



## Legislative

The IFO is dedicated to providing excellent and affordable higher education in Minnesota. Key aspects to achieve this goal include; student access and affordability, protecting academic freedom and innovative instruction, strengthening shared governance, commitments to diversity and inclusion, and fair faculty compensation and benefits.

### *Student Access and Affordability*

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The IFO supports state investment for Minnesota State colleges and universities that allow our campuses to provide the highest quality post-secondary educational opportunities. We support efforts to provide the sufficient revenue to fully fund the state's commitment to protect access and affordability. In today's economy, a college education is essential to gainful employment and entrance to the middle class. Yet, college costs are beyond the reach of many Minnesotans. State legislative policy and funding cuts have played a significant role in this trend by shifting costs to students and families by reducing state support. Students and their families now face unsustainable indebtedness that presents grave consequences for Minnesota's economy.

### *Commitments to Safety, Diversity, and Inclusion*

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The IFO supports legislative policies that help eliminate barriers to post-secondary education. Faculty lead efforts to foster an actively engaged learning community that respect the inherent worth of all students, faculty, and staff and foster an actively engaged learning community based on justice, equity and inclusiveness, in a safe, supportive, and welcoming environment.

### *Strengthening Shared Governance*

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The IFO supports faculty involvement in personnel decisions, selection of administrators, preparation of the budget, and determination of educational policies. We support campus autonomy from the system office for decisions directly affecting our campuses. All input sought by the system office should be drawn from campuses as much possible before making decisions. Statewide and campus meet-and-confer meetings are a key piece of shared governance and provide an arena for faculty to voice concerns if the expectations of shared governance are not being met. The IFO opposes continued administrative growth.

### *Protecting Tenure, Academic Freedom, and Innovative Instruction*

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The IFO supports the full protection of tenure and academic freedom. This includes freedom to: develop curriculum and discuss academic subjects without constraint; research, engage in civic issues, and report on topics regardless of whether the results are popular; and for all faculty and students to freely explore and express artistic or theatrical discoveries. The clash of competing ideas brought out by academic freedom is an important catalyst for the expansion of knowledge but also in students' development of independent critical thought.

### *Pension and Employment Benefits*

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The IFO supports preserving and improving the pensions and benefits provided to our members. These are important recruitment and retention tools and they are vital to the success of our students and universities.