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In This Issue:

Click on titles to go straight to the story.

- [Please Vote Yes on IFO Contract Ratification!](#)
- [Open Enrollment for Health, Dental, and Other Benefits](#)
- [IFO Supports Keeping TIAA-CREF, SBI as Investment Options](#)

PLEASE VOTE "YES" ON IFO CONTRACT RATIFICATION!

by [Nancy Black](#), IFO President

On October 15th the IFO and MnSCU negotiations team reached a tentative agreement on a contract for the 2005-07 biennium. In order for this proposed contract to be implemented, it must first be ratified by the IFO membership, and then approved by the MnSCU Board of Trustees before it can be implemented by a legislative committee that has the authority to implement contracts agreed upon between legislative sessions.

VOTING DAY: On November 16, 2005, the faculty will vote on whether or not to ratify the contract.

The [IFO Negotiations Team](#) recommends a "YES" vote to ratify the contract. The [IFO Board of Directors](#) reviewed the contract on October 28th, and recommends a "YES" vote to ratify the contract. Finally, I recommend ratification of this contract. This contract (described below) provides significant pay increases compared to recent settlements, and after 8 months of tough negotiations, we believe it is the best we can do at this time.

Pay Increases for 2005-06

The proposed contract raises all salaries on the salary grid by 1.35%, retroactive to July 1, 2005. This provides a 1.35% pay increase to all faculty, including almost all new hires. In addition, all returning faculty will receive a step increase (2.4%) effective July 1, 2005. This means most faculty will see their pay increase by 3.75% this year. A new step will be added to the top of both the Instructor lane and the Professor lane.

Pay Increases in 2006-07

The proposed contract provides an additional step increase (2.4%) starting July 1, 2006. Faculty who are at the top step (Step 49) will receive a one-time payment of \$2400 in lieu of a step increase. For most faculty, the total (compounded) salary increase over the two-year contract period will be 6.24%.

Health Insurance

Health insurance coverages and the premiums paid by the employee will remain the same in calendar year 2006 as they are in 2005. Co-payments for office visits will go up \$5, but this co-payment increase will not be charged for any faculty member who fills out a voluntary, confidential, on-line [health assessment](#) during open enrollment.

Dental Insurance

Dental insurance premiums for employees will go up \$5 per month for 2006. However, dental restorative reimbursement benefits will increase from 50% to 60%.

Health Reimbursement Arrangements (HRAs)

The on-going annual employer contribution to employee HRA accounts will be permanently increased from \$500/year to \$600/year, starting January 1, 2006. Also, the administrative fees on the HRA will be eliminated.

Miscellaneous

Many faculty were worried about the loss of certain existing benefits under the contract. I am happy to report that the career steps, early separation incentive, and final year two-step increase remain intact in this contract. There were other small improvements, such as expanded uses for professional travel funds, and health insurance coverage for faculty on education leaves. For a more complete summary of these changes, please visit the IFO website at www.ifo.org.

Language Changes

This is a relatively simple contract settlement in terms of language. There were few changes to contract language, and most of the changes are technical in nature. You can find a complete copy of the proposed text changes in the contract on the IFO web page at www.ifo.org.

For More Information

We want faculty to be thoroughly informed when they cast a vote on contract ratification. Please visit the IFO web site www.ifo.org for complete information on the contract changes and the ratification process.

There will be two information sessions held on each university campus. Members of the [negotiations team](#), [faculty association presidents](#), and in most cases, either Chief Negotiator Rod Henry or I, will present information and answer questions. A listing of the dates and locations of these meeting can be found on the IFO web page: www.ifo.org. Information is being distributed to all departments and will be available through your local [Faculty Association President](#).

Rod Henry, the Chief Negotiator for the IFO, has generously agreed to field questions about the contract via e-mail. You can contact him at: rhenry@bemidjistate.edu.

The sooner we get the contract ratified and processed through the proper channels, the sooner faculty will receive their pay increases and back pay. [Please vote to ratify the contract.](#)

OPEN ENROLLMENT FOR HEALTH, DENTAL, AND OTHER BENEFITS

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

Open Enrollment for faculty benefits will be held from November 3-16, 2005. During this period faculty members can change carriers, add or drop coverages, increase life insurance coverages, and enroll for long term insurance and pre-tax spending accounts. You should have received open enrollment information in the mail. You may enroll online 24 hours a day, seven days a week during the open enrollment period. For complete detailed information on open enrollment visit the Department of Employee Relations web page at: <http://www.doer.state.mn.us/oe/index.htm>.

We have received inquiries about the health assessment that will be conducted by DOER as part of open enrollment. Please understand this is an entirely voluntary health assessment—you do not have to participate in the health assessment. However, there is a financial incentive for completing the assessment—employees who complete the assessment will pay a \$20 co-payment per office visit, whereas employees who do not complete the assessment will pay a \$25 co-payment. The purpose of the assessment is to help employees learn more about managing their personal health. Employees who take the survey may be contacted by phone and receive follow up information from a health coach on disease management, weight control, smoking cessation, etc. The strategy behind the assessment is to try to control health costs by helping people lead healthier lives. DOER says all personal information will be confidential.

IFO SUPPORTS KEEPING TIAA-CREF, SBI AS INVESTMENT OPTIONS

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

At its meeting on October 27th, the IFO Board passed motions in support of keeping the current TIAA-CREF and the State Board of Investments (SBI) funds as investment options under the MnSCU IRAP, Supplemental Retirement, and Tax Sheltered Annuity programs. MnSCU is currently conducting a Request for Proposal (bidding) process for vendors under the retirement programs. IFO is concerned that the structure of investment options under the MnSCU RFP might exclude some or all of the TIAA-CREF or SBI options.

It is very important that faculty understand that the vendor selection process has nothing to do with negotiations or the IFO/MnSCU contract. The vendor selection process is set in law—and IFO's role is advisory only. MnSCU is conducting the RFP process and reorganization of the fund selections. The IFO does want to assure that faculty concerns are heard in the selection process. The IFO positions will be communicated to the Chancellor at Meet and Confer, to the advisory committee that is overseeing the vendor selection process, and to the State Board of Investment that will be making the final decisions on which investment options will be available under the programs.

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](#).