

Inter Faculty Organization

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NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

by [Nancy Black](#), IFO President

Dear Colleagues:

As this academic year comes to a close the old cliché “Time flies when you’re having a good time” comes into my mind. I have to say that this is quite possibly the fastest four years in my life as I end my second two-year term as IFO President.

I am proud of the Inter Faculty Organization accomplishments since July 2004, and have been privileged to work with so many dedicated and talented faculty and IFO staff. We should all have a sense of satisfaction from challenges we have faced and the positive results we produced by working in solidarity. Some of these include:

- the progress on improving faculty salaries which is our core responsibility. We had an 8.7% increase last contract, and an 11.2% increase now in the 2007-2009 agreement.
- the central IFO office reorganization in order to better serve the membership.
- maintaining the organization in solid financial shape. Our average dues went up but at a much lower percent than our salary increases.
- applied doctorates now being offered at Minnesota state universities with more being developed.
- two of the biggest bonding bills for improving our facilities being passed. Faculty often teach in these buildings for 30 years.
- the progress we are making on salary equity, slowly but surely.

- getting the Dream Act and benefits for Domestic Partners through the Minnesota State legislature only to lose them to Governor Pawlenty's veto. But we continue to persevere and one day they will happen. Major progress takes time and effort to achieve and we will not give up.

For me, one of the best parts of this responsibility has been meeting so many outstanding faculty across the state and working with the IFO staff. We have worked together to continue to make public higher education accessible and affordable while we maintain excellence. I appreciate the patience of all the visible and invisible people who helped me learn so much in order that I could better serve colleagues and students. It is gratifying to receive e-mails and notes from faculty recently. Thank you all.

I am writing this last **Notes from the President** as commencement is occurring at Metropolitan State University and will soon be held at other Minnesota state universities. Following my upcoming sabbatical year, I will be returning to Chair the Social Science Department there. I have missed my Metropolitan State University colleagues and students and am eager to rejoin them.

Commencement is time for celebration. My hope is that you enjoy and take pride in the excitement and fruits of your labor as more than 10,000 state university students graduate this spring. I am delighted that President-Elect Roderick Henry will be representing you beginning July 1, 2008; his talents and perspectives will serve us well.

My best wishes to you,

Nancy Johnson Black

A GOOD SESSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION (WE THINK)

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

The 2008 legislative session will end on May 19th. The following is a brief summary of faculty/higher education related legislation that has already passed and what is likely to pass in the very near future:

IFO Contract Ratified

One of IFO's prime goals this session was the ratification of the IFO collective bargaining contract. The IFO 2007-09 contract went into effect on April 17th, when Governor Pawlenty signed the contract ratification bill for public employees. The IFO was not in the original bill with the other public employee contracts, but the bill was held up for our contract to catch up and be included. Once both the faculty and MnSCU approved the contract it got amended into the ratification bill, and it passed relatively quickly. In past sessions the contract ratification legislation often got attached to other measures for political leverage and often didn't pass until the final hours of the session. This year the bill was kept as separate legislation and passed comparatively early in the session—before the mean spirited debates over the budget began. Although there was some criticism of the size of the pay increases at a time when the state has a budget deficit, there were no attempts to make changes to the contracts, and they passed by lop-sided margins. Whether the legislature passes small budget cuts to MnSCU, or the Governor unallots appropriations to MnSCU, it is pretty clear MnSCU is going to suffer some cuts next fiscal year. Having the contracts approved means faculty compensation will be spared when those cuts are made.

Click [HERE](#) for a list of the contract settlements ratified by the contract ratification bill.

Bonding Bill Becomes Law—After Vetoes

A second IFO goal this session was the passage of the MnSCU bonding request, with HEAPR funding as the highest priority. 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. \$55 million of the appropriation was for HEAPR projects. 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, but thanks to Sen. Keith Langseth and Rep. Alice Hausman, as well as campus area legislators, MnSCU gained \$111 million over the Governor's request as the bill proceeded through the legislature.

A third goal of the IFO was passage of the gas tax/transportation funding legislation. Originally the Governor had proposed using \$416 million of the general fund 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.

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 IFO passed the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement and will reach the House and Senate floors this week.

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 off 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 withdrawals during phased retirement if it is permitted under a collective bargaining contract.

IFO has also proposed legislation to allow faculty members a second choice 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.

The Pension Commission also passed a proposal by the directors of the major pension funds to reform the Postretirement Pension Fund, from which benefits are paid, to gradually eliminate the \$2.6 billion deficit in the Postretirement Fund. The deficit is expected to get much worse by June 30th, the next time the fund is

evaluated. The Postretirement Fund reforms will probably result in cost of living adjustment for retirees of only 2.5% for a number of years, but unless something is done about the deficit, the fund directors warned that the state pension funds could go into a “death spiral” similar to what happened to the former Minneapolis Teachers fund. IFO has a goal to support the Postretirement Fund reforms.

The way the Pension Commission works is they roll all the bills they pass into one large Omnibus Pension Bill that moves through the legislative process at the end of the session. Because it is such a complex area of legislation, once the bill clears the Pension Commission it is seldom amended. Once we catch the train we just sit back and ride through the process.

Budget Balancing Bill in Conference Committee - Higher Ed Agreement Reached

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 called for a \$6,173,000 cut (about 1% of MnSCU’s total appropriation), all of it coming from the MnSCU central office (\$5 million of this is from technology specifically). The Senate bill called for a \$6.5 million cut to MnSCU, all of it from the 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 as a whole.

On Sunday, May 3rd, the House and Senate conferees agree to the higher education section of the bill. For MnSCU, the conferees agreed to a \$6.6 million general base cut to MnSCU’s appropriation. However, the conferees added \$900,000 for a new “Power of You” program, \$120,000 for a “Teachers of Color” program, \$500,000 to eliminate non-resident tuition at some community colleges, and \$1,000,000 for tuition reciprocity. Therefore, the net appropriation adjustment to MnSCU was \$4,080,000. This is about 2/3 of 1% of the MnSCU annual appropriation.

IFO has a legislative goal that reads: “If there is a budget shortfall next session, any cuts the state legislature makes to the MnSCU budget should come from the budget of the MnSCU central office, in particular the technology allocation, with no charge backs to the campuses.” The legislature heard the concerns of faculty on this matter, and both the House and Senate bills had clear language to focus any cuts on the central office and technology in particular. The rider on the final House/Senate compromise says:

“Of this reduction, \$5,000,000 is from the appropriations for technology. The remainder is from the Office of the Chancellor budget. The reductions in this subdivision must not result in reductions to any of the campuses, must not reduce technology expenditures or grants to the campuses, and must not increase any assessments to the campuses from the Office of the Chancellor.”

We don’t know yet what the governor will do with the budget balancing bill. If he vetoes the bill 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 budget bill is vetoed. 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 quit hard.

Battle over Financial Aid

Because the state subtracts the federal Pell Grant from the State Grant a student is eligible to receive, the recent increase in the federal Pell Grant did not result in any net increase in the financial aid a student is eligible to receive. Instead, the Pell Grant increase resulted in a financial windfall to the state treasury. This year the financial windfall is around \$11 million. The Office of Higher Education, the U of M, and the Private College Council are supporting efforts to capture the \$11 million and use it to raise the cap on tuition recognition under the financial aid formula.

IFO has a goal of opposing increases in the tuition recognition cap. We joined with the MnSCU student

organizations to oppose using the Pell windfall to raise the tuition cap in the State Grant formula. Even though MnSCU students make up 60% of Pell grant recipients in the state, they would not get one penny of increased financial aid resulting from raising the State Grant cap. The tuition recognition cap is currently around \$10,000, while the average MnSCU tuition is only about \$5,500; therefore raising the cap only benefits students attending high cost institutions. We think this is a very uneven way to redistribute the Pell windfall. We argued that at a time when the state is cutting funding to higher education, they should not be increasing grants to students at institutions that are not affected by the budget cuts.

We supported increasing the Living and Miscellaneous Expense (LME) in lieu of raising the tuition cap because all recipients are benefited by an equal dollar amount, regardless of whether the student attends a MnSCU, U of M, or private higher education institution.

The budget balancing conference committee adopted a provision yesterday that would use the windfall from the Pell Grant increase to increase the LME allowance for all students by an equal dollar amount.

UPDATE ON D2L: THE LEGAL SITUATION AND HOW IT AFFECTS FACULTY AND STUDENTS

by [David Bouchard](#), Ph.D., Professor Metropolitan State University

As many of you know, it has been a challenging year in the management and improvement of D2L (Desire to Learn – the system we use for managing most online courses in MnSCU). The challenges of D2L have included:

- building good reliability;
- improving performance, responsiveness;
- defining quality standards;
- protection of intellectual property;
- and, many more.

We have made significant progress with the system and its management this year, including:

- the institution of performance measurement information, and improvement of performance (the system achieved 100% uptime for April);
- much improved project management of upgrades and other changes;
- development of retention standards, which will be distributed shortly;
- development of service level performance metrics;
- development of a tool to enable purging of the huge files in D2L that have caused scalability and performance issues;
- development of a notification and consent system that will be introduced shortly to allow Faculty to determine the extent of access to intellectual property by Help Desk personnel;
- and, many more.

A plan was developed with ITS (MnSCU's Information Technology Services group) to create "Excellence in D2L," with additional improvements.

Many challenges remain. Among these are:

- Choice of a longer range IMS/LMS (Instructional Management System/ Learning Management System) platform with more flexibility;
- Proper configuration of IMS/LMS (e.g. regional vs. centralized);
- Managing scalability issues, especially with common start date;
- Learning Objects and LORs (Learning Object Repositories);
- Intellectual Property issues re LOR's and all aspects of online content management;

- and, many more.

CURRENT PROBLEMS

However, the system currently faces perhaps its most serious challenges from forces outside our direct control. For over a year, we have been warning that a looming patent infringement case against D2L Canada (the company that owns and maintains D2L) by Blackboard (the company owning the Blackboard and WebCT IMS software systems) had the potential for serious dislocations to the whole online course delivery system in MnSCU. We were regularly assured by D2L and others that the issues had no merit and would not be a problem. Over the last few months, however, the issues came to trial in Texas. While most of the patent challenges were dismissed as predicted, three of them were not, and we are now in a situation that is requiring careful management on several levels.

BACKGROUND

Earlier this year, D2L Canada had a legal setback in their patent protection lawsuit with Blackboard, which was tried in Texas (the U.S. patent “capitol” – i.e. a place friendly to patent lawsuits). In essence, a Texas jury found that while most of the 44 patent infringement claims made by Blackboard against D2L did not have merit, three did, and they awarded about \$3.1 million in damages to Blackboard. The state [IMS Advisory Council](#) has been digging into the implications of this and working hard to be sure the interests of students and faculty are protected as we all work through the implications of this ruling. A good summary article on this may be found in [Inside Higher Ed](#) - here's a link to the page: <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2008/02/25/blackboard> .

As some of you may know, I have been serving as the MnSCU State Chair of the IMS Academic Computing Advisory Council. The Council is an advisory group to ITS and MnSCU on issues related to instructional management systems and related areas. It is made up of faculty, students, staff, CIOs and others. It also is designed to act as a conduit for communication to its stakeholder groups. We have been holding special meetings to discuss issues related to D2L and the Blackboard lawsuit, and our options, along with the normal management issues for the system.

We have learned that the judge in the case went beyond the Texas jury's ruling to add restrictions on D2L in selling their product and even in servicing existing accounts, like MnSCU. A 60 day stay of the injunction was established by the judge, delaying any application of these rulings while issues were discussed further. That stay ends shortly, and the injunction goes into effect after **May 11** (yes, Mothers' Day...) if nothing happens to change that.

Recently, the US Patent Office (USPTO) issued a ruling saying that ALL the patent issues raised by Blackboard were invalid, and that D2L had not infringed on Blackboard patents. However, since the Texas ruling had already taken place, it was, and is, in force independently of this evaluation.

The IMS Council had been working carefully with ITS (MnSCU IT Services Department) and had planned for an update of D2L to version 8.2.3 (we currently use 8.1.3), around June 5, 2008. However, we were subsequently told that version 8.3.1 of D2L actually is constructed in a way that bypasses any patent issues related to the ruling and would eliminate problems re the Texas court. We asked if this was just D2L's claim, or if the judge had agreed. We were told that the D2L group had made this assertion and was waiting for the judge to evaluate the claim.

Version 8.2.3 must be installed before version 8.3.1 can be installed, so the IMS Council advised that the 8.2.3 upgrade process continue, and that work be done to help us analyze the 8.3.1 upgrade. MnSCU IT was strongly advocating the 8.3.1 upgrade, and we allowed them to go forward, subject to further analysis. In our meeting on 04/14/2008, we reviewed MnSCU IT's progress and discussed contingencies further. We determined that planning was going adequately and advised that ITS should plan to go ahead with the dual upgrades over the June 5 to 9 period, ultimately moving to version 8.3.1.

We also worked hard at our emergency meeting in April to help MnSCU IT develop several scenarios for contingency planning. In that meeting, we received assurances that after the substantial downtime needed

to do the upgrade (estimates from 84 to 104 hours), our D2L online courses will be able to function as they do now. Since the change is anticipated to begin June 5 (in the middle of some summer terms, but before summer term for other MnSCU institutions), we are pressing hard to be sure we minimize the transition issues. While there appears to be a significant down time for the upgrades, we are working hard to minimize this, and should have a report on those efforts shortly.

We are also pushing hard for training to be available for use of the new features and other items and are already starting to see the first components. The new versions of D2L improve the consistency of the interface and add functionality that you can use if you wish, but you can also continue to operate courses as you do now.

IMPORTANT UPDATE

After the regular April meeting, the IMS Council agreed to move ahead on the updates for early June, and also agreed that the deletion of significant amounts of old discussion thread information in courses, which is using huge amounts of storage, would save about 24 hours in the updates if deleted, leaving the estimate at approximately **84 hours**.

Dates and Affected Data:

- **The current plan is for the MnSCU ITS team to delete all historical Discussion threads from the database from term 2007 (fall 2006) back, to significantly speed up both the upgrade and all future activity of the system. This will begin May 18, so if you have a need for these discussion threads, please contact your local D2L team ASAP for planning purposes. I have provided IFO with a [document prepared by ITS that shows a simple way of backing up the Discussion data](#). We have tried this and it seems to work quite well.**
- **The major upgrade is scheduled to start at 6 p.m. on Thursday, June 5, 2008 and end at 6 a.m. on Monday, June 9, 2008.** During this period, you will not be able to access D2L, nor add or change any content to your D2L sites.
- You can stay current on D2L updates and other information at: <http://mnscuims.mnscu.edu> .

To help you prepare for this, I wrote the article below, "[Preparing for D2L Upgrades](#)." Please review it carefully if you will be teaching a D2L course this summer, or are using D2L for any of your classes.

As noted above, the stay of injunction delaying the implementation of sanctions by the Texas judge on D2L, ends on 05/11/08. We are working hard to establish good options to allow you to continue your online course activities after that date, and during the process of updating to the new versions. If all goes well, you will find that the D2L version that results (version 8.3.1) will have many improvements and will be helpful to you. As I note in the [article below](#), **if you choose not to use any new features, we have been assured that your course will continue to operate without adjustment.**

I called a special meeting of the IMS Council for May 5, to resolve as many of these issues as possible. As you may have surmised, the legal offices of MnSCU and the Attorney General's office are working with MnSCU to be sure things proceed without problems. We have asked them to participate in the May 5 meeting, to be sure we can get full information back to you as soon as possible. Please watch for notices from MnSCU ITS, and from your center for online learning to give you further updates.

MAY 5 UPDATE

This added update is being written immediately following the May 5 meeting of the IMS Academic Computing Advisory Council. The meeting was attended by the regular Council members, plus Linda Baer (MnSCU Senior Vice Chancellor), Gail Olson (MnSCU Council), Ken Niemi (MnSCU CIO) and many others. I will restrict this update to the issues discussed in the article above. Gail Olson reviewed the legal situation as of today. To give you a sense of how "fluid" the situation is right now, after her morning presentation, she went to a conference call with Blackboard and others to answer important additional questions, and then returned to the group to report. The following reflects what we knew at the

end of the meeting this afternoon.

MnSCU has been actively working with D2L to prepare for the possibility that the injunction will go into effect after May 11. Because the injunction against D2L prohibits them from selling or supporting versions of the product that are in violation of the ruling (i.e. versions up through 8.2.1), we need to be prepared to manage the system without D2L Canada until legal issues are resolved. The Texas judge has not yet ruled whether D2L 8.3.1 meets the requirements to be considered as non-infringing on the patents at issue.

The most likely scenario of next steps was described to the Council as being:

- Injunction goes into effect after 05/11.
- We can continue to operate the software we have (the suit is against D2L, NOT MnSCU). Blackboard reaffirmed today that they currently do NOT intend to go after clients like MnSCU.
- D2L would not be allowed to directly support our upgrade to 8.2.3 nor to 8.3.1, although there may be ways to get that accomplished.
- Moving to version 8.3.1 of D2L would allow D2L Canada to support our operations again.
- While D2L has additional legal options, they would exercise them while under the injunction (i.e. they could not support versions through 8.2.3).
- Because Blackboard does not agree that version 8.3.1 of D2L is free of patent infringement, they may decide to start another round of lawsuits on that one. However, since this is a “new” product and the USPTO has already said initially that D2L is not infringing on any patents, they (D2L) would theoretically be in a stronger position; the burden of proof would be on Blackboard.

As noted above, the Council has been working hard to discuss options, alternate scenarios and strategies. Several are currently under discussion:

- If injunction does not go into effect, move forward as planned.
- If injunction does go into effect, move forward as planned, finding a way to get the upgrades through 8.3.1 done.
- If injunction goes into effect, after the injunction date stop upgrade plans, manage the current D2L system (version 8.1.3) until either issues are resolved (e.g. D2L can pay Blackboard the award and royalties, and the action ceases), or we move to another platform.

The Council had been working with pilots of Moodle and other alternate IMS/LMS products. It was determined that for a variety of reasons, Moodle would be the alternative platform of first choice. Regardless of other actions, the Council has advocated moving as quickly as possible toward putting agreements into place with Moodle Rooms (an external hosting environment for Moodle) and setting up strategies for the use of Moodle on all MnSCU campuses. Because of expertise in the system (e.g. IFO Faculty member Rhonda Ficek is managing a major pilot at Moorhead) and expertise at the University of Minnesota (they are running parallel platforms of WebCT and Moodle, and are willing to work with us), we think that moving to this platform has merit. It is widely used and is considered “Open Source,” which means among other things that software is not proprietary; Blackboard has publicly stated they will not sue open source applications (although they could certainly change their minds). The Council had pilot plans in place for Moodle, but are now expanding and accelerating them.

As noted, the situation is still very fluid. We are told that within a week or so, many key questions will be answered, at least to the point where a strategy can be clearer. For now, please read the [article below](#) on preparing – if you do the items in it, you will be well prepared for any of the directions this may take. **Please understand, the system is NOT in imminent danger. Whether or not the injunction begins, we can continue to offer online classes in D2L.** The problem is for the mid and longer terms, and everyone is working hard to be sure good choices are made. Please watch the website noted (<http://mnscuims.mnscu.edu>) for current information.

TO FACULTY WITH SUMMER COURSES USING D2L: PREPARING FOR D2L UPGRADES FROM THE IMS ADVISORY COUNCIL

by [David Bouchard](#), Ph.D., Professor Metropolitan State University

As you know, major upgrades to D2L (version 8.2.3 followed by 8.3.1) are planned to be implemented in June. With the current legal situation with D2L, it is possible the upgrades will be postponed or cancelled, but as of today, we need to operate as if they will occur as scheduled. As such, the following suggestions are provided to help you prepare for the upgrades.

The first steps will be short down times for D2L to delete significant amounts of Discussion Thread data (see below), beginning: **Sunday, May 18**

The **major upgrades** are scheduled to **start at 6 p.m. on Thursday, June 5, 2008 and end at 6 a.m. on Monday, June 9, 2008**. During this period, you will not be able to access D2L, nor add or change any content to your D2L sites. Those of you who will have already started your summer courses by then will not be able to use them, nor will students be able to access them – this includes your grade books.

It is very important that you plan for this situation, both for your own course management, and for your students. Please remember that this first part of the upgrade will only upgrade the D2L **environment** – your **course content should not be changed** in any material sense. Thus, if your class is in good shape before the conversion initiation, it should be fine after it. There are some interface changes, with which you will want to get familiar before the upgrades. The new functional features available in D2L 8.2.3/8.3.1 are being evaluated, and will be introduced and trained later on. Other considerations will vary depending on where you are in summer session at the upgrade date (**June 5**).

For Those Whose Classes are in Session on June 5:

- Plan for the effect on your class of the lack of access to D2L for your class plan. Be sure to consider the effect re grade books, provision of content, assignments, etc.

For Summer Faculty Using D2L:

- Remember ALL your content should be ready and loaded before June 5. If it is not, your next chance will be June 10 at the earliest.
- Be sure to keep in touch with your local D2L administrators to be sure you are “in synch” with their local plans.
- Strongly consider backing up both your courses and your grade books in advance of the upgrade.
- Notify your students of both the “short” downtimes and the long one starting June 5 as appropriate. Be sure to reassure them about the situation and that your plan will not result in any harm to the students’ course results.
- Develop a “contingency plan,” considering what you would do if the upgrade took an additional day, two days, four days. While this eventuality is very unlikely, you are much better off if you have considered your actions in advance. At the least, consider how you might contact your students to inform them of your plans if D2L is not available.
- Watch the D2L update pages (<http://mnscuims.mnscu.edu> for general information, and the page to which you will be directed automatically during downtimes) to be aware of the progress of the upgrade and estimated changes to the schedule. The D2L team will configure the login page to automatically re-direct anyone trying to access site pages to the status page, so there is no need to look for a special “update” site during the upgrade.
- After the upgrade check your course to be sure all converted properly. Report any concerns to your local D2L administrators and the D2L team, as instructed by the team. Also, please alert your local site administrator if you notice major functionality changes in your site (D2L uses a fairly complex

control for this and any changes should be reviewed).

For Those Using D2L for Research or Other Non-Instructional Purposes:

- The ITS team will be deleting all historical discussion threads from the database from term 2007 (fall 2006) back, to significantly speed up both the upgrade and all future activity of the system. The IMS Council has been working all year on ongoing retention schedules for many aspects of the D2L system, which will be presented for review and comment soon, but ITS (IT Services – MnSCU) needed to reduce the files containing discussion threads before these major upgrades to reduce the amount of backup and recovery time as well as other purposes, prior to the upgrade. In investigating the implications of such a file reduction, we have learned that some faculty and administrators have been using D2L discussion data as part of research activities, accreditation analyses and possibly other purposes. The IMS Council looked hard at delaying the file size reductions to avoid disruption of these activities, but ultimately were informed that the information could be captured before the conversion, and that the reductions in file sizes were so important to the D2L conversion process that they needed to take place.
- If you have a need for the discussion data, or the summary reports, it is important that you coordinate saving these data with your local site administrator and, if needed with ITS. You should contact your site administrator immediately, and be completed with saving the data no later than 05/17/2008. The ITS staff is committed to ensuring that you have the help you need to get this done as quickly and directly as possible.
- If the planned changes described above will cause significant problems for you, please contact your site administrators immediately – they will communicate this to the ITS staff and IMS Council ASAP and options will be developed.

CONTACT US

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