

INTER FACULTY ORGANIZATION

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

FACULTY UPDATE

VOLUME XXVII No. 3

www.ifo.org

JANUARY 2005

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Welcome back to spring semester! This is a busy time of year for the IFO—the legislative session has begun, and we are preparing for the next round of negotiations.

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Task Forces Look at Faculty Workload and Salary Competitiveness

Our Negotiating Team successfully bargained for the creation of two important task forces in our current contract: Costing Teaching Workload and Other Faculty Assignments and Faculty Salary Competitiveness. I am pleased that Wil Harri, Office Administrator, from the IFO office and Ruth Zietlow, IFO Board Member, will be providing leadership to support the IFO faculty representatives from each campus for the Costing Teaching Workload Task Force and Russ Stanton, Director of Government Relations is serving in the same capacity for the Faculty Salary Competitiveness Task Force

These Task Forces' work is crucial to the Negotiations Team for the next round of negotiations which begin shortly. If you wish to discuss these issues with your campus representative on the Task Force, we are providing their names below:

Costing Teaching Workload and Other Faculty Assignments:

Bemidji State University	Mary Ann Papanek-Miller
Metropolitan State University	Ruth Zietlow
Minnesota State University, Mankato	Sandra Eggenberger
Minnesota State University Moorhead	Mike Ruth
St. Cloud State University	Chuck Cantale*
Southwest Minnesota State University	Vicky Brockman
Winona State University	Kelly Herold

*= No faculty volunteers from SCSU came forward so a rep from Minnesota State University, Mankato was appointed to fill this position.

Faculty Salary Competitiveness:

Bemidji State University	Kate Smith
Metropolitan State University	Gary Starr
Minnesota State University, Mankato	Howard Miller
Minnesota State University Moorhead	Joann Segovia
St. Cloud State University	Dale Buske
Southwest Minnesota State University	Jo Dohoney
Winona State University	Mark Wrolstad

Both task forces have met once with their MnSCU counterparts. The task forces have a deadline of May 1, 2005 to submit a report on their findings. I want to thank all of the faculty who agreed to serve on these task forces. Your work is an important part of the preparation for the next round of bargaining.

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, the Higher Education 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 also purchased two tables for the event.

The event will take place March 31, 2005 at the Prom Center in Woodbury. They are requesting donations in the form of a gift certificate or unique item 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. If you have an interest in attending the event on March 31, 2005 or wish to contribute to the Silent Auction, please contact MSUSA staff person, [Kathy Hanon](#) at 651-224-1518.

Welcome to New Staff Member, Tiffany Nelson

IFO has a new staff member. Tiffany Nelson started her paralegal position with the IFO St. Paul office on January 3. We are very pleased that she will be providing research and secretarial support to Frank Conroy, Director Labor of Relations, and Pat Arseneault, Equity Advocate as well as the IFO Negotiating Team. Tiffany comes to us from US Bancorp where she was working as a paralegal/legal records coordinator for the last five years. She earned her B.A. summa cum laude, double-majoring in cultural anthropology and American Indian studies from the University of Minnesota and is also a graduate of Hamline University School of Law. She can be reached at nelson@ifo.org, 651/227-8442 x 13.

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

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

Bonding Bill Back on the Front Burner

Last year the Senate failed by a mere two votes to pass a bonding bill to build and repair state buildings. Although all 34 DFLers, plus three Republicans and an Independent voted for the bill, the bill fell short of the special 60% majority (41 votes) needed to pass a bonding bill. As a result, the \$234 million worth of MnSCU building projects went down to defeat.

The failure of the legislature to pass a bonding bill contributed to a public perception of a "do nothing

legislature” and a political backlash in the November elections. To make matters worse, construction costs skyrocketed by over 8% since the legislature failed to pass the bonding bill, adding \$23 million to the cost of MnSCU’s proposed construction projects. There is now a lot of pressure for legislators to pass a bonding bill before costs go up even more. One of the first big debates of the new session will be passing a bonding bill.

Two days after the elections in November, Senate DFLers said they would introduce a bill essentially the same as the bill that failed last session, but with adjustments for the inflation of construction costs. The Senate bill last year called for \$948 million in bonding, of which \$274 million was for MnSCU. The Senate DFL majority said they hope to pass the bill by the end of January.

The Governor said he wanted a special session to pass a small bonding bill, but his proposal drew little serious consideration. The Governor recently increased his offer, calling for an \$816 million bill, but with only \$100 million for MnSCU projects. This \$12 million more than he proposed for MnSCU last year, with the increases coming in the form of inflation adjustments to projects and an additional request for science lab renovations.

On the second day of session the new House Capital Investment Chair, Dan Dorman of Albert Lea, introduced House File 3, the Republican bonding proposal. It calls for a \$642 million bonding bill, with \$129.7 million for MnSCU. Last year the House passed a \$147 million bonding bill, but dropped a \$10 million project for Bemidji and an \$8.3 million project for Lake Superior CCTC. One thing appears certain, there will be action on a bonding bill early in the session.

State Universities Have a Lot at Stake in the Bonding Bill

Minnesota’s state universities have over \$90 million at stake in the bonding bill, both for building projects and Higher Education Asset Preservation and Repair (HEAPR) projects. HEAPR funds are used for urgently needed repairs on leaky roofs, boiler replacements, etc. Here is a list of the state university projects in MnSCU’s bonding request.

PROJECT	REQUEST	PRIORITY
Bemidji State University		
Bridgeman Hall Renovation/Health Addition	\$10,000,000	#22
HEAPR projects for roof repair, boilers, etc.	\$5,900,000	#1
Metropolitan State University		
Part of MCTC science lab renovations	\$5,790,000	#25
HEAPR projects for security systems, signage, repair HVAC and electrical systems	\$935,000	#1
Minnesota State University, Mankato		
New science addition/Trafton renovation design	\$2,560,000	#22
HEAPR projects for roofs, ceiling and elevator replacement, repair of Trafton Plaza, etc.	\$8,280,000	#1
Minnesota State University Moorhead		
Hagen Hall Science Renovation	\$9,645,000	#3
Design McLean Hall Renovation	\$500,000	#30

HEAPR projects for elevators, roofs, sprinklers, ceilings, lighting, ADA accessibility, etc.	\$8,267,000	#1
St. Cloud State University		
Centennial Hall	\$2,900,000	#5
Brown Hall/Science and Math renovation design	\$9,000,000	#23
HEAPR projects for floors, roofs, sprinklers, windows, dormers, etc.	\$8,420,000	#1
Southwest Minnesota State University		
HEAPR projects for chiller plant, roof replacements, street lights, fire safety, etc.	\$3,766,468	#1
Winona State University		
Pasteur Hall renovation	\$10,235,000	#2
HEAPR-replace HVAC system and locker room.	\$5,294,000	#1

Now is the Time to Contact Your Legislators to Support the Bonding Bill

Legislators will be considering and voting upon bonding bills within the next month. Now is the time to send an e-mail to your legislators to urge them to support the bonding bill. Keep your message short, polite, and to the point. Points you should emphasize are:

- We support the MnSCU bonding request and prioritization. These projects are urgently needed, particularly the HEAPR projects that will repair and maintain our existing infrastructure.
- The delay in passing a bonding bill last session cost the state tens of millions of dollars in added construction costs, higher interest rates, and further deterioration of buildings. To delay the passage of the bonding bill will cost even more.
- These construction projects will improve the quality of education at our universities, provide jobs, and inject money into local economies.
- If your local legislator(s) voted for the bonding bill last year, thank them for their support and urge them to continue their support. If your legislator did not support the bonding bill last time, politely request their support this time around (provided your local projects are included in the bill).

The following is a list of campus area legislators and their e-mail addresses. Remember, we only have to pick up two votes in the Senate to pass the bonding bill. The pressure is building to pass a bonding bill--write your area legislators now. *Those with an asterisk by their name supported the bonding bill last session.*

Bemidji State University

Sen. Carrie Ruud (Republican) sen.carrie.ruud@senate.mn

Rep. Frank Moe (DFL) (new) rep.frank.moe@house.mn

Metropolitan State University

*Sen. Mee Moua (DFL) sen.mee.moua@senate.mn

*Sen. Linda Higgins (DFL) sen.linda.higgins@senate.mn

Rep. Sheldon Johnson (DFL) rep.sheldon.johnson@house.mn

*Rep. Margaret Kelliher (DFL) rep.margaret.keliher@house.mn

*Rep. Keith Ellison (DFL) rep.keith.ellison@house.mn

Minnesota State University, Mankato

*Sen. John Hottinger (DFL) http://www.senate.mn/members/sendis23_email.htm

*Rep. John Dorn (DFL) rep.john.dorn@house.mn

Rep. Ruth Johnson (DFL) (new) rep.ruth.johnson@house.mn

Minnesota State University Moorhead

*Sen. Keith Langseth (DFL) (chief author) sen.keith.langseth@senate.mn

Rep. Morrie Lanning (Republican) rep.morrie.lanning@house.mn

Rep. Paul Marquart (DFL) rep.paul.marquart@house.mn

St. Cloud State University

Sen. Dave Kleis (Republican) sen.dave.kleis@senate.mn

*Rep. Joe Opatz (DFL) rep.joe.opatz@house.mn

*Rep. Jim Knoblach (Republican) rep.jim.knoblach@house.mn

Southwest Minnesota State University

Sen. Dennis Frederickson (Republican) sen.dennis.frederickson@senate.mn

*Rep. Marty Seifert (Republican) rep.marty.seifert@house.mn

Winona State University

*Sen. Bob Kierlin (Republican) sen.bob.kierlin@senate.mn

*Rep. Gene Pelowski (DFL) (co-author) rep.gene.pelowski@house.mn

*Rep. Steve Sviggum (Republican) rep.steven.sviggum@house.mn

Rochester Center

*Sen. Sheila Kiscaden (Independent) sen.sheila.kiscaden@senate.mn

Rep. Tina Liebling (DFL) (new) rep.tina.liebling@house.mn

BENEFIT NEWS

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

New Health Reimbursement Arrangements (HRAs) Become Effective

In the last round of negotiations the IFO was the first state union to negotiate the creation of Health Reimbursement Arrangements, or HRAs, through which faculty can pay for health related expenses, such as deductibles and co-pays on a pre-tax basis. These new accounts are like flexible spending accounts except that unused balances can be carried forward from year to year, and even into retirement. For 2005 the IFO negotiated a \$600 employer contribution to the account of each insurance eligible faculty member. In future years, the employer will contribute \$500 per year.

MnSCU will not have the HRA program up and running until March or April of this year, but all uncovered medical expenses incurred after January 1, 2005 are eligible for reimbursement under the program. **SAVE YOUR RECIEPTS FOR MEDICAL EXPENDITURES AFTER JANUARY 1ST. YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED WHEN THE HRA PROGRAM IS OPERATIONAL, AND YOU MAY SUBMIT YOUR MEDICAL EXPENSES AT THAT TIME.**

Retirement Notification Deadline

Faculty members who plan to retire at the end of fall semester 2005, and who are eligible for the early separation incentive in Article 15 of the IFO/MnSCU Contract, must submit their notification of intent to retire by January 15, 2005 to qualify for the early separation incentive and the final year two-step increase. Faculty members who plan to enter the Phased Retirement Program or the Annuitant Employment Program at the start of spring semester 2006 should also submit their application by January 15, 2005. If you have questions about these issues contact Russ Stanton at stanton@ifo.org. He can supply you with form letters for retirement notification and application for the phased retirement programs.

Taxation of Tuition Waiver Benefits

MnSCU recently released some valuable information on the tax treatment of tuition waivers and tuition reimbursements. If you take undergraduate courses via the tuition waiver, you will not be subject to tax on the benefit. However, if you receive tuition reimbursement for undergraduate courses, you will be subject to taxation on tuition reimbursement in excess of \$5250 per calendar year. You will be subject to taxation on graduate level tuition waiver and/or reimbursements in excess of \$5250. Courses taken by your spouse and dependents will not be subject to taxation on tuition waivers on undergraduate courses, but will be subject to taxation on graduate level courses. For more information on this visit www.ifo.org and click on "Taxation of Tuition Waiver Benefits".

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 also send us an email by clicking [here](#).