

# The UPDATE

Newsletter for the  
faculty of the seven  
Minnesota state  
universities.

Fiscal Year 15, No. 4  
April 2015

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## President's Report

### The End is Nigh

*Jim Grabowska, IFO President*



The academic year is quickly coming to a close. I'm sure that everyone is moving faster and faster in order to have

things wrapped up by May. The same sense of urgency is felt in the IFO office. We have discussed ways to communicate more quickly and efficiently with our members. To that end, we have decided to change the *Update* to a quarterly missive in favor of email, our website, and social media (For now, [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)). [Aaron Lichtov](#) and [Jon Bohn](#) will coordinate these efforts for the IFO and would appreciate any insights you may have.

After the legislative session is over, IFO's Director of Government Relations, Jon Bohn, will prepare to visit campuses, working to engage more faculty at a variety of levels. Our intent is to develop cohorts of faculty who are interested in the issues that face us all and help them help us disseminate information

and better represent our members within and across campuses, as well as more effectively represent our members to the Trustees, the System Office, and the Capitol.

Better representation of faculty concerns, as well as taking advantage of faculty perspectives and ideas, was behind the recent agreement we reached with the Board of Trustees to re-engage with Charting the Future. The Gallery Walks that are currently underway

***We will be encouraging everyone to take an active role in providing input on . . . Charting the Future, ensuring that any initiatives which come forward will reflect the needs of the students and communities we serve.***

are the vehicle by which the current Implementation Teams will draw their work to a close. Their work and recommendations will be forwarded to campuses during the summer so that, come fall, broad input at the campus level may begin. We will be encouraging everyone to take an active role in providing input on the six principles of Charting the Future,

## In This Issue

President's Report	1
Legislative Update	2
IFO Membership Information	3
Meet the New IFO Staff	
• Jonathan Bohn	4
• Richard Kaspari	4
• Aaron Lichtov	5
IFO GLBTA Conference	5

ensuring that any initiatives which come forward will reflect the needs of the students and communities we serve.

We have a new member of our team, Richard Kaspari (see page 4), who will be taking on the benefits role that Russ Stanton will leave behind when he retires in December. Richard is also beginning to work on the salary equity studies. As time allows, he—with our other legal staff—will prepare arbitration hearings to help us reduce the backlog of contract and enforcement issues.

As faculty move more and more quickly to finish the academic year, know that the IFO is likewise moving quickly in positive directions to better represent the interests, welfare, and aspirations of all faculty of the seven state universities. ●

# Legislative Update

Jonathan Bohn,  
Director of Government Relations



## Contract Ratification

The contract ratification bills have passed multiple committees in each body and are waiting to be heard in the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee. Both will be the final stop before the bills arrive on the floor of their respective bodies. Neither committee has scheduled a time for the bills to be heard at this point, but we remain optimistic that hearings will be scheduled after legislators return from the Easter/Passover break. This still leaves ample time for final passage before session adjourns.

## MnSCU Budget

Governor Mark Dayton announced his supplemental budget recommendation, which included an additional \$866 million in spending over the original budget recommendation he released in January. The change is due to the additional surplus projected in the February economic forecast. Dayton recommended an additional \$288 million for higher education, including \$142 million for MnSCU.

The House released their budget targets on March 24 and included \$53 million for higher education. During the House leadership press conference, Rep. Knobloch said they have enough money to pay for a tuition freeze at one of the two systems (U of M and MnSCU). That would mean they plan to use some or the entire

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State Grant Program surplus (\$72 million) to supplement the low target. MnSCU's budget is likely to be a high priority of the House committee.

Senate DFL leadership held a press conference on March 27 releasing the budget targets for the 2016-2017 biennium. The Senate set a target for an increase of \$205 million for higher education. The Senate is interested in funding programs such as free technical education, cookie-cutter remedial education, and apprenticeship programs. We are working with Senate leaders to ensure that our existing programs are protected while keeping tuition down, but so far Sen. Bonoff, the committee chair, has shown interest in other areas.

Now that the higher education committees have their targets to work with, they will begin crafting their omnibus bills when lawmakers return from the legislative break. With such a drastic difference between the House and Senate higher education targets, once each body passes a bill, they will head to conference committee to work through the differences.

## Policy Issues

MN State College Student Association has been pursuing language forcing MnSCU to create transfer pathways between colleges and universities. They have gained support from legislators on this initiative, and we worked closely with them and other stakeholders to craft language on the issue that provided the flexibility needed to ensure the final product works as intended. The language directs MnSCU to implement the transfer pathway plan that was created after legislation last year directed MnSCU to create a transfer plan. The legislation also permissively asks MnSCU to create a plan to enhance Bachelor of Applied Science Degree programs in order to facilitate transfer pathways for students in Associate of Applied Science Degrees. Bachelor of Applied Science degrees are being pushed by MSCF and currently exist at multiple universities within our system.

## Policy Issues, continued

Sen. Miller authored a bill that provides a more official role for local leaders when choosing a university or college president. His bill was heard in the Senate Higher Education Committee. Some minor changes were made to the make-up of the local committee, and the bill was sent to the Senate State and Local Government Committee. This bill has not been scheduled for a hearing in that committee. We are working closely with Sen. Miller to have this bill included in the Senate omnibus higher education package. So far the bill has not been introduced in the House but is being considered by Rep. Knobloch.

## Retirement

Here is a summary of main provisions of the 2015 Omnibus Retirement Bill, as of March 24. The Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement (LCPR) will meet April 8 for a possible final vote on the bill. It must then be referred to the appropriate House and Senate committees for consideration before being sent to the House and Senate floors for action.

- **Post-retirement adjustment financial sustainability trigger:** Revises the financial sustainability triggers for post-retirement adjustment mechanisms for MSRS, TRA and SPTRFA, requiring reversion to a lower COLA if a system's funded ratio dips below 80 percent in one year or 85 percent in two years. (PERA General already has this sustainability trigger mechanism.) Clarifies proration of COLAs in first year of retirement for all the funds.
- **Contribution stabilizer:** Revises the contribution stabilizer mechanisms for MSRS, PERA and TRA by changing from a mandatory, virtually automatic, rate-setting procedure to an advisory procedure by removing the specific increments of contribution rate increases or decreases required by the stabilizer and by specifying the financial factors each of the governing boards should consider prior to making rate change recommendations. ●

## IFO MEMBER DUES & FAIRSHARE FEES



*By Donna Lynn Blake,  
Controller/Membership Coordinator*

FY15 IFO member dues and fairshare fees payroll deductions started for most new spring part-time and full-time faculty on their 1/23/15 paycheck. Payroll deductions for most new spring adjunct/community faculty started on their 2/20/15 paycheck. If you haven't seen a union deduction taken from your paycheck yet, you should see one start soon.

The FY15 member dues and fair share fees rates that were approved by the Delegate Assembly can be found on our website at [www.ifo.org/membership-information](http://www.ifo.org/membership-information). Most new spring full-time and part-time faculty will have 8 payments deducted and new spring 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](mailto:blake@ifo.org).

If you need your 2014 calendar year dues paid information for your taxes, please send me an email at [blake@ifo.org](mailto:blake@ifo.org) and I will reply with your information. You should also be able to find this information on your last paycheck stub in December 2014.

If you would like to join the union, you can sign up for instant membership by using the convenient online membership application found on our [website](http://www.ifo.org). You can also return the orange membership card included in your fair share packet.

## IFO MEMBER ID CARDS

All faculty who have joined the union should have received an IFO member ID card in the mail. New members who have recently joined should allow 1-2 weeks processing time for their new member ID card to arrive. If you have not yet received your card, had a name change and would like a new ID card, or have misplaced your original ID card and would like a replacement, please contact me at [blake@ifo.org](mailto:blake@ifo.org).

# Meet the New IFO Staff

## Jonathan (Jon) Bohn, Director of Government Relations



Jonathan draws on nine years of experience in government relations, media relations, and organization management to develop sound public relations and public affairs strategies. In the halls of the Capitol, Jonathan is regarded as a well-connected, smart strategist who has worked to raise public awareness of issues, leading directly to legislative victories. He has extensive experience with a variety of legislative issues, including higher education, gaming, local government, the environment, and natural resources.

***First introduced to politics as a six-year-old volunteer on local legislative races, Jonathan has honed his grassroots organizing skills as a field organizer on congressional campaigns and served as campaign coordinator for Senate Majority Leader Tom Bakk's 2010 gubernatorial campaign.***

Before joining the IFO, Jonathan served as director of government and system relations for the Minnesota State University Student Association, where he built the association's reputation as a leading advocate on higher education issues at both the state and federal levels. In addition to his role with the student association, Jonathan has worked as a public affairs consultant for nonprofits and trade associations, focusing efforts on both government and public relations. He has secured positive media coverage for legislative clients and placed opinion pieces in daily newspapers at key times during the legislative process.

First introduced to politics as a six-year-old volunteer on local legislative races, Jonathan has honed his grassroots organizing skills as a field organizer on congressional campaigns and served as campaign coordinator for Senate Majority Leader Tom Bakk's 2010 gubernatorial campaign.

Jonathan has a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in public administration from Hamline University.

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## Richard (Dick) Kaspari, Benefits Specialist



Richard Kaspari [pronounced *casper*--the "i" is silent] is a union-side labor lawyer who has represented unions, working people, and non-profit organizations in the Upper Midwest for many years. He graduated from Hibbing High School, completed his undergraduate degree at UW-Madison, and graduated with honors from the University of Minnesota Law School. Prior to becoming an attorney, Dick worked in industry and construction. While working as a public employee, he served as the president of his local union. He is certified as a Labor and Employment Law Specialist by the Minnesota State Bar Association. He has been recognized by his peers as a Minnesota Super Lawyer in each of the last fifteen years. Dick and his wife, Carla Kjellberg, live in Minneapolis.

## Call for Papers: Second Annual IFO LGBTIQAA Conference

The IFO GLBTA Committee is proud to announce our second annual LGBTIQAA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, questioning or queer, asexual, and ally) conference, which will be held on Friday, November 6, 2015, from 8:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. at the Radisson Roseville Hotel. This conference seeks to address the needs and interests of tenured/tenure-track, fixed-term, and adjunct faculty, as well as graduate student teaching assistants, at all the Minnesota state colleges and universities relating to LGBTIQAA issues in and beyond the classroom.

We seek individual paper, panel, roundtable, and workshop proposals relating to the following topics:

- Queer pedagogies
- Being out (or not) in the classroom
- Making courses more LGBTIQAA-friendly
- LGBTIQAA curriculum design and program development
- Intersectionality on campus and in the classroom: race, gender, class, and disability issues for LGBTIQAA teachers
- Being LGBTIQAA on a rural campus
- Queer assemblages
- Bullying and micro-aggressions on campus
- Instituting social justice on campus
- The precarious position of LGBTIQAA graduate teaching assistants and fixed-term and adjunct faculty (quality of life issues)
- Embodiment theory and related themes
- Safe(r) Space raining
- Queer communities of color on campus
- Antiracist activism in LGBTIQAA communities on campus
- Teaching white straight or cisgender privilege on campus
- Gender identity and expression in the classroom
- Being an ally on campus
- And any other LGBTIQAA issues that interest or affect faculty

Please e-mail abstracts (250 words each) for 20-minute papers, panel proposals (3-4 papers), roundtable proposals (3-4 participants), and workshops that include: the author/authors' name(s), title(s), institutional affiliation(s), and email address(es) by Monday, May 18th to: [engdahl@ifo.org](mailto:engdahl@ifo.org).

Acceptances will be issued in July along with further details about parking and accommodations for the conference.

Questions regarding the conference may be directed to Andrea Wood, the Chair of the IFO GLBTA Issues Committee, at [awood@winona.edu](mailto:awood@winona.edu).

## Meet the New IFO Staff

### Aaron Lichtov, Administrative Assistant



Aaron Lichtov comes to the IFO with more than two decades of experience in nonprofit administration that has included marketing and communications; graphic design; tier-1 and -2 tech support on Mac, PC, and mobile platforms; facilities management; development; and systems design/process improvement.

He also spent several years as an independent consultant, conducting trainings and facilitating workshops for college classes, community groups, and other organizations on topics related to sexual orientation and gender identity. It was at one of these trainings that he met his wife Molly, a social studies and performing arts teacher at Harding High School in St. Paul. They live literally and figuratively on the border between Minneapolis and St. Paul with their kindergartener (equal parts Powerpuff Girl and Power Ranger), two Border Collies, two cats, and an impressive collection of ramekins.

Aaron attended the University of Minnesota, where he majored in English and minored in linguistics, with a heaping side dish of women's/gender studies and campus organizing. He sat on President Nils Hasselmo's Select Committee on GLB Concerns whose work led to the creation of the U's GLBT Programs Office. He is thrilled to be using his powers for good at the IFO.