

Inter Faculty Organization

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

Faculty Update Newsletter

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NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

by [Nancy Black](#), IFO President

Dear Colleagues:

As the holiday break approaches we find ourselves at a critical stage in our negotiations process. As you have probably heard, the state economy is beginning to falter, and state revenue collections are falling below projections. While no specific budget cuts have been announced, the possibility of budget cuts next session is increasing. The timelines for reaching an agreement that can be approved and implemented (meaning faculty could start getting increases in their paychecks) before the legislature session starts on February 12th is fast approaching. If we don't have an approved agreement by the start of the session, the agreement will not be implemented until after the legislature passes the contract ratification bill and it is signed into law—which could be May or June.

We are trying to settle this contract, but we won't do so without a decent pay increase that will improve our compensation competitiveness. The IFO and MnSCU are fairly close on money—the problem is that MnSCU wants some concessions that IFO will not agree to for the money MnSCU is willing to pay (*see Rod Henry's [article](#) below*). My hope is that mediation will result in a quick agreement. We need to get the contract settled so we can go into the next legislative session with a united front.

This is my last year as IFO president. It has been an exciting and challenging experience. IFO presidents can only serve two consecutive terms, and I am in the last year of my second term. It is time to choose a successor, and the process has already begun. The IFO Board has named a *nominating committee* to recruit candidates. Names will be presented to the IFO Board in February. Members may also self nominate. The election will be held on Tuesday, April 8, 2008 and the new president will assume office on

July 1, 2008. I encourage interested members to contact the [nominating committee](#) for more information.

Best wishes to you and your family this holiday season!

NEGOTIATIONS REPORT

by [Rod Henry](#), IFO Chief Negotiator

As the first serious storm of the season rolled into Minnesota on December 1, talks between MnSCU and the IFO ended without an agreement. The IFO had offered MnSCU two options—a package including many of the language items MnSCU is seeking, but at a cost to MnSCU of compensation increases in the range of 14-15%; the second option would have cost MnSCU approximately 3% less, but did not include language concessions that MnSCU is seeking. Note that the amount in the less expensive of the two offers (11-12%) is still less than the amount by which MnSCU's funding was increased by the Legislature for this biennium.

MnSCU countered with what they labeled as a “final offer” which offered compensation increases amounting to almost \$32 million—approximately double their opening proposal. This a big improvement compared to their initial offer of one step (each step equals 2.4%) salary increase in the second year. The MnSCU “final offer” included one step the first year, two steps the second year, plus a 2% across the board increase on 7/1/08, plus an additional mid-year across the board increase of 1.8%. We are not far apart on the overall cost of the compensation increases—in fact we are almost right-on in one of the IFO proposals.

Unfortunately, the MnSCU offer includes language concessions that IFO is simply unwilling to make for the price MnSCU is willing to pay. We have made concessions and reached agreement on a variety of topics, including endowed chairs, the evaluation of coaches, sabbatical pay and the order of eligibility, and summer session flexibility. However, significant hang-ups at this point include:

- IFO proposes extending the career steps indefinitely. The employer proposes ending career steps in 2011.
- Adjuncts – Adjuncts have not received a pay raise in the last four years. IFO proposed to increase the rate for adjuncts by \$100 (from \$1,100 per credit to \$1,200) in both years of the contract. The employer proposes to increase the rate by \$100 in the second year only.
- Salary Adjustments - MnSCU wants to put only \$800,000 toward salary equity adjustments. IFO estimates the cost of salary equity to be \$1.6 million.
- MnSCU has refused to agree to put the Early Separation Incentive payments into Health Care Savings Plan, even though it would save them money (they would not have to pay the FICA tax). This would be a huge tax savings (on average about \$9,600 per retiree) for our members.
- University Scholars – MnSCU has proposed granting one-time pay increases up to \$6,000 for up to 10% of the tenured faculty in a department. We have agreed to university scholars' language in return for more money for all faculty members (Package 18 B). We are willing to agree to MnSCU's language, but it is not a substitute for a base salary increase. For more information on why this is not necessarily a win/win proposal, see this article on how this system has worked in our neighbor North Dakota: <http://www.bismarcktribune.com/articles/2007/11/19/news/state/143024.txt>
- Schedule Enhancement – MnSCU has proposed mid-year increases that will negatively affect the faculty member's Early Separation Incentive and severance payments. A faculty member who retires mid-year will not get the benefit of the increase and their ESI and severance will be calculated using their salary before the increase. Additionally, due to the pattern of demand in many programs (higher enrollments in fall, lower enrollments in spring) many fixed-term faculty would not receive increases in base pay.
- Nine Month Appointments – MnSCU has proposed nine month appointments occurring outside the regular academic year that could be imposed on all new hires. IFO opposes this because it could create a two-tier faculty system, and because current faculty who would be affected (counselors,

coaches and librarians) would lose pay.

We are now headed for mediation to try to settle the contract. We assume that mediation will occur in late January or early February.

Support your [IFO negotiators](#)! We have made an enormous amount of progress at the bargaining table due to the patience and persistence of your negotiating team and your efforts on-campus. The IFO team has put forth reasonable proposals for settlements that can be funded within available resources and without adverse affects on the universities. We have been flexible in terms of responding to MnSCU proposals, even proposals we didn't like very much. However, if MnSCU wants language concessions, we want more competitive pay in return - it is that simple.

We remain committed to raising faculty salaries to nationally competitive levels. MnSCU has the money. ***If not now, then when?***

If you have questions, keep sending them to me, Rod Henry, at duowcewy@hotmail.com.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS NEWS

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

State Budget Shortfall Projected

The slumping economy has caused the State of Minnesota to revise its estimated revenue collections for this biennium downward by \$739 million (2.2%). The state had previously projected a \$294 million balance at the end of the biennium—now they are projecting a \$373 million deficit.

So far, there has been no word from the governor's office or the legislature regarding budget cuts to MnSCU. State policy makers seem to be taking a wait-and-see attitude until the next budget forecast in early March. Proportionally, this is not a big shortfall—only about 1%. The state has a sizable “rainy day” fund, MnSCU has about a 2% reserve, and the campuses have on average reserve of about 5%, so unless the economy worsens, we may get by without cuts. However, the shortfall has dampened expectations for any new money above the 12.6% increase already provided to MnSCU this biennium.

MnSCU Spending Priorities Disputed

In the last month there has been considerable discussion and controversy over MnSCU's spending priorities, particularly technology spending. The issue spilled over into the press, with stories appearing in the Pioneer Press, on MPR, and in many regional newspapers.

At the last MnSCU Board of Trustees' meeting MnSCU officials revealed a little more detail than has been supplied in the past on how they plan to spend the \$62.8 million increase in technology money this year. MnSCU is increasing expenditures on technology from \$21,500,000 in FY2007 (last year) to \$46,355,000 million this year—a 115% increase in one year. They are proposing an additional \$4.7 million increase in system level technology expenditures next fiscal year. MnSCU currently has 140 system level technology positions, 20 of which are vacant. They are proposing to add an additional 55 new technology positions.

MnSCU received essentially block grants from the legislature of \$666.8 million in FY2008 (this year) and \$689.3 million in FY2009. The biennial increase in appropriations was 12.6%. The increase in appropriations this year to the MnSCU system as a whole was 10.6% The increase in appropriations sent out to the campuses by MnSCU was only 3.3%.

Faculty have complained that MnSCU is spending too much money on central office growth, particularly on system level technology, and not sending enough of the state appropriation out to the campuses, where education takes place. The amount of money MnSCU is spending on “Systemwide Set-Asides” is

increasing from \$58.9 million in FY2007 to \$85.8 million in FY2008 (a 45.6% increase) and to \$90.8 million in FY2009 (another 5.8% increase). At the last [IFO Budget Committee](#) meeting, Tom Fauchald, Budget Committee Chair, presented an analysis of the growth in state appropriations from MnSCU to the state universities as a percent of the university operating budgets. Here is the biennial growth by university:

Bemidji	2.50%
Metro	2.92%
Moorhead	2.18%
Mankato	2.71%
Southwest	1.93%
St. Cloud	2.62%
Winona	3.20%

Faculty want more scrutiny of technology expenditures, and more money spent on local institutions. The IFO Budget Committee is recommending:

- Development of impartial benchmarks for measuring MnSCU technology spending compared to that of like institutions.
- No new permanent IT positions above the current compliment of 140 positions unless MnSCU provides better justification for the positions.
- Phasing in the IT improvements over a longer period of time, and that the savings be allocated out to improve campus budgets.

North Metro University?

We were surprised by an article that appeared in the *Star Tribune* this month regarding a desire by Anoka County and the City of Anoka to start a new university in the northern suburbs. This initiative was linked to a \$500,000 request for planning money in the MnSCU bonding request that is to be used to plan facilities at North Hennepin College and Anoka Ramsey College to offer baccalaureate and graduate programs.

This issue was brought up at Meet and Confer, and the Chancellor immediately distanced himself from any idea that two year colleges should be migrating into four year institutions, or that a new university should be created in the northern suburbs. He was supportive of existing universities offering more upper division programs at the sites (something that several universities are already doing).

At its last meeting, the IFO Board passed a legislative goal to:

“Support rider language to the ARCC/NHCC bonding project to limit the funding to planning facilities for upper division and graduate programs offered by current state universities.”

GUEST EDITORIAL: PROBLEMS WITH MERIT AWARDS

by Professor [Paul Harris](#), Minnesota State University Moorhead

During my years as a member of the History Department at Minnesota State University Moorhead, my colleagues and I have often had occasion to cast our gazes across the Red River and observe that things could be worse – we could be teaching in North Dakota. A recent flap over the selection of North Dakota State University history professor Tom Isern as University Distinguished Professor provided the most recent occasion. Isern was one of two finalists from their History Department, and after his name was announced, a barrage of scathing e-mails was fired off by the other candidate and his supporters. The feud made its way to the front page of the Fargo *Forum*, which elicited in turn a salvo of letters to the editors from each side.

As an outsider, I was less interested in whether Isern is deserving than in a larger issue. When faculty members at a university are grossly underpaid to begin with, and then the administration chooses to bestow large rewards on a select few, did it not occur to anyone that the result would be jealousy and division? The issue hit home for me because the MnSCU Board of Trustees would like to implement a similar program here. Fortunately, faculty in Minnesota still have some say in the matter, and our representatives have been fighting to avoid precisely the kind of bitter acrimony currently on display at NDSU.

Faculty salaries in Minnesota are not as bad yet as they are in North Dakota, but they have been slipping and are now below the majority of similar institutions. The solution to this problem is raising salaries across the board, not dumping pots of money on a favored handful. I have great respect for NDSU Pres. Joseph Chapman, but this was not his finest hour. The implication of compensation policy at NDSU is that the faculty consists of a few stars amid a herd of drudges, and that is simply wrong

There is perhaps a still deeper and more troubling trend at work. A model of university governance based on collegiality and respect for the professional expertise of the teaching faculty is under threat. In its place, administrators are pushing a corporate model that regards gross income inequality as the key motivator and assumes that all meaningful innovation flows from the top down. The many dedicated faculty in Minnesota (and North Dakota, too, for that matter) deserve better.

2008 DELEGATE ASSEMBLY ANNOUNCEMENT

by [Cindy Finch](#), IFO Membership Coordinator & Administrative Assistant

The Inter Faculty Organization Delegate Assembly will be held on March 28-29, 2008, at the Roseville Radisson (same location as 2006). According to [Chapter XI](#) of the IFO Operating Procedures the following table outlines the number of delegates allotted to each campus:

Campus	Campus Appointments			Board Members	TOTAL DELEGATES
	FA President Appointments	1 per 15 Members	Subtotal		
Bemidji	5	12 (180)	17	3	20
Mankato	5	35 (526)	40	4	44
Metro	5	13 (204)	18	2	20
Moorhead	5	19 (298)	24	3	27
St. Cloud	5	38 (576)	43	4	47
Southwest	5	9 (147)	14	2	16

Winona	5	24 (361)	29	3	32
TOTAL	35	150 (2,292)	185	21	206

If you are interested in becoming a Delegate for your campus, please fill out this [form](#) and send it to your [faculty association](#). Each faculty association has their own deadline (near the end of February) for registration, so please check with your faculty association for more details. The tentative agenda can be found on the [form](#).

To propose a new resolution you will need to fill out this [form](#) and send it to your [faculty association](#). Each faculty association has their own deadline for submitting new resolutions. Please check with your Faculty Association for more details.

FIC ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2008 DELEGATE ASSEMBLY AWARDS

by [Patrice Arseneault](#), *Equity Advocate*

The IFO Feminist Issues Committee (FIC) is accepting [nominations for Outstanding Contributions to the IFO](#) by a woman IFO member to be recognized at the 2008 Delegate Assembly. The FIC is seeking to honor female IFO members who have had long term service to the IFO and who have made significant contributions in leadership capacities and advocacy within the organization on issues impacting women faculty.

The Feminist Issues Committee is also accepting [nominations for Outstanding Contributions to Women's Advancement](#) in MnSCU by an IFO member to be recognized at the 2008 Delegate Assembly. The FIC will recognize an IFO member with long term service who has improved the lives and working conditions for professional women within the MnSCU system by creating equity and opportunities for women faculty through serving in leadership capacities and by advocating on issues with substantial impact on women faculty in the system. Individuals who receive multiple nominations for outstanding contributions to women's advancement in MnSCU will be favored over individuals with a single nomination.

To be considered for either award, nominees must be IFO members and not have [received the award before](#). Nomination forms are available on the IFO website, and may be submitted online, or sent by email to nelson@ifo.org or by mail to Tiffany Nelson at the IFO, 165 Western Avenue North, Suite 8, St. Paul, MN 55102. Nominations must be received by the IFO by February 1, 2008.

The FIC will present the Outstanding Contributions Awards at the March 2008 Delegate Assembly.

WE WILL MISS OUR FRIEND KERRY WILLIAMS

by [Bruce Svingen](#), *Winona State University Faculty Association President*

Kerry Williams, Winona State University Professor of Psychology, after battling a lengthy illness, passed away on Monday, December 10, 2007 at his home in Winona. He received his B.A. from the University of Washington, Seattle, WA, and his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. Kerry had been a member of the WSU faculty for 25 years. Prior to coming to WSU Kerry had been a faculty member at the College of Saint Teresa, Winona, MN. He was married to Janette Williams who is also a professor in the Department of Psychology at WSU. He and Janette loved reading, conversation, discussion and learning.

Kerry was an outstanding academician. His breadth and depth of knowledge in his area of study inspired and motivated his students. His classroom demeanor and sense of humor kept his classes involved and energetic. He was an advisor and mentor to countless psychology majors, many of whom went on to obtain advanced degrees. Kerry was compassionate and cared deeply for his students, their well being and their success. He stirred many to carry on his passion for education, scholarship, social justice, and life. His colleagues and the students of WSU will miss him greatly.

Kerry was a leader in faculty governance. He served as chair of his department for several terms and proved to be a consummate herder of cats. He served for many years on the Academic Affairs and Curriculum Committee where he championed academic rigor and relevance. He was a guiding hand behind the development and implementation of WSU's University Studies Program. He served several terms on the Faculty Association Senate where his informed discussions, true ideals and passion for faculty rights often steered the senate along the path of logic. And if his well honed powers of persuasion didn't work, his icy stare often did. As has been often remarked Kerry did not tolerate fools. Kerry was serving as one of WSU's representatives to the IFO Board of Directors when his illness made it impossible for him to continue at the level of excellence that he demanded of himself.

We will miss our friend.

IFO SUPPORTS NELLIE STONE JOHNSON SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Nellie Stone Johnson Scholarship Program is named for the late activist Nellie Stone Johnson, a longtime member of the Minnesota State University Board, and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees. It was established to be a permanent reminder of her contributions to civil rights, human rights, higher education, and the rights of workers. The IFO is proud to serve again on this program's steering committee for their annual scholarship fundraising dinner and silent auction. The IFO has purchased two tables for the event.

The event will take place on March 27, 2008, at the Prom Center in Woodbury that coincides with the IFO Delegate Assembly weekend. They are requesting donations in the form of a gift certificate or unique items that would be used to raise additional scholarship funds through a silent auction. These dollars go directly to selected scholarship applicants who meet the guidelines and wish to pursue post-secondary education at one of the seven Minnesota State Universities. In the past faculty have donated their art pieces and books. If you have an interest in attending the event or wish to contribute to the Silent Auction, please contact Cindy Finch at finch@ifo.org

IFO HOLIDAY HOURS

In observance of the holidays, the IFO headquarters in St. Paul will be closed the week of December 24, and will reopen on Wednesday, January 2, 2008. If you have an urgent issue during this period, please call us at 800/325-9644 or 651/227-8442, and you will be directed to call our after hours emergency number.

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](#).