

# INTER FACULTY ORGANIZATION

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

## FACULTY UPDATE

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[www.ifo.org](http://www.ifo.org)

Thank You!

by [Jim Pehler](#), President

Dear Colleagues:

The academic year is drawing to a close along with my second and final term as IFO President. We have been successful in many ways but as you and I both know, it is a never ending battle to retain the rights and duties of faculty within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System.

The largest challenges I see are to remain vigilant in the defense of our contract, to protect the academic freedom of our faculty members and the equitable treatment of all faculty. I am very concerned about what appears to be a continuing attempt to centralize and control the ability of our campuses to meet the needs of our students. We can provide quality academic programs by working in a cooperative responsibility-sharing environment with our local administration.

I am proud to say that your support and the strength of the local campuses have helped to ensure that we have held our own in this effort. You as an individual and as a member of your faculty association through your work on committees such as the Salary Equity Study, Government Relations, Academic Council and many others have proven that we are professionals and have earned respect of state governing authorities.

Your willingness to participate and be active in your union organization is not only what makes our union strong but makes me proud to have been able to have served as your President. I cannot fully express my gratitude for your responsiveness to issues and expressing your concerns. You are the IFO and I want to thank you for your efforts and for allowing me to have the honor to serve as your state IFO President for the last four years. **THANK YOU!**

### Official Election Results

Congratulations to Nancy Black who will become IFO President July 1, 2004. Also, thanks to Chris Brown, Georgia Holmes and George Seldat for their willingness to give up time to run for this office and by continuing to actively serve in IFO/Faculty Association positions.

Campus	Chris Brown	Nancy Black	Georgia Holmes	George Seldat	Total
Bemidji	74	25	6	2	107
Mankato	49	55	40	7	151
Metropolitan	4	101	5	6	116
Moorhead	101	35	0	16	157
St. Cloud	52	145	16	11	227
Southwest	4	33	0	45	82
Winona	54	51	2	15	126

TOTAL	338	445	69	102	966
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## Comments from our President-Elect

by [Nancy Black](#), *President-Elect*

During the IFO presidential campaign, I learned a good deal from campus visits. My election will not be the end of that process. One of the challenges at hand is to rebuild a consensus for our union, and listen to the voices of everyone. Our organization needs the support of all faculty to achieve our common goals.

In this election year, it is vital that voters are reminded how the “Minnesota Miracle” occurred—through access to a high quality public education. The backbone of Minnesota’s economy is broken, and a significant reason why is the failure of our state government and legislators to invest in education as social capital. This social capital has served Minnesota well in the past, and we must ensure that it continues to serve the state in the future. I urge you to get friends of public higher education elected to the legislature and to be vigilant in protecting and improving our public institutions. Your involvement in political activities at all levels, especially working with local and state-wide Government Relations Committees (GRC), is crucial.

I want to thank President Jim Pehler of St. Cloud State University for his fine leadership over the past four years, and I greatly appreciate his support during this transition period. I am following President Pehler’s tradition, and will be visiting campuses to meet with you. The IFO staff works hard for the membership; and as you enter the summer months, the staff and I will be activity involved with MnSCU system initiatives and task forces, stalled IFO contract negotiations, the Citizens’ League study on the future of higher education, and other issues that affect you. My sincere thanks to Chris Brown of Bemidji State University, Georgia Holmes of Minnesota State University, Mankato, and George Seldat of Southwest Minnesota State University, for running formidable, respectful and informed campus campaigns, and for their contributions to this organization over the years.

To paraphrase the late Nobel Prize winning novelist William Faulkner, in solidarity, we will not only endure, we will prevail.

## IFO Requests Injunction for Health Insurance Premiums

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

On Tuesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, in Ramsey County District Court the IFO requested that the court issue a temporary injunction to prevent the state from collecting dependent health care premiums from faculty paychecks. In November, the Department of Employee Relations obtained the consent of the Legislative Joint Committee on Employee Relations to unilaterally impose the uniform insurance plan and premium contribution rate on the IFO bargaining unit members. Claiming that an impasse in negotiations had been reached, the state imposed the new insurance plans approved by all other state bargaining units but continued the non-insurance language of the 2001-2003 IFO/MnSCU Agreement.

The injunction had been filed in conjunction with the filing of an unfair labor practice complaint. In the complaint the IFO argued that the parties were not at impasse in negotiations but rather that the employer had artificially contrived an impasse state. Further, the IFO asserted that the state should have imposed all provisions of their “final settlement” offer made in November, 2003 rather than just the insurance provisions. Other provisions of the final settlement offer either continued the provisions of the now expired contract or improved upon them.

A decision on the injunctive relief request is anticipated shortly. When the case on the unfair labor practices allegations will be heard depends upon the court's calendar but it is likely that a hearing will not occur before the summer months.

## Delegate Assembly Approves 2004-2005 Budget No Dues Increase

Dues and fair share fees are as follows:

APPOINTMENT	ANNUAL DUES	PAYCHECK DEDUCTION	FAIR SHARE FEES	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 & Community Faculty	\$130.50	43.50	\$110.88	36.96

Acknowledging economic realities, delegates approved a budget without a dues increase for the next academic year. In addition, 166 delegates addressed resolutions on a wide range of contract issues, public higher education policies and funding and the equitable treatment of all faculty. A special thank you to all of the faculty who took the time to participate as delegates. The next Delegate Assembly will be held in March 2006.

## Make Sure You Understand Your TRA Survivor Benefits They Can Be Worth Hundreds of Thousands of Dollars to Your Survivors

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

There seems to be a lot of confusion over the issue of survivor benefits if a TRA member dies prior to retirement. I have had people contact me about retiring early because they had the mistaken belief that their spouse would get a much smaller benefit if they died prior to retirement.

If a TRA participant is married at the time of death there are several options available to his or her spouse. He or she can:

- receive a lump sum death benefit equal the contributions of the TRA member (not the employer contributions), plus 6% interest until the time of death; or
- receive a lifetime annuity based on the years of service and high-five salary of the deceased TRA member, but based on the age of the spouse (the younger the spouse is the less the benefit); or
- receive a fixed term benefit actuarially equivalent to a lifetime benefit, with term options of 5, 10, 15, or 20 years.

I WOULD STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT A MARRIED TRA MEMBER LEAVE INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS OR HER SPOUSE TO NOT TAKE THE LUMP SUM BENEFIT. GIVEN NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND LIFE EXPECTANCIES, THE LIFETIME BENEFIT IS WORTH MANY TIMES MORE THAN THE LUMP SUM BENEFIT.

If a TRA member is unmarried at the time of death, his or her beneficiary or estate receives a

lump sum benefit plus 6% interest. IF YOU ARE UNMARRIED, YOU SHOULD DESIGNATE A BENEFICIARY. THIS CAN BE A SIZABLE AMOUNT OF MONEY AND YOU WILL PROBABLY WANT TO MAKE SURE IT GOES TO THE PERSON OF YOUR CHOICE.

A married couple may designate someone other than a spouse to receive a lifetime annuity. This designation must be done prior to death and be approved by both the participant and his or her spouse. Contact TRA to get a designation form (Form TRA-2300).

If you have questions about survivor benefits, or if you want to designate a beneficiary, contact TRA at 1-800-657-3669.

## 2004-2006 IFO Feminist Issues Grant Recipient

by [Patrice Arseneault](#), *Equity Advocate*

The IFO Board of Directors voted at its April 23, 2004 meeting to approve the FIC recommendation to award the 2004 – 2006 IFO Feminist Issues Grant to Dr. Stewart Ross, faculty member at Minnesota State University, Mankato for his proposal:

Faculty Learning Community for Women Faculty at MSU: "Talking About Teaching and Feminist Issues for Women Faculty."

Dr. Ross is the current Director for the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at MSU, Mankato (now in its second year of operation). In his grant proposal, Dr. Ross states that the Faculty Learning Community sponsored by the grant will be open to up to 15 faculty participants. The group will center its activities on teaching and feminist issues, by selecting specific issues, articles and books to study and discuss. The group's facilitator will be Dr. Nancy Fitzsimons, current chair of the IFO Faculty Development Committee at MSU, Mankato. The grant proposal includes that the Feminist Issues sponsored group will meet once each month (during the academic year) for the two year period of the grant (2004-2005 and 2005-2006). The results of the two-year Faculty Learning Community will be shared with faculty through posting of ideas generated on the [FIC website](#) and on the website for the [Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning](#). In addition, the Feminist Issues Committee hopes to sponsor a forum/panel discussion with the facilitator and participants at the 2006 Delegate Assembly.

## 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](#).