



Newsletter for the faculty of the seven Minnesota state universities.

Fiscal Year 13- No. 13  
October 2013

# The UPDATE

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

# IFO Representation on MnSCU Committees Fills Important Roles

by Nancy Black, IFO President, [black@ifo.org](mailto:black@ifo.org)

Another month has flown by probably because of the rush of activities surrounding *Charting the Future* and shared governance and the accompanying rounds of joint academic council meetings. There are four main committees: Academic Affairs, Academic Policy, Academic Technology and Student Affairs, which have members appointed from the Inter Faculty Organization as well as other unions, student associations, and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) staff. In addition, there is a Coordinating Commission composed of chairs or co-chairs of the various

councils who meet together since many subjects intersect. Their deliberations are sent to Interim Vice Chancellor of Academic and Students Affairs, John O'Brien, for a final decision. Under some of the councils, there are subcommittees or occasional work groups, but an effort has been made to streamline the process so that work actually gets accomplished. In the not too distant past, many more committees involving faculty existed, and sometimes dealt with quite similar if not the same issue. For example in FY'03, 58 committees are listed, while FY'05 documents list "only" 40.

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One significant subcommittee of the Academic Affairs Council is the Transfer Oversight Committee. Credit transfer among MnSCU universities seems to be a frequent target of the legislature's interest. I was particularly gratified to see a letter to the editor written by former IFO President Don Larsson, "A Persistent Complaint in Search of a Problem," in the *Star Tribune* on Sunday, October 13, 2013 (see Faculty Voices section).

Over the past eight years, faculty and students have worked together in such venues as the Transfer Oversight Committee to remove “road blocks” for student transfer. As Don points out, we need actual data to examine in order to identify and address any outstanding issues. We strive for student success—an affordable and accessible extraordinary ed-

ucation.

I continue to receive comments from faculty on *Charting the Future* as well as the IFO response (both are on the IFO website). Thank you for your suggestions and careful reading of the documents. The timeline for *Charting the Future Workgroups* includes three meetings. One was held on October

4<sup>th</sup>, a second meeting was held on October 18th and the next meeting is scheduled for October 29<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of these meetings is to review the revisions to the plan based on input from many sources. We have been informed that we will see the final report before it is presented to the MnSCU Board of Trustees on November 20, 2013.

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

# The Minnesota Political Refund Program is Back—Help Those Who Helped Us

by Russ Stanton, Director of Government Relations, [stanton@ifo.org](mailto:stanton@ifo.org)

During the last legislative session the IFO achieved many important legislative goals. After years of flat pay, the legislature ratified an IFO contract that provided a 4.6% pay increase. After years of brutal budget cuts, the legislature provided nearly \$103 million in new money for MnSCU—a 9.4% increase from the last biennium. And after years of struggle, marriage equality and the DREAM Act became law. The stark turnaround from the previous session did not happen by chance—it was the result of some very controversial and courageous votes by many legislators, and the leadership of Governor Mark Dayton. We now have a mechanism for showing our gratitude for what they did, and helping the legislators who helped us as they prepare for what promises to be a grueling election next year.

The Minnesota Political Refund Program is back. The program allows Minnesota residents to contribute up to \$50 per person/\$100 for couples filing jointly *and get the entire amount of contribution refunded by the Department of Revenue*. The ideas behind the refund are to encourage candidates to limit campaign spending and to rely

on many small contributors instead of large financial contributors. The program was in effect for many years until Governor Pawlenty was successful in repealing it four years ago. Governor Dayton and the 2013 legislature reinstated the law, effective July 1st this year.

### How the program works:

1. Minnesota residents can contribute up to \$50 per person, \$100 per couple filing jointly, to a candidate that has signed an agreement to accept campaign spending limits.
2. The candidate sends a receipt to the contributor, as well as a Form PCR. Form PCR can also be downloaded from the Department of Revenue web site : [http://www.revenue.state.mn.us/Forms and Instructions/pcr 13.pdf](http://www.revenue.state.mn.us/Forms%20and%20Instructions/pcr%2013.pdf)
3. The contributor attaches the receipt to the Form PCR and mails it to the Minnesota Department of Revenue (the address is on the form). A contributor can attach several receipts to the same form.

Minnesota Political Refund Program (continued)

4. The Department of Revenue then sends the contributor a refund of 100% of the contribution up to \$50 per person, \$100 per couple filing jointly per year.

#### Designation of contribution recipients:

Who you contribute to is up to you. If you go to the IFO web page at [www.ifo.org](http://www.ifo.org) you will find a list of campus area legislators and their home addresses, as well as their voting records on the IFO contract ratification, the higher education funding bill, the same-sex marriage law, and the tax bill that raised the revenue to make higher education funding increases possible.

Please act now! If you procrastinate you are likely to forget. Many legislators put their careers at risk to support our issues—we need to have their backs when they need us. When you use the PCR program you get all your money back—all it costs you is a stamp, and a little time and effort.

When you send your contribution, include a note telling the legislator you are a faculty member and thank them for supporting higher education.

ACADEMIC  
AFFAIRS

## MnSCU Academic and Student Affairs Advisory Councils

by Donna Brauer, Academic Affairs Coordinator, [brauer@ifo.org](mailto:brauer@ifo.org) and Tom Hergert, Academic Affairs Coordinator, [hergert@ifo.org](mailto:hergert@ifo.org)

After spending the first 5 weeks of the academic year focused on responses to *Charting the Future*, the four MnSCU Academic and Student Affairs advisory councils have begun work on other issues. **Three of the councils – Policy, Student Affairs, and Academic Affairs – have an opening for an IFO representative from a campus. Applications are open until October 24<sup>th</sup>, so please contact your FA president if you are interested in serving.**

**Policy Council:** The work plan for the year includes review of policy and/or procedure for *Advanced Placement Credit, Int'l Baccalaureate Credit, Undergraduate Course Credit*

*Transfer, Credit for Prior Learning, Academic Programs, and Minnesota Transfer Curriculum.* Work has begun on Policy and Procedure 3.36 Academic Programs. This is a very long document with numerous sections; the review and any proposed revisions will continue into the Spring Semester. Policy can be viewed at:

<http://www.mnscu.edu/board/policy/336.1>

**Academic Affairs Council:** Due to the large number of issues that this council considers, three subcommittees have been established: *Faculty Development* (Tom Hergert, chair), *Graduate Education* (Donna Brauer, chair), and *Transfer Oversight*. The main purpose of the *Faculty Development Subcommittee* is to foster commu-

nication among all MnSCU personnel who are involved in faculty development at any level. One challenge is that the expectations, structure, and bargaining unit involvement differ between system colleges and universities and among campuses. The first initiative will be to create a system-wide D2L site for sharing materials and general communication. That site should be up and available to faculty developers soon. The *Graduate Education* subcommittee is in the formation stage and will be meeting later in the semester to discuss issues surrounding graduate education across campuses. The *Transfer Oversight* subcommittee has recommended a change in the *procedure* related to new courses intended to satisfy MN Transfer Curriculum goal areas. This topic will be discussed by IFO's Aca-

*MnSCU Academic and Student Affairs Advisory Council continued*

demical Affairs Committee at the October 31<sup>st</sup> meeting. Contact your campus representative on that committee for details.

**Student Affairs Council:** The second meeting, October 9, addressed several issues that touch student access and status. Options regarding student insurance and proof of insurance were given and the choices discussed, with no decision reached yet. A report on the Student Services aspects of College University Partnership Baccalaureate Programs was shared. There are multiple programs in the system. A goal now is to better integrate and standardize student services for those programs so students have more equi-

table access to those services. We reviewed a proposed Board policy change that implements elements of the Prosperity Act, Minnesota's version of the Dream Act that provides in-state tuition for some undocumented students. This is in response to a mandate from the legislature. Another legislative mandate directs MnSCU to recognize "the applicant's veteran status as a positive factor in determining whether to grant admission to a graduate or professional academic degree program," and requires the Board of Trustees to report to legislators annually. MnSCU and the universities are developing an approach to address these requirements.

**Academic and Student Support Technology Council:** We discussed changes in status and the contract for efolio Minnesota. The end of that program is now scheduled for the end of this academic year. MnSCU has been funding it, but our system-wide use of it does not seem to warrant the expense. We looked at the commercial GPS Lifepan project that has been started by Century College. The major questions revolved around whether this is an appropriate system-wide project. The plans for this committee for the rest of the year have begun. We will continue that discussion at the next meeting on Tuesday, December 10.

## FACULTY VOICES

I am sharing with you an editorial recently published by MnSCU faculty member, Donald Larsson (Minnesota State University, Mankato). I appreciate members and others who take the time to challenge the *status quo*. If you would like to share an interesting perspective please email me at [black@ifo.org](mailto:black@ifo.org). Let's keep the conversation going! — Nancy Black, President

ORIGINALLY PRINTED IN "STAR TRIBUNE, EDITORIALS" ON OCTOBER 13, 2013

*College transfers. A persistent complaint in search of a problem* by Donald Larsson, [donald.larsson@mnsu.edu](mailto:donald.larsson@mnsu.edu)

I was disappointed to see Lori Sturdevant, in her Oct. 6 column, repeat the often-made suggestion that the Legislature should require the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system "to remove persistent roadblocks to the transfer of credits from one state college or university to another." To which "roadblocks" is she referring? Which institutions or programs have persistently embedded such

roadblocks? Have any refused to comply with the law that all MnSCU schools must accept courses completed at other state schools to fulfill the statewide Minnesota Transfer Curriculum? Which of the thousands of "articulation agreements" between individual programs at state universities and colleges are failing? Has MnSCU taken no steps to address the findings of a study made about three years

College transfers. A persistent complaint in search of a problem (continued)

ago that found that of the less than 10 percent of transfer students encountering problems, a significant portion had not sought or received advice about how to plan for transferring or were unaware of the transfer appeals process that usually works in the student's favor?

Any individual who experiences difficulty with a large and complex system deserves attention, but discussion of the "transfer problem" in the Legislature and media continues to be driven by anecdotes and assumptions. Let's see some actual data to determine if "transfer problems" are indeed systemic before inviting the Legisla-

ture to make blanket requirements whose "cure" could be far worse than any "problem" they address.

Donald Larsson is a professor at Minnesota State University, Mankato

GRIEVANCE AND EQUITY

# IFO Equity Committees' Campus Climate Study Results

by Patrice Arseneault, Director of Grievances and Equity, [arsen@ifo.org](mailto:arsen@ifo.org)

Over five years ago, the Inter Faculty Organization's equity committees, including Benefits Equity Committee (BEC), Feminist Issues Committee (FIC), the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Allies (GLBTA) Issues Committee, and the Multicultural Issues Committee (MIC), began a joint conversation on the quality of the work environment on campus related to issues of sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, religion, and race/ethnicity/national origin. In fall 2008, the equity committees met to assess the willingness of equity committee members to sponsor a campus climate study. We learned that committee members shared a common desire to review the social and cultural climate of campuses in order to gather information on equity-related matters, accessibility, and whether the actions of our union are in accordance with an egalitarian framework.

Faculty focus groups at the seven state universities served as the starting point for the study of campus climate. Beginning in March 2010 and concluding in January 2011, faculty volunteers on each campus were asked to participate in focus group sessions. Findings from these sessions identified key themes that were further explored in the more comprehensive online survey of all faculty conducted in November 2012. Once the survey results were in, lead researcher and BSU faculty member Debra Peterson analyzed the survey responses, compared the data derived from the survey with the focus group findings, and with the current theory and research

on campus climate. Dr. Peterson issued her final report to the IFO Board of Directors in September 2013. The Board approved the report findings and embraced the strategies for implementing the climate study recommendations.

Click to view the Executive Summary and the Campus Climate Report.

<http://ifo.org/equity-salary/campus-climate-study/>

*Campus Climate Study Results (continued)*

Not surprisingly, the study revealed that what is happening outside academe is mirrored on the state university campuses. Most notably, institutional structures facilitate negative behaviors such as bullying, and this manifests itself in how faculty are treated and supported. Also, as in our society as whole, there are specific issues on our campuses that have

to do with equity including gender, race, religious and sexual orientation biases.

The IFO seeks to address the issues identified by the study and to providing a positive working environment for all faculty. The information obtained through the research process will serve to guide the IFO with its own strategic planning

and with its efforts to influence the MnSCU system and administrative policy.

In endorsing the recommendations and strategies set forth in the Executive Summary, the IFO Board of Directors made a commitment toward building a stronger and more inclusive union and positive working climates on our campuses

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## Call for Papers: 1<sup>st</sup> IFO LGBTIQAA Conference

by Andrea Wood, Chair, GLBTA Issues Committee & WSU Committee Representative, [awood@winona.edu](mailto:awood@winona.edu)

The IFO GLBTA Committee is proud to announce our 1<sup>st</sup> one-day LGBTIQAA conference (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, questioning or queer, asexual, and ally), which will be held on February 21, 2014 from 12:00-6:00pm at the MSU Mankato extension in the Twin Cities (7700 France Avenue, Edina). This conference seeks to address the needs and interests of faculty at the seven state universities relating to LGBTIQAA issues.

Based on the feedback we received from faculty on our survey, we seek individual paper, panel, poster, roundtable, and workshop proposals relating to the following topics:

- Making courses more LGBTIQAA-friendly
- LGBTIQAA curriculum design (program development)
- Queer pedagogies
- LGBTIQAA topics in education
- LGBTIQAA topics in the social sciences
- Gender expression and behavior

- Bullying
- Safety and harassment
- Being out (or not) in the classroom
- Safe Space Training
- And any other LGBTIQAA issues that interest or affect faculty

Please e-mail abstracts (250 words each) for 20-minute papers, panel proposals (3-4 papers), poster proposals, roundtable proposal (3-4 participants), and workshops that include: the author/authors' name(s), title(s), institutional affiliation(s), and email address(es) by November 8, 2013 to: [arsen@ifo.org](mailto:arsen@ifo.org)

Acceptances will be issued on November 18<sup>th</sup> along with further details about parking and accommodations for the conference.

Questions regarding the conference may be directed to Andrea Wood, the Chair of the IFO GLBTA Issues Committee at: [awood@winona.edu](mailto:awood@winona.edu)

## GLBTA Issues Committee Call For Nominations for James Eric Chalgren Award

by Patrice Arseneault, Director of Grievances and Equity, [arsen@ifo.org](mailto:arsen@ifo.org)

The IFO Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Allies Issues Committee (GLBTA) is accepting nominations for the 2014 James Eric Chalgren Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Advancement of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Issues. The GLBTA Issues Committee is seeking to recognize an IFO member who has made significant contributions to improve the professional lives or working conditions for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender employees in the state universities or otherwise who has advocated within the IFO or the MnSCU system on issues that have substantial impact for the LGBT community.

The James Eric Chalgren Award announcement (with selection criteria) and nomination form can be found on the GLBTA webpage of the IFO Website.

<http://ifo.org/equity-salary/glbta/>

The GLBTA committee named the award in honor of the late James Eric Chalgren, a graduate of Minnesota State University, Mankato, and a strong advocate within the Mankato community on behalf of LGBT residents. Mr. Chalgren also advocated at the Minnesota state legislature for

human rights legislation to protect LGBT citizens from discrimination. To be considered for the James Eric Chalgren Award, nominees must be IFO members. Award nomination forms and the GLBTA committee's selection criteria are available on the GLBTA Issues Committee website. Nominations may be submitted by email to [arsen@ifo.org](mailto:arsen@ifo.org) or by mail to: Chalgren Award Nominations, IFO, 490 Concordia Avenue, Suite 125, St. Paul, MN 55103. Nominations must be received by the IFO by January 27, 2014.

The GLBTA Issues Committee will present the James Eric Chalgren Award at the 2014 Delegate Assembly banquet on Friday, March 28.

## FIC Accepting Applications for Feminist Issues Grant

by Patrice Arseneault, Director of Grievances and Equity, [arsen@ifo.org](mailto:arsen@ifo.org)

The IFO Feminist Issues Committee (FIC) announces the 2014-2016 Feminist Issues Grant of up to \$3,000. The Grant is designed to promote research, projects, or creative works that contribute to the advancement of women in the IFO and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. Past recipients' projects include a survey on the tenure and promotion process, a lecture series on women's health issues, and research on whether women in academics are affected professionally by their personal status.

The grant period extends from March 2014 to March 2016. The two-year \$3,000 grant is made possible by

funding from the Inter Faculty Organization through the statewide Feminist Issues Committee (FIC). A final written report will be due at the 2016 Delegate Assembly.

To apply for the Grant, submit your proposal by email ([arsen@ifo.org](mailto:arsen@ifo.org)) in Word or PDF format, no later than January 24, 2014. The successful grant applicant will be notified by March 7, 2014. For more information, please see the 2014-2016 FI Grant Announcement and Outline on the Feminist Issues Committee webpage or contact your local campus Feminist Issues Committee representative.



## Five Ways to Save Money on Your Health Care

by Russ Stanton, Director of Government Relations, [stanton@ifo.org](mailto:stanton@ifo.org)



Open enrollment for the State Employee Group Insurance Plan (SEGIP) is November 1-14, 2013 for calendar year 2014 coverage. During open enrollment, you will have the opportunity to make changes to your coverage for next year. Here are five ways to save money on your health care:

- 1. Choose a Level 1 or Level 2 clinic instead of a Level 3 or Level 4 clinic.** Clinics are categorized based on how much they charge the state health plan for their services, with Level 1 being the lowest cost and Level 4 the highest cost. To encourage participants to go to more cost efficient clinics, SEGIP offers much lower deductibles, co-pays and out-of-pocket maximums for Level 1 clinics. For instance, deductibles for a Level 1 clinic are \$75 per person/\$150 per family per year; the deductibles for a Level 2 clinic are \$180/\$360; for a Level 3 clinic the deductibles are \$400/\$800; and for Level 4 clinics the deductibles are \$1,000/\$2,000.

For office visits the co-pays for Level 1 are \$18 with an assessment/\$23 without an assessment; for Level 2 the copays are \$23/\$28; for Level 3 \$36/\$41; and finally, for Level 4 the copays are \$55/\$60.

The maximum non-drug out-of-pocket for Levels 1 and 2 are \$1,100/\$2,200; for Level 3 the maximums are \$1,500/\$3,000; for Level 4 the maximums are \$2,500/\$5,000.

There are many other differences in co-pays and coinsurance by cost levels. High cost plans do not offer more services—they just charge more. You can save a lot of money and still get good care by choosing the lowest cost level plan in your area.
- 2. Do a health care assessment and agree to have a coach contact you.** This will save you \$5 per office visit during the coming year. Even though only the employee does the assessment, the \$5 savings applies to all office visits for the employee *and* his or her dependents. If you don't feel the coaching is valuable, just tell them you don't want to continue—you will still get the \$5 savings per office visit. One of the purposes of the assessment is to identify and treat health problems at an early stage to avoid larger problems and costs down the road.
- 3. Use generic or preferred brand drugs instead of costly non-preferred brand names.** The copays for prescription drugs are divided into three tiers: Tier 1 is \$12; Tier 2 is \$18; and Tier 3 is \$38. If you use a lot of prescription drugs, ask your doctor to prescribe a generic or preferred brand, and you can save a lot of money.
- 4. Use convenience clinics like “Minute Clinic” or online care clinics for minor ailments and preventative care.** The co-pays for convenience clinics and online care are only \$10—much less than a regular office visit.
- 5. If you have predictable medical costs, set aside money in the state flexible spending account, known as the Medical Dental Expense Account (MDEA) to pay for these medical expenses on a pre-tax basis.** This can save you up to about 40% by not paying taxes on the money used for medical care. You can set aside up to \$2,500 per year in the MDEA. However, don't set aside more than you can reasonably use during the year—because if you don't use all the money you set aside out of your pay you lose it back to the employer at the end of the year. Always estimate conservatively.



## Health Care Open Enrollment 2014 by Donna Blake, Controller, [blake@ifo.org](mailto:blake@ifo.org)

Open enrollment will be held from November 1st through November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The open enrollment website is now available and can be found at [www.mmb.state.mn.us/health-rates-ee](http://www.mmb.state.mn.us/health-rates-ee). The website includes links to the following items:

- SEGIP Report Open Enrollment Newsletter
- List of Open Enrollment Employee Meetings
- Information On What Is Open
- Open Enrollment Handbook
- Clinic Directory
- Rate Guide
- Schedule of Benefits
- Dependent Eligibility Chart
- Link To Employee Self Service Webpage
- Link To Carriers Website

A few things to note are:

**Clinics** – Please check the clinic directory to see if your current clinic

has changed cost levels. Your annual first dollar deductible is based on the highest cost level of your family members.

**Health Assessment** – The state is switching to a new health assessment company called Staywell on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013, and will no longer be using JourneyWell as of October 31, 2013. You will be receiving a letter in the mail in late October from Staywell with instructions on how to take the health assessment. Please note that your JourneyWell login information will not work on the Staywell website, so you will need to set up a new login this year. If you take the health assessment during open enrollment AND agree to a possible health coach phone call, you will qualify to get the \$5.00 reduced copay for yourself and your family members.

**Medical** – There will be a 4.4% increase in medical premiums for 2014. Single premiums will still be covered 100% by the employer, but family premiums will see an increase of \$6.44

per month.

**Dental** – There will be a 10.3% to 11.4% increase in dental premiums for 2014. Single premiums will remain at \$5.00 per month, but family premiums will see an increase of about \$2.50 to \$3.00 per month. The good news is that the maximum benefit payable is increasing to \$1,500 per year for 2014 (compared to \$1,000 in 2013).

**Confirmation Forms** – After you submit your elections, please remember to print a copy of your confirmation form or save an electronic version of it and check it for accuracy. If you made a mistake, you can go back in and make changes as many times as you want up until the end of open enrollment. Please note that the electronic confirmation form will not be available to view after the open enrollment period, so please save and/or print a copy of it before open enrollment ends.

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## Letter of Understanding For Continuation of Health Care Coverage

by Patrice Arseneault, Director of Grievances and Equity, [arsen@ifo.org](mailto:arsen@ifo.org)

The IFO will enter into a Letter of Understanding with MnSCU in order to continue our health and dental insurance coverage in 2014 while we are in negotiations for the 2013-2015 contract. The changes in our health care coverage will become part of Article 14.

There will be no increases in Article 14's Health Plan Benefits Schedule; all co-pays, deductibles, and co-insurance amounts will remain the same for 2014 and 2015.

There was one improvement in the Health Plan Schedule for virtual office visits for faculty who use the online health care option. The co-pay for online care will be reduced to \$10 per visit beginning in 2014. Currently the co-pay is \$40 for accessing the online health care option.

For the first time in many years, there will be an improvement in the State Dental Plan coverage. Beginning in 2014, the annual maximum benefit that is payable per person



*LOU for Continuation of Health Care Coverage*

under the Dental Plan will increase from \$1,000 to \$1,500 per year.

Beginning in 2015, all state employees will be required to pay 5% of the premium for single health care coverage. In conjunction with this change in 2015, when both spouses work for the state or another organization participating in the State's Group Insurance Program, a spouse may be

covered as a dependent by the other spouse. Also new in 2015, if an employee's adult child (age 18-26) works for the State or another organization participating in the State's Group Insurance Program, the child may be covered as a dependent by the employee.

JOIN TODAY

To join the union, you can sign up instantly by using the convenient online membership application found on the membership webpage [www.ifo.org/membership-information](http://www.ifo.org/membership-information) or by clicking on the "Join IFO" link at the top of the home page [www.ifo.org](http://www.ifo.org). To check on the status of your membership, contact Donna Blake at [blake@ifo.org](mailto:blake@ifo.org).

CONTACT  
US

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