

# Inter Faculty Organization

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

## Faculty Update

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

Dear Colleagues:

As the academic year comes to a close, contract negotiations and coalition bargaining on health insurance have taken center stage. Our [Negotiating Team](#) is hard at work and have already been meeting with MnSCU negotiators. Intense and tough negotiations are ahead. The key question is where is the state government going to come up with the revenue to support higher education?

Governor Pawlenty addressed the MnSCU Board of Trustees session on April 20 - the first time a governor has come to a Board meeting. He shared some of his thoughts on the need for new strategies for today's challenges in higher education "as we climb out of the budget deficit." The governor ended with the message that was a need for us all to work together to improve the educational system in Minnesota. As the legislative session is supposed to draw to a close on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, we hope that such is the case. We have made significant progress, and it looks as if we will see an increase in state funding of 8 to 10 percent over the last biennium. However, both the House of Representatives and the Senate proposals are based on an agreement to raise more revenue. The Senate proposes to raise revenue by increasing taxes on high income earners. The House and governor are proposing expanded gambling. This situation is a house of cards that could come tumbling down at any moment.

Commencement is time of celebration at our state university campuses. My hope is that you enjoy and take pride in the excitement and accomplishments of the fruits of your labor as more than 10,800 state university students graduate this spring. Best wishes to you in the summer months.

### Health Reimbursement Accounts

by [Wil Harri](#), *Office Administrator*

Faculty members ceasing employment at a Minnesota State University this spring will continue to have

HRA money available for reimbursement of medical expenses incurred up to December 31, 2005, or until their balance is exhausted whichever one comes first. The Health Reimbursement Arrangement accounts (HRA) are fully operational and all insurance-eligible faculty have \$568.67 available to them for reimbursement of out-of-pocket medical expenses incurred since January 1, 2005. The HRA monies are paid out after monies from the Flexible Spending Account (medical expense reimbursement account) have been exhausted for the calendar year. The reimbursement request form with a listing of eligible reimbursable medical expenses may be obtained at:

<https://secure.eidebailly.com/benefits/stateforms.asp>. Any unused balance remaining at year end will carry over to 2006.

## The Legislature: Where We Stand on IFO Goals

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

The regular session of the Minnesota legislature will come to an end on May 23. The following is a brief summary of where we stand on IFO legislative goals:

### 1. Bonding

The IFO supported the MnSCU bonding request to build and repair MnSCU facilities. The bill passed into law earlier in the session, providing MnSCU with \$213.6 million. MnSCU was by far the biggest recipient of funds in the bill and every single MnSCU project was funded.

### 2. Avoiding Budget Cuts

When the session began, the IFO feared higher education might suffer further budget cuts due to a large state budget shortfall. It looks like we avoided budget cuts. Governor Pawlenty proposed a \$107.5 million increase in funding for MnSCU. The House bill calls for a \$102.3 million increase and the Senate a \$125.6 million increase. The bills have passed the House and Senate and are in a House/Senate conference committee that is working out the final compromise bill. It looks like even under the lowest proposal, MnSCU will get about a 8.04% increase over last biennium.

### 3. Funding Enrollment Growth

MnSCU has \$130 million coming to it under the higher education funding formula to cover enrollment growth. \$72 million of this is base, or recurring funding and \$58 million is one-time money due to enrollment that wasn't funded in the past. IFO's highest priority was to fund this enrollment growth – particularly the \$72 million increase in base funding.

Governor Pawlenty proposed to not fund enrollment growth at all. The House provided \$55,375,000 of undesignated funding increases to cover enrollment. The Senate funded the \$72 million base increase for enrollment growth.

### 4. Line Item Budgeting

The IFO opposes line item appropriations that “fence” discrete amounts of funding for specific purposes. We prefer general appropriations to MnSCU for enrollment and inflation, leaving it up to MnSCU (and in the case of compensation, the collective bargaining process) to determine how the money is spent.

The Governor proposed “fencing” \$57 million for: “Centers of Excellence” (\$20 million); competitive salaries for personnel at “Centers of Excellence” (\$5 million); MN Online (\$14 million); nursing programs (\$10 million); and farm and small business programs (\$3 million). He also proposed \$50 million to be allocated to the campuses for general purposes.

The House cut the funding for the “Centers of Excellence” to \$15 million and MN Online to \$5 million. They increased the funding for competitive salaries to \$13.9 million and the general appropriations to the campuses to \$55,375,000. They also fenced \$10 million for nursing programs and \$3 million for farm

and small business programs.

The Senate did not fence money through line items. Instead they provided a \$125,560,000 increase to MnSCU and said the increase was to cover “funding for the recurring enrollment adjustment and money to strengthen and expand the Minnesota online program, increase the capacity for training nurses and teachers, provide for the management education needs of farm and small business owners, provide services and outreach to underserved populations, provide needed repair and replacement of facilities, and encourage and reward excellence performance by faculty or staff.” No discrete dollar amounts were attached to each imitative. The Senate bill did not provide any funding for “Centers of Excellence”.

The IFO is supporting the Senate approach to the budget because it provides \$23 million more in funding from the House bill, and the Senate bill provides more spending flexibility than the House bill.

#### 5. Applied Doctorates

The IFO arranged to have legislation introduced that repeals the law that prevents state universities from offering applied doctoral programs. The legislation is included in both the House and Senate bills, so it should pass. The Senate bill gives the state universities general authority to offer applied doctorates; the House bill authorizes applied doctorates in the areas of education, psychology, physical therapy, audiology and nursing. We prefer the Senate approach because it is more flexible.

#### 6. Resident Tuition for Undocumented Students who Graduate from Minnesota High Schools

The IFO supported legislation to allow the children of undocumented citizens who attended and graduated from Minnesota high schools to attend Minnesota post-secondary institutions at resident tuition rates. This legislation passed in the Senate but was not included in the House bill. I expect it to be included in the final conference committee bill.

#### 7. Rochester University

Both the House and Senate bills contain provisions calling for a study of expanded higher education opportunities in Rochester. The report will be due on January 15, 2006. The House bill provides \$3 million for expanding programs – the Senate bill \$2.5 million.

I was able to get language inserted into both bills that reads, “If the committee recommends any programmatic changes that result in institutional realignments, the committee must consult with the representatives of affected employees and address the continuation of collective bargaining and contractual rights and benefits including accumulated sick leave, vacation time, seniority, time to tenure, separation or retirement benefits, and pension plan coverage.”

#### 8. Alternative Teacher Licensure

The IFO opposed legislation that would allow individuals to be licensed as teachers without going through post-secondary teacher preparation programs. The legislation was not included in the Senate K-12 education bill but is included, in watered-down form, in the House bill. The House bill requires that the alternative programs be offered by post-secondary institutions so it gives post-secondary institutions some control over how they are designed. It is hard to predict how this provision will turn out.

#### 9. IFO Contract Ratification

It might surprise some people to know that the 2003-2005 IFO/MnSCU contract, although implemented last fall, is still not ratified by the legislature. If the contract is not ratified by the May 23<sup>rd</sup> adjournment, it will be void and we will revert to the coverage of the previous contract. So far the ratification has advanced without controversy. It has passed both the House and Senate as part of a larger State Department Appropriation Bill. The only problem I foresee is that the conference committee on the State Departments Appropriation Bill could deadlock over matters unrelated to our contract the whole bill could

go down. For the moment, the ratification process is moving forward.

There are many other less important issues that the IFO is tracking. If you have any questions on legislative matters, please call me at 800-325-9644, extension 14, or send me an email at [stanton@ifo.org](mailto:stanton@ifo.org).

## Negotiations Update

by [Rod Henry](#), Lead Negotiator, Bemidji State University

Since the last Negotiations report, the IFO Team has had its initial meetings with the MnSCU negotiators. At these initial meetings a variety of topics were presented and discussed including the presentation of initial proposals. After introductions, the IFO Team confirmed its willingness to bargain on May 5 and 6 as well as May 19 and 20. We also let the MnSCU negotiators know that we would be available for sessions any Thursday or Friday in the coming month of June. We also proposed a cutoff date for language proposals from either side of May 19. Other protocols were also discussed prior to presentation of our initial contract language and economic proposals.

Our initial proposals consisted of proposals made in prior years based on Delegate Assembly resolutions as well as others from the most recent Delegate Assembly, Board input, and discussion of grievances and arbitrations. Our economic proposals were framed in the context of our Chancellor's statements to our last Delegate Assembly that he wanted to bring our compensation up from its current national percentile (somewhere between the 50<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup>, depending on rank) to the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile. A combination of across-the-board raises and steps were used to achieve this.

Later, MnSCU made its initial contract language proposals after a brief statement by MnSCU's John Shabatura relating to MnSCU objectives or concerns in this round of negotiations. Some of the many changes put forth by MnSCU that may be of interest to faculty are a change in the structure of duty days, changes in compensation for a variety of courses including ITV, changes in the career steps concept, and changes in Salary Equity reviews.

Separately, the IFO Team also discussed recent LOUs and the process for making recommendations regarding them as they pertain to the IFO operating procedures. The Team is also seeking a change in our ability to cost the contract changes by either getting an improved template from MnSCU or deriving our own, similar to a process used by the recent Costing Teaching Workload Reductions task force.

The IFO Team met with MnSCU on May 5 and May 6. At this meeting the IFO presented MnSCU with the key objectives or concerns in this round of bargaining. Specifically, we agree with the Chancellor that faculty salaries should be at the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile nationally. We also feel that benefit cuts have gone far enough and that there has to be restoration of past losses. The IFO also believes that changes in the distribution of workload are required to enable faculty to fulfill the key evaluative criteria in the present environment. We were able to reach tentative agreements on several technical changes and the removal of obsolete language. MnSCU has yet to provide an economic proposal, which is tied into contract language issues, which makes progress in negotiations harder to achieve. Both sides also agreed on several meeting dates in June.

I want to close by thanking again all of those who participated in our first action of the session and who have volunteered for future actions – it helps the Team immensely.

## Action Update

by [Judy Kilborn](#), IFO Action Chair, St. Cloud State University

Thank you for participating in early action this spring. Although most actions have been simple -- wearing buttons, putting up posters, and using the talking points to clarify the stakes we face as we try to Stop the Slide! -- these actions are essential in building the argument that this round of negotiations will not be business as usual.

Already, these simple actions have begun to build a base of support for our negotiating team that could make a significant difference for the contract. In St. Cloud later this month, leaders of AFSCME, MAPE, MMA, and MSUAASF will meet with the FA leadership and local action to discuss the Stop the Slide! campaign.

At Bemidji State University (whose well-timed local actions during the final stage of our last contract negotiations helped to bring the contract to closure), early action put pressure on the governor during an April 27th Chamber of Commerce breakfast at the American Indian Resource Center. According to local action chair, Sharon Gritzmacher, faculty wearing Stop the Slide! buttons and carrying Stop the Slide! posters joined nearly 40 students in informational bannered outside the building on a wintry day -- 24 above with a stiff wind. Faculty offered Stop the Slide! buttons to people attending the breakfast, including BSU's president, Jon Quistgaard. Students wore VOTER tags, carried tuition freeze posters, and chanted their tuition freeze slogans. Gritzmacher reported that "Pawlenty worked the crowd, shaking everyone's hand, and gave an impromptu speech about rising costs in MnSCU. Not surprisingly, he laid the blame on health care and personnel costs."

Clearly, this round of negotiations is going to be difficult. Please hold onto your buttons and posters, and be ready to pull them out in the fall if action is warranted. This summer, we'll be making plans for this action. Please contact your [local action chair](#) or [Judy Kilborn](#), State Action Chair, with additional ideas. Unified, positive, and highly visible actions early in the process should preclude the need for more dramatic actions later on.

## Call for Proposals: IFO Feminist Issues \$3,000 Grant Announcement

by [Patrice Arseneault](#), Equity Advocate

The statewide IFO Feminist Issues Committee (FIC) seeks proposals for the next two-year \$3,000 Feminist Issues Grant period, extending from May 2006 to March 2008. The IFO Feminist Issues 2006-2008 Grant is designed to promote research, projects, or creative works that contribute to the advancement of women in the IFO and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.

The amount of funding (up to \$3,000) will be commensurate with the successful applicant's proposed expenses. The grant recipient is expected to share his/her results and/or experiences in writing or in another appropriate forum on individual campuses or with the system wide membership. Please contact a member of [Feminist Issues Committee](#) if you have questions on the grant.

Applications for the grant are due no later than January 23, 2006. The FIC will conduct a blind review of all applications, and will forward a recommendation to the IFO Board of Directors for approval on or before the April 20-21, 2006 meeting. The committee is open to a wide range of possibilities for consideration in the application process, including surveys, workshops or other projects, artistic creations or other creative endeavors. Please see the IFO webpage [announcement for the FI Grant](#) Application Outline and other information relative to grant submission.

## 2005-06 IFO Dues and Fair Share Fees

At their April 21-22, 2005 meeting, the IFO Board of Directors authorized keeping dues at the current level of 2004-05 for the 2005-06 academic year. As a result of the Board's action, dues/fair share fees have remain unchanged since the 2002-03 academic year. Dues/fair share fees for 2005-06 are

detailed below.

All faculty teaching more than 3 semester credit hours or teaching more than one course during the academic year are employees in the IFO bargaining unit and pay either dues (if a [member](#)) or a fair share fee (if a nonmember) according to the following schedule adopted by the Delegate Assembly in March 2004:

APPOINTMENT	ANNUAL DUES	PAYCHECK DEDUCTION	FAIR SHARE FEE	PAYCHECK DEDUCTION
Full-time (75% or more)	\$652.50	43.50	\$554.50	36.96
45% to 74% of full-time	\$326.25	21.75	\$277.25	18.48
Adjunct and Community Faculty	\$130.50	43.50	\$110.88	36.96

Faculty on sabbatical or phased retirement will pay reduced dues if the sabbatical or appointment reduces salary below 75% of base salary. Faculty on unpaid leave must pay the adjunct rate to maintain membership status.

#### PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS

Faculty with full-time, year-long 2005-2006 appointments will ordinarily have their dues or fair share fees deducted from their paychecks in 15 equal installments. Deductions will begin in September or October, 2005 and extend into April, 2006. For faculty with less than 75% of full-time assignments or faculty with other types of appointments deductions will follow a schedule determined by the Inter Faculty Organization. Dues deductions will ordinarily be \$43.50 per pay period and Fair Share payments will be \$36.96 per pay period. Adjunct dues or fair share assessments will normally be deducted in three equal installments.

You may also choose to pay your dues or fair share assessment in one lump sum by sending a check for the full amount for your appointment category. Make the check payable to Inter Faculty Organization and send it to: Attention: Membership, Inter Faculty Organization, 165 Western Avenue North Suite 8, St. Paul, MN 55102-4613.

In order to avoid complications with the State payroll process, lump sum payment checks must be received by the IFO Office prior to September 1, 2005.

#### 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](#).