

# Your Union Working For You

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## IFO Accomplishments

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### Contract Ratification

The 2011-2013 Master Agreement between the IFO and MnSCU has yet to be settled. In the meantime, the provisions of the 2009-2011 contract will still be in force. Faculty members who have been promoted will still receive step increases in their salaries, and faculty members who completed 10, 20 or 30 years of service at the end of the last academic year will receive career steps

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### At the Legislature

This last year has seen unprecedented attacks on public higher education and public employees around the country. In Wisconsin, the faculty at the state universities have been stripped of the right to bargain collectively on most matters, a right that they had won only two years ago. In Ohio, state university faculty members were declared by the legislature to be “management” and unable to bargain collectively at all. And the list goes on. In Minnesota, though, the IFO has played a key role in preventing worse things from happening. Our lobbying efforts and the emails and phone calls from hundreds of faculty members across the state have helped to stop

- ➔ Hard pay freezes for all state employees that would have also stopped promotion and career step salary increases and early separation and severance benefits.
- ➔ A shift in health insurance costs for public employees that would have increased individual expenses by as much as \$15,000 per year.
- ➔ An increase in faculty contributions to the Teachers Retirement Associate pension plan by 3%-- which would mean a 3% cut in pay.
- ➔ A proposed amendment to the state constitution that would make Minnesota a so-called “Right to Work” state, which would severely weaken state unions, including the IFO.
- ➔ A bill to cut the state workforce, originally including MnSCU faculty, by 15%.

And the IFO also supported the Office of the Chancellor in persuading the Governor to exempt MnSCU and our universities from being affected by the longest shutdown of state government and services in Minnesota history.

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## Pay Equity

Each year, the IFO participates in the joint IFO MnSCU salary committee review of the salaries of new hires and faculty awarded promotions and terminal degrees, which results in equity step increases for some faculty. Every five years, the joint salary committee conducts a comprehensive study of all faculty salaries. The next study will review faculty salaries for the 2010-11 academic year.

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## Faculty Advocate

The IFO processes many grievances on behalf of faculty for violations to the terms and conditions of employment under the IFO contract. While many issues are settled on the campuses, last year nine grievances were appealed to the state level for resolution.

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## Academic Affairs

In the last year, the IFO has been instrumental in helping the Office of the Chancellor and its Academic & Student Affairs Division to streamline and simplify MnSCU committee structures and to make shared governance on the state level more effective. IFO representatives have been vocal and effective champions of faculty intellectual property rights. And the IFO has had a strong role in shaping the implementation of new MnSCU procedures for transfer of student credits, which in the short run has helped to forestall bad legislation and in the long run may prove to be beneficial to students and their faculty advisors.

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## Retirement

In the fall of 2010, the IFO conducted workshops to help new faculty make an informed decision on which retirement program—the Teachers Retirement Association or the Individual Retirement Account Plan—best fit their needs. The IFO conducted workshops and individual counseling sessions for faculty nearing retirement to help them maximize their retirement related benefits under the contract.

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## Participate in Your Union

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Only IFO faculty who have completed an IFO membership application are eligible to serve as IFO representatives on IFO local and statewide committees, vote on the IFO contract and in local elections, or to seek an IFO elected office. Contact your faculty association president to find out how you can get involved. If you are not a member, go to our website at [www.ifo.org](http://www.ifo.org) to join.

The Inter Faculty Organization (IFO) is the union for approximately 3,000 full and part time faculty members at Minnesota's seven state universities. The IFO President and Board of Directors are elected by faculty and represent your concerns. Services include:

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### Negotiations

Every two years the Negotiating Team, made up of faculty representatives from each campus and staffed by Connie Howard, IFO General Counsel, and Tiffany Nelson, IFO Legal Assistant, negotiates the compensation and working conditions for Minnesota state university faculty. Your salary, health and dental care, severance pay and separation benefits, life and disability insurance, faculty development and travel money, sabbatical rights, and many other forms of compensation are covered in this contract. The contract also sets procedures and criteria for faculty development, promotion, tenure, discipline, and retrenchment.

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### Contract Enforcement

Once your contract is negotiated, the IFO enforces fair implementation of the contract. Local grievance officers and Pat Arseneault, IFO Director of Grievances & Equity, assist and represent faculty in the grievance and arbitration processes

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### Government Relations

About half of the money to pay faculty salaries and benefits comes from the state legislature. The legislature also sets pension benefits and must ratify the IFO contract once it is negotiated. In addition, the legislature passes laws on a wide range of issues, such as teacher licensure, human rights, and appropriations for state buildings that affect faculty members both professionally and personally. Russ Stanton, IFO Director of Government Relations, staffs the Government Relations Committee and lobbies on behalf of faculty to improve faculty compensation and further the interests of public higher education.

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## Equity Advocacy

The IFO is strongly committed to equity and diversity. Pat Arseneault and IFO Legal Assistant, Tiffany Nelson, staff the Salary Equity Committee, Feminist Issues Committee, Multicultural Issues Committee, Benefits Equity Committee and GLBTA Issues Committee and assist members with issues involving discrimination, harassment, reasonable accommodation and equity.

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## Faculty Governance

The IFO is the officially recognized representative of faculty at the seven state universities. The IFO appoints faculty members who serve on MnSCU committees and represents faculty concerns to the administration through the Meet and Confer process and through meetings of the IFO President and Chancellor of MnSCU. The Faculty Association on each campus represents the faculty in local governance.

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## Academic Affairs

Appointed faculty members receive partial reassigned time to serve as Academic Affairs Coordinators and to staff the Academic Affairs Committee. The IFO appoints faculty representatives to a variety of MnSCU committees and task forces on academic policy issues including credit transfer, teacher preparation, and graduate education.

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## Retirement Information

Each fall Russ Stanton conducts pension plan workshops for new faculty members to assist them in choosing a pension plan and investment options that are most appropriate for their goals and anticipated career pattern. Russ also provides retirement workshops and meets with hundreds of faculty members nearing retirement to help them maximize their retirement benefits under the IFO/MnSCU Contract and state retirement programs. Over the years, the IFO has helped to secure an impressive array of retirement-related benefits and options including supplemental retirement employer-matched contributions, early separation incentives, severance pay, phased retirement, the annuitant re-employment program, tax-free post-retirement healthcare savings plans, and final year promotional steps.

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## MnSCU Budget Monitoring

IFO representatives provide input to MnSCU on both developing MnSCU's biennial legislative appropriation request and allocating legislative appropriations out to MnSCU institutions. The IFO's Government Relations and Budget Committees, made up of faculty representatives from each campus and staffed by Russ Stanton, tracks MnSCU finances, which is especially important for negotiation purposes.

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