

INTER FACULTY ORGANIZATION

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

FACULTY UPDATE

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome!

by [Jim Pehler](#), IFO President

I want to welcome you back and send my greetings to our new faculty members!

We are attempting to make information more readily available to you. To do that we are changing our *Faculty Update* to an electronic format. In previous years we distributed printed newsletters via your campus mail but by the time it was received information may have already been out-of-date. To better serve you we will be using a headline format making it easier for you to access information, items of interest, and materials that will be most helpful to you.

Thank you and have a great year!

We are looking for comments and suggestions. Please email us by clicking [here](#).

Budget Like Dry Weather...No Relief in Sight!

[Revised FY04/05 Allocation for State Universities](#)

Enrollment Continues Upward

[FYE Student Enrollment for State Universities](#)

MnSCU Attempting to Institute Acceptable Use Policy

[MnSCU's Proposed Policy 5.22 on Acceptable Use of Computers and Technology](#)

[IFO's Proposed Changes to MnSCU's Proposed Policy 5.22](#)

Let us know your comments or suggestions on this policy by clicking [here](#).

IFO/MnSCU Salary Equity Committee

A salary equity update is now available. Please click [here](#) for that information.

CONTRACT TOPICS

Negotiations Update

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

MnSCU and the IFO have exchanged language proposals and initial economic proposals in May and June. A group of technical changes have been tentatively agreed upon by the parties. The IFO language proposals have been posted on our [website](#).

At this time, future negotiation sessions have not been scheduled.

Career Steps Fully Paid This Year

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

The career steps increase which became effective in the middle of the last academic year are in effect for the entire 2003-2004 academic year. Consequently, anyone who attained eligibility for career steps last year will see a salary increase at this time attributable to the career steps.

10, 20 or 30 Years of Service Accrued at the End of Academic Year 2002-2003?

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

If you completed your 10th, 20th or 30th year of service at the end of the 2002-2003 academic year, your appointment letter for this academic year should reflect a two-step salary increase over your step placement at the end of the 2002-2003 academic year. There is no simple mechanism to identify those who have reached a decennial service anniversary date. Therefore, if you have reached your decennial service anniversary and the two career steps are not reflected in your 2003-2004 appointment letter, you should bring this matter to the attention of your Human Resources/Personnel Office immediately.

October 1st Deadline for Retirement Notice

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

You must give notice by October 1st if you plan to retire no earlier than the end of spring semester 2004 or no later than prior to the beginning of fall semester 2004. This early notice qualifies you for the two-step salary increase provided in our contract.

Special Early Separation Incentive for Those Over Age 55

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

For anyone over age 55 who accrues 15 years of service, the contract permits you to invoke the early separation incentive (ESI) and receive a full year's base salary as well as the full year of employer-paid health insurance. However, this special ESI must be exercised in the same year in which 15 years of service are accrued for those over age 55. If not exercised at this time, the regular contractual 10% reduction in the ESI amount for each year beyond the age of 55 will apply to a later retirement year.

Supplemental Retirement Deducted for 2001-2002 and 2002-2003

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

MnSCU and the IFO had agreed to an increase in the maximum deduction and employer match for your supplemental retirement account in both of the past two years. The previous maximum of \$2,100 for the fiscal year rose to \$2,200 two years ago and \$2,250 last year. For a variety of reasons the \$100 and \$150 increases were not deducted from your paychecks until this past spring. The parties have made every effort to insure all contractual supplemental deductions have now been taken, matched by the employer, and deposited in your supplemental retirement account. Examination of your quarterly supplemental statements for this year should substantiate such deposits.

RETIREMENT TOPICS

IFO Offers Retirement Workshops

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

Each September Russ Stanton conducts two types of retirement workshops for IFO members. The first type of workshop is for faculty members nearing retirement and is

designed to help them maximize their benefits under the state retirement programs and the IFO/MnSCU contract. The second type of workshop is for new faculty members and is to help them make the selection between IRAP and TRA as their basic pension plan. Russ will also meet individually with either new or retiring faculty members to discuss their particular retirement concerns.

The workshops for faculty nearing retirement covers topics such as: the early retirement incentive; the final year two step promotion; severance pay; the tax-free postretirement healthcare savings plan; phased retirement; the annuitant employment program; and, ways to tax shelter income. Form letters for giving notice and checklists for preparing for retirement will be distributed. Faculty members planning to retire at the end of the year must give their notice of intent to retire by October 1st in order to be eligible for some of the above benefits.

The workshops for new faculty members will compare the IRAP and TRA programs feature by feature and assist new faculty members in deciding which program is most appropriate for them. All new faculty members have 90 days to select either IRAP or TRA as their basic plan, and once made, the decision is irrevocable for as long as the faculty member works for a MnSCU institution.

The dates for the workshops are listed below. For specific times and locations, or to make an appointment for an individual ½ hour appointment, please call your local faculty association office.

<u>State University</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Bemidji State University	September 26
Metropolitan State University	September 24 and 30
Minnesota State University, Mankato	September 3 and 4
Minnesota State University Moorhead	September 9 and 16
St. Cloud State University	September 8, 11, 15 and 17
Southwest Minnesota State University	September 29
Winona State University	September 22 and 23

Additional days will be added, if needed, at any campus.

LEGISLATIVE TOPICS

2003 Legislative Session Wrap-Up

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

The 2003 legislative session ended after a special session adjourned on May 30, 2003. Since the academic year ended in mid-May, I am supplying the following summary of the outcomes of major legislation affecting faculty members.

2001-2003 IFO Contract Ratified

In early April the legislature passed and Governor Pawlenty signed the bill that ratified 16 state labor contracts for the 2001-2003 biennium, including the IFO contract. Had the bill not passed, the \$263 million in step and pay increases in the 2001-2003 contract would have been rescinded. Attempts to delete the career steps were defeated. However, the provisions on domestic partner benefits were not ratified. Attempts were made on the floor in both the House and Senate to reinstate domestic partner benefits, but they fell far short of the votes needed to pass.

Wage Freeze/Freeze on Employer Contributions to Health/Dental Insurance Defeated

In the final days of the session, proposals by the House and Senate Republicans to freeze wages of all state employees for two years and to freeze employer contributions to health and dental benefits were defeated. The proposed freeze was a “hard freeze” – it would have prevented step increases, across-the-board increases, and any benefit increases. While the Republican-controlled House passed the wage and insurance freeze, the DFL-controlled Senate defeated it by a slim margin. In the leadership negotiations sessions at the end of the session, Senate DFL Majority Leader John Hottinger was successful in getting the Republicans to drop the proposals. While negotiations for wages and health insurance will still be very difficult in negotiations with AFSCME and MAPE, the state is proposing step increases for both years and is offering some small increases in employer contributions to insurance—so defeat of the legislation appears to be paying off.

Bonding Bill Passed—MnSCU a Big Winner

One of the few bright spots of the 2003 special session was the passage of a bill that re-approved many of the capital improvement projects vetoed by Governor Ventura. All of the MnSCU projects vetoed by Ventura were re-passed. MnSCU received far more money under the bill than the U of M or any state agency--\$59,716,000. Metropolitan State University received \$10,000,000 for land acquisition; St. Cloud State University received \$10,000,000 for renovation of Centennial Hall; Southwest Minnesota State University received \$9,200,000 for renovation of its library; Minnesota State University, Mankato received \$9,200,000 for Otto Arena and a student fitness facility; Bemidji State University received \$1,000,000 for co-location design. Sen. Keith Langseth (DFL-Moorhead) deserves credit for dragging the bonding bill to passage through a wall of opposition. Credit also goes to MnSCU Vice Chancellor for Facilities, Al Johnson, who developed a project review and ranking system that impressed legislators of all persuasions.

State Waives 11th Amendment Immunity—Extends Protections to State Employees

In recent years the federal courts have ruled that state employees cannot bring lawsuits against their employers under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, or the Family and Medical Leave Act, because of state immunity under the 11th Amendment to the Constitution. However, the courts said states can pass a law waiving their immunity, and thereby bring state employees back under the protections of the federal laws. IFO initiated legislation two years ago under which the State of Minnesota waived its sovereign immunity to allow state employees to bring actions under federal law. Even though the legislation passed the legislature unanimously, a federal court judge ruled the statute was not clear that employees could bring actions in federal courts. This year we introduced legislation that explicitly allows suits in federal courts. The legislation passed the Senate unanimously, and the House by a vote of 129-3. The governor signed the bill into law.

Efforts to Raise Taxes Fail—Higher Education Takes Deep Cuts As a Result

In an effort to solve the state’s \$4.6 billion revenue shortfall without raising taxes, Governor Pawlenty proposed massive cuts to state spending, including a \$204 million cut in appropriations to MnSCU institutions. The governor proposed allowing tuition to increase up to 15% each year of the biennium to backfill the loss of state appropriations.

The DFL Senate tried to mitigate the damage to higher education and other programs by proposing an increase in the cigarette tax and taxes on higher incomes; they proposed

cutting MnSCU appropriations by \$106 million. The Republican House proposed a state casino at Canterbury Downs to raise revenue, and to cut MnSCU appropriations by \$176 million.

In the end, both the tax increase and the casino proposal died, and without the revenue the higher education committees had to cut deeply to balance the budget. In the final bill the cuts to MnSCU were \$194 million—only \$10 million less than what the governor originally proposed. Financial aid for low income students was increased to offset the expected 15% per year tuition increases, but the vast majority of MnSCU students will see huge tuition increases with no offsetting aid.

Pelowski Study of Higher Education Teacher Licensure Changed
Representative Gene Pelowski was successful in getting an amendment attached to the House higher education bill that would have required MnSCU to do a study of the number of MnSCU teacher preparation faculty who are licensed to teach by the Board of Teaching. The legislation was modified in conference committee to simply request that the Minnesota Association of Colleges of Teacher Education gather data from all member institutions regarding their education faculty's involvement in K-12 projects.

Fond du Lac Teacher Education Program Approved
The Legislature passed legislation allowing Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College to offer a baccalaureate degree in elementary education. The legislation ties the authority to Fond du Lac's unique status as a tribal land grant college so that the program will not set a precedent for other two-year institutions offering four-year degree programs. The upper division faculty members in the program will be IFO members.

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](#).