

# Inter Faculty Organization

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

## Faculty Update

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### PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

by [Nancy J. Black](#), IFO President

Dear Colleagues,

Two years ago I was elected IFO President. I find it hard to believe it is already election time again. This year we have an unusual situation in that despite extending the deadline for nominations to ensure that all interested faculty had time to present materials I am the only candidate who was put forward for the office of statewide president. I am running for a second term as IFO President, and I would appreciate your support.

The past two years have presented many challenges to faculty, but I believe we have made progress on many fronts:

- We finished negotiations on the 2003-05 contract and achieved legislative ratification despite a fractious and chaotic legislative session that ended in the first government shutdown in state history.
- We successfully spearheaded an initiative to repeal the law prohibiting state universities from offering applied doctoral degrees. We helped kill legislation to allow individuals to be licensed as a teacher without going through a postsecondary teacher preparation program. And, along with many other groups, we lobbied to prevent passage of a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage.
- We joined with the MnSCU administration, other unions, and students to support the MnSCU bonding bill and appropriation request. Despite tight state finances, MnSCU institutions received the largest bonding appropriation in history, and the MnSCU operating budget was increased by \$102 million (8.7%) over the previous biennium.
- We reached a tentative settlement of the 2005-07 IFO/MnSCU contract last October (one of the earliest settlements in our history). The contract was supported by 94.7% of those voting in the ratification election. The contract provided a step (2.4%) increase each year of the contract, plus a 1.35% across the board in the first year. This was an important turn around from the previous biennium, when we received only one step and cuts in our health benefits.

During this session of the legislature we are pursuing an ambitious agenda that includes ratification of our contract, passage of a large bonding bill for improved teaching facilities, and pension improvements for members.

If re-elected as your IFO President, I will continue my quest for competitive and fair compensation for faculty, academic excellence at our state universities, and professional improvement for faculty.

It has been an honor and a tremendous responsibility to serve you for the last two years. I would appreciate your support for my reelection.

To view [Nancy Johnson Black's biography](#) click [here](#). To view [Nancy Johnson Black's endorsements](#) click [here](#).

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION MOVING FAST

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

The 2006 legislative session is off to a fast start. Several bills we are tracking are moving quickly through the legislative committee process. Among these are the following:

The Pension Bill. The omnibus pension bill has passed out of the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement and will be heard in the House Government Operations Committee and the Senate Finance Committee this week. Major provisions of the bill include the merger of the Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) with the Minneapolis Teachers Retirement Fund (MTRF). As part of the deal, TRA contributions would be raised from 5% to 5.5%, and the annual TRA service credit would be increased (prospectively) from 1.7% to 1.9% for each year of service. This bill seems to have broad bipartisan support this year, and it passed out of the Pension Commission unanimously. The biggest obstacle may be Governor Pawlenty, who opposed it in the past. The bill has changed slightly, so the governor may change his position on the matter.

The Labor Contract Ratification Bill. The bill to ratify the public employee labor contracts including the IFO/MnSCU contract, passed out of the Legislative Subcommittee on Employee Relations in January, and last week passed the House Governmental Operations Committee unanimously. The bill is now in the State Department's Finance Division in the House and the Finance Committee in the Senate. There is little controversy about the labor contracts themselves. The biggest dangers are that the bill will be attached to another bill that contains controversial provisions, or that the legislative process could "melt down" like last year. If the IFO contract is not ratified by the time the legislature adjourns, the contract dies and faculty would revert to the coverage and pay of the 2003-05 contract. Legislative leaders of both parties have guaranteed us the contracts will pass.

The Bonding Bill. The higher education section of the bonding bill will be heard in both the House and Senate Higher Education Committees this week. IFO President Nancy Black will be testifying along with Chancellor James McCormick and student representatives. The bill will also be heard in the House Capital Investment Committee. MnSCU is requesting \$280 million for building and repair projects. Governor Pawlenty is recommending only \$142 million. This prompted Sen. Keith Langseth, author of the Senate bonding bill, to ask why the governor doesn't like MnSCU. It appears both the House and Senate are likely to add significantly to the governor's proposal for MnSCU.

The Supplemental Appropriation Bill. According to the latest revenue forecast, the state has a slight budget surplus. However, the \$88 million surplus won't go far on a nearly \$30 billion state budget. It is doubtful there will be a higher education supplemental appropriation this year. If there is one, it is likely to be quite small. This issue will be heard in the Senate Higher Education Committee this week.

The Alternative Teacher Licensure Bill. Last week the House Education Committee passed a bill authored by Rep. Sonja Erickson that would provide alternative pathways to teacher licensure for mid-career people who decide they want to become teachers. The teacher candidates would not have to go through a college or university teacher preparation program. Instead they could enroll in an on-the-job mentoring program that would be combined with nine credits of pre-induction preparation, 200 clock hours of instruction during the mentorship, and an intensive one week workshop at the end of the mentorship. The bill is targeted at areas of teacher shortage, such as science, math, and global languages. A bill like this passed the House in each of the last two sessions, but didn't make it through the Senate. I expect the same thing will happen this year.

Concurrent Enrollment Bill Introduced. One surprise this year was a bill introduced by Rep. Marty Seifert, Republican-Marshall, to prevent higher education systems and institutions from passing policies that would restrict teaching postsecondary courses in high-schools. The bill is co-authored by thirty-two legislators, including most campus legislators. It is a reaction to plans by MnSCU to raise the credential requirements of K-12 teachers teaching courses under the supervision of postsecondary faculty. The bill seems to have caught MnSCU totally off guard. MnSCU officials are trying to work with Seifert to respond to his concerns.

Some of the bills we are following will reach the House and Senate floors in the next couple of weeks. After passing the House and Senate floors the bills will go to conference committees that work out the differences between the House and Senate versions of the bills. I expect the conference committees to be completing their work in April, and legislators will go home. This is likely to be one of the shortest sessions on record.

For a list of IFO's legislative goals for this session, click [here](#).

## NEGOTIATOR'S REPORT

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

Since the conclusion of negotiations last fall, there have been some incidents in which the amount of money not obtained through negotiations has been raised. The amount that has been circulating around is \$12 million dollars and is attributed to statements made by Chris Dale of the central MnSCU office to various campus administrators.

This figure is at odds with the amount stated by the same person when he appeared before the Joint Subcommittee on Employee Relations at its January 10 meeting. When asked by one of the legislators about the lack of a merit/incentive pay feature in our agreement (you can go to the JSER website and access the audio of the hearing to confirm this), Mr. Dale stated that the amount of such pay could have been \$1 million dollars, not \$12 million. In negotiations, the total amount of money offered for giving up things like tenure for administrators, creation of a new sub-class of faculty, an extreme makeover make over to the tenure/promotion process and other proposals that the IFO Board and Delegate Assembly have opposed, was about \$1.4 million dollars per year. Add them all up over 2 years and the maximum amount is \$4.8 million dollars, roughly a third of the amount mentioned. In summary, it appears that either Mr. Dale told our presidents and deans an incorrect amount or the legislative body that oversees his operations.

Assuming that his number for the amount for merit/incentive pay was accurate brings another problem to light. At several times during the course of negotiations the team tried to fix an amount for this so as to not have it become the sole means by which faculty would receive pay increases (a throwback to the Bad Old Days before the salary schedule - read [Rookery Blues](#) for graphic descriptions). The MnSCU team used an accounting method that carried over optional or discretionary payments in past agreements as

future obligations, meaning that the cost of things like overloads, extra duty days, sabbaticals or promotions are built into the contract.

Furthermore, MnSCU DID NOT want to assign a cost to merit/incentive pay for this contract but would include the figure in future contracts once it had been established. This could have a number of bad effects.

If the amount of merit pay given out in this agreement was actually \$12 million dollars that would carry over into the next contract and replace dollars normally going to across-the-board pay raises, insurance, salary equity, etc. In an attempt to deal with the issue and in exchange for meaningful teaching workload reduction the team proposed total amounts to be given out for merit/incentive awards ranging from \$400,000 dollars to \$4 million dollars (the high end figure was our estimate of the amount currently being given out in the form of non-contractual duty days, reassigned time, etc.). We were told that MnSCU had NO INTEREST in fixing an amount for this and we were also given poor counter-offers containing the other side's version of teaching workload reduction.

These two things combined with the amount of money being offered (about \$12 dollars per faculty member per week) and problems in MnSCU's costing of our settlement made rejecting these offers the reasonable thing to do.

Lastly, assuming that there are these millions of dollars out there that were originally designated for faculty pay, the question arises as to where the money went. There is absolutely no reason that this money couldn't have gone back to the faculty in other forms or have been used to fill needed faculty positions.

If you have questions about this or other issues, [email me](#) or better yet, ask me in person at the Delegate Assembly.

## DELEGATE ASSEMBLY 2006

by [Cindy Finch](#), Administrative Assistant

We are almost one week away from the Delegate Assembly that will be held at the Roseville Radisson on March 24-25. We have a full agenda this year that includes Minnesota gubernatorial candidate presentations on Friday afternoon and MnSCU's Chancellor James McCormick at Friday's dinner banquet. If you are one of the 200 registered delegates, you should be receiving an informational email by the end of this week.

At this point all new resolutions not already submitted to your faculty association president may be introduced at the Delegate Assembly, but only with a majority of delegates voting to consider it and it will require a two-thirds majority to pass.

For more information on the IFO Delegate Assembly (i.e. resolutions, tentative agenda, location), click [here](#). If you have questions, please send me an email by clicking [here](#).

## CITY WALK CONDOMINIUM FOR SALE

The Inter Faculty Organization is selling its City Walk condominium located in downtown St. Paul. It is a large two bedroom unit with two garage stalls, listed at \$229,000. All inquiries should be directed to Betty Herbert, Edina Realty, 651-225-3925.

## 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](#).