnSCU projects that made it into law, click [here](#).

Common Course Numbering Bill Fails to Pass

The legislative bill to require MnSCU to develop a common course numbering system for credit transfer did not make it into either the House or Senate higher education bills. A rapid response e-mail campaign from faculty members to legislators appears to have changed legislative support for the measure. In fact, one of the original authors changed her mind and removed her name from the bill. Over the summer MnSCU plans to have a task force explore less drastic ways to improve credit transfer. The common course numbering bill appears to have emanated from the students at two year institutions; state university students opposed the bill.

IFO Pension Bills Pass Commission

Several pension measures proposed by the IFO passed the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement on April 9th.

The first bill would require MnSCU to exercise due diligence to find the owners of abandoned IRAP and Supplemental Retirement Accounts. These are usually small amounts (on average about \$6,000) left by faculty members who quit and moved away, and MnSCU has lost track of them. In some cases, the former faculty member died and MnSCU cannot locate heirs. The bill says that if MnSCU cannot find the owners of the accounts after five years, the money is placed in a reserve account and invested. The interest from the reserve account is used to offset administrative fees charged to faculty participants in the retirement plans. If a former faculty member or heir is later found, their account is restored.

The second piece of legislation would allow faculty members to have access to their Supplemental Retirement funds while in phased retirement. We have such a provision in our contract, but it conflicts with a law prohibiting withdrawals while an employee is still working. This legislation changes the law to allow what is permitted under the contract.

IFO has proposed to allow faculty members a second chance to choose between IRAP and TRA once they reach tenured status. TRA raised questions about whether such a choice could adversely impact the funding level of TRA and required contributions by other TRA members. Therefore, we proposed an amendment for a study by an actuary to determine the impact on TRA. The amendment passed. The study will be completed by next January.

Budget Balancing Bill in Conference Committee

The House and Senate have each passed bills proposing ways of making up the \$935 million state budget shortfall. The bills are now in a House/Senate Conference Committee that will resolve the differences between the House and Senate bills. The bill involves all of state government—higher education is just one small part of the budget balancing picture. The House bill calls for a \$6,173,000 (about 1%) cut from the MnSCU central office (\$5 million from technology specifically). The Senate bill calls for a \$6.5 million cut to the MnSCU central office, but adds back \$1.5 million to eliminate non-resident tuition at certain community colleges and to pick up tuition reciprocity costs. The Governor had proposed a \$26.6 million (unspecified) cut (about 4%) to the MnSCU system.

The legislature and the Governor are currently a ways apart on their approaches to balancing the budget. If they don't reach an agreement with the Governor, it is highly likely he will veto the bill. If that happens and the legislature adjourns, the Governor would be able to unallot appropriations to balance the budget (Minnesota has a constitutional requirement for a balanced budget). It would not be good for higher education if the legislature does not reach an agreement with the Governor on the budget. I think it is safe to assume, given the Governor's original proposals for balancing the budget, that if he gets the authority to unallot, higher education will get hit quite hard.

The legislature is required by the Constitution to adjourn by May 19th.

IFO HONORS UNION MEMBERS' SERVICE TO THE IFO AT DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

by [Patrice Arseneault](#), *Equity Advocate and Acting Director of Labor Relations*

At the March 28 Delegate Assembly banquet, two faculty members were honored by the IFO for their contributions by and for women faculty. The IFO also recognized the outstanding service of three IFO Negotiating Team members and the Chief Negotiator.

Chair of the IFO Feminist Issues Committee, Laurie Blunsom, presented the first award to **Saeed Moaveni**, a faculty member at MSU, Mankato in the Mechanical and Civil Engineering Department, in recognition of his contributions towards women's advancement. Dr. Moaveni was honored for his support and mentoring of female faculty in the engineering field. Dr. Moaveni's leadership in areas of diversity and equity and his advocacy on behalf of women in the field have contributed greatly towards women's advancement in MnSCU and in the engineering community.

Dr. Blunsom presented the IFO Award for Outstanding Contributions to the IFO by a Female Member to **Tamara Berg** for her service on Faculty Senate and on the Board of Directors of the Winona Women's Resource Center, as well as her service on the Gender Issues and Engaged Research, Teaching and Scholarship committees at WSU, and in recognition of Dr. Berg's longstanding membership and participation in the statewide IFO Feminist Issues Committee.

IFO President Nancy Black recognized the dedicated service of **Rod Henry** as Chief Negotiator for the past two rounds of extremely difficult negotiations with MnSCU.

President Elect and Chief Negotiator Rod Henry presented IFO awards to three IFO negotiating team members in honor of their contributions and extreme commitment in serving on the IFO negotiating team. **Chris Brown**, faculty member at Bemidji State University, was recognized for his continued service on the team since joining the 1995-97 contract negotiations. **John Tesch**, faculty member at MSU Moorhead, was presented an award for his many years of dedicated service on the IFO negotiating team from 1995 to 2007. **Bill Langen**, faculty member at St. Cloud State University, was honored for his contributions as an IFO negotiating team member from 2001 to 2008.

The IFO is especially grateful for the efforts of these faculty on behalf of their colleagues.

IFO SEEKING ONE PART-TIME ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COORDINATOR

REASSIGNED TIME OR COMPENSATION FOR THOSE ON LEAVE AVAILABLE TRAVEL EXPENSES REIMBURSED

Last March the IFO Board of Directors revised the Academic Affairs Coordinator's position. At this time we are seeking one faculty member to coordinate academic affairs on a part-time basis for the coming academic year (fall 2008 through spring 2010). Please see the description below for complete information.

Please contact your [Faculty Association President](#) or [Nancy Black](#), IFO president, for further information. **Send letters of interest to Donna Blake (blake@ifo.org)**. Review of applications begins April 21, 2008; position is open until filled. The Executive Committee will recommend selections at the April Board Meeting or request an extension for an e-mail vote.

Position Title: *Academic Affairs Coordinator*

Term of Position:

The position shall end on the last duty day of the 2009-10 academic year (two-year term). A summer stipend may be offered for the summer of 2008 and 2009.

Major Responsibilities:

1. Convene and co-chair meetings of the IFO Academic Affairs Committee (AAC). Keep the AAC informed about various MnSCU initiatives. Seek input from the AAC on IFO positions on academic issues. Work with the Government Relations Committee to advance legislative goals related to academic issues.
2. Under the direction of the President, serve as the IFO representative with respect to academic matters within MnSCU. Attend and report on IFO and MnSCU meetings dealing with academic matters. The two coordinators shall establish a master calendar of meetings and propose coverage.
3. Keep the President, Executive Committee, Board of Directors, Negotiating Team, and membership informed about academic matters involving the campuses, MnSCU and other state and national organizations. The coordinators shall meet with and give reports to the President, IFO Board of Directors, and Executive Committee on an established basis. Make recommendations to all of the above as appropriate. Shall attend statewide meet and confers.
4. Oversee Academic Affairs office and files at the IFO office. Includes responsibility for:
 - keeping records about and communication with IFO members of MnSCU committees to assure they are attending meetings and informed of IFO perspectives.
 - directing and providing information to IFO Website Coordinator on all committees including meeting agendas and notes for posting on the IFO website.
 - assuring records for all committees are organized and maintained at the IFO office.
5. The Academic Affairs Coordinators shall meet with the IFO President who will determine how the responsibilities will be shared between the two coordinators.

Compensation:

Academic Affairs Coordinators will be reassigned twelve (12) credits per year from their home institution. If on leave from home institution, the AAC will be compensated at regular duty day rate times 60 duty days. (By law may have to be paid as wages – withholding as required.) In addition, possible compensation of \$1,000 for the summer (for serving after July 1). Reimbursement of travel expenses as per IFO policy. No additional benefits.

Expertise:

Academic Affairs Coordinators should have experience/expertise in at least one of the following areas: technology; P-16 education issues; and, academic policies.

Knowledge of or willingness to learn the IFO MnSCU Contract is required.

Seeking Letters of Interest Indicating:

- interest in position;
- union experience;
- expertise relevant to position; and,
- whether reassigned time or duty day compensation is preferred.

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 address is 165 Western Avenue North, Suite 8, Saint Paul, MN 55102, or you can reach us by phone at 800/325-9644 or 651/227-8442. You can send us an email by clicking [here](#).