



November 16, 2016

Dear Colleagues,

The election results have left many faculty, students, and staff across our campuses deeply concerned with the direction our governments may take in Washington, D.C., and St. Paul. There will be unprecedented attacks on communities of color, organized labor, academic freedom, tenure, and other protections we have fought for decades to earn.

Due to the troubling reports of crimes targeting minority communities on our campuses and around the country, the IFO reiterates our unwavering commitment to creating a climate of inclusion on all seven campuses. As union members, we are committed to creating the kind of community and working environment that promotes the best outcomes for all students, faculty, and staff.

We cannot simply attribute the obstacles facing higher education and the pending assault on organized labor to the results of the 2016 election. This has been a coordinated effort pushed by well-funded anti-worker groups over the past forty years.

As we have for decades, the IFO will continue to build coalitions of faculty to endorse legislative policies aimed at restoring our great higher education system as a public good that is accessible, inclusive, and affordable, while protecting the quality, academic freedom, and shared governance that made our colleges and universities the envy of the world.

We will face attacks at the state and federal level from lawmakers and anti-worker groups that wish to end public employee unions by overturning our ability to collect fair share fees from nonmembers. We will likely face legislation seeking to end tenure, corporatize higher education, restrict the right to bargain collectively, and more. We will also see attempts to pass discriminatory legislation aimed at LGBTQ citizens, people of color, women, immigrants, and those from traditionally underrepresented communities that are so vital to the success of our institutions and society. We must all unite against these attacks.

The IFO pledges to reaffirm and enhance our advocacy efforts:

- Oppose discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation/gender identity, religion, or national origin and fight for an equitable and welcoming educational environment in which all can freely and safely learn, discuss, differ, debate, and grow.
- Oppose attacks on unions and the economic security of state university faculty, and continue to fight for expanding and strengthening the rights of all faculty through collective bargaining.
- Oppose violations of academic freedom and of broader rights to free expression in the academic community and fight for strengthened protections.
- Oppose the privatization of Minnesota State colleges and universities and continue to advocate for higher education as a public good—accessible, affordable, and inclusive to all Minnesotans.

The IFO stands ready to defend traditionally underrepresented communities, professional rights, and the academic freedom of all those who teach at a Minnesota State University. However, we can't do it alone. [Please join us in this fight and sign up to volunteer today.](#)

We recognize there are divisions amongst our ranks by discipline, institution, and employment status, as well as by race, religion, gender, and politics. But we cannot succeed against these attacks without a fully engaged grassroots effort. We must not succumb to despair; we must stand up and be active.

In solidarity,
Jim Grabowska, IFO President