

**The Inter Faculty Organization and MSU Faculty Association:
Some Frequently and Infrequently Asked Questions
2012**

Q: What are the Inter Faculty Organization and the MSU Faculty Association? Are they different groups?

A: **The Inter Faculty Organization (IFO)** is the statewide faculty union that engages in collective bargaining and statewide shared governance for the faculty in all seven state universities with the Minnesota State College and Universities (MnSCU) system. **The Faculty Association (FA)** is the local branch for our university of the IFO. The seven state universities all have their own individual Faculty Associations:

- Bemidji State University
- Metropolitan State University
- **Minnesota State University, Mankato**
- Minnesota State University Moorhead
- St. Cloud State University
- Southwest Minnesota State University
- Winona State University

Q: Are faculty in other Minnesota public higher education institutions also part of the IFO?

A: No. The faculty in the University of Minnesota system (Twin Cities, Crookston, Duluth, and Morris) are not unionized. Faculty at the two-year colleges in the MnSCU system have their own union (Minnesota State College Faculty) and engage in separate contract negotiations.

Q: Who can be an IFO/FA member?

A: Any state university faculty member covered by the MnSCU/IFO contract can be an IFO member: full-time, part-time, tenured, tenure-track, fixed-term, adjunct, etc.

Q: If I am an MSU Mankato faculty member, am I automatically an IFO member?

A: No. You have to fill out a membership application form and pay full IFO dues. If you have not filled out such a form and wish to, contact Donna Blom (donna.blom@mnsu.edu) in the Faculty Association Office, Morris Hall 240B (phone: 389-2479).

Q: What does “Fair Share Faculty” mean?

A: “Fair Share” refers to faculty members who are not members of the IFO but who pay 85% of full dues in order to cover the costs of assuring their rights and protections under the contract.

Q: What are the advantages to being an IFO member? Why should I bother paying full dues?

A: The major advantage is that membership gives you a direct voice in the IFO, the MSU Faculty Association, and shared governance at MSU Mankato. Only IFO members can

- Participate and vote in the Delegate Assemblies that meet every two years to approve the budget and dues, set IFO policies, and propose and adopt resolutions that will direct the Negotiating Team in the next round of contract bargaining
- Participate and vote in the MSU Faculty Association meetings every semester
- Participate on administrative search committees
- Vote to ratify or reject contracts
- Vote for the state IFO President
- Vote for MSU Faculty Association Officers, including
 - President
 - Vice President/Grievance Officer
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - 3 campus representatives to the state IFO Board of Directors
 - Unit (college) representatives to the MSU FA Executive Committee
 - Unit (college) representatives to the standing “sub-meet and confer” committees that do much of the actual work on campus in our shared governance system
- Participate in shared governance through the standing sub-meet and confer committees and other committees, task forces, etc. on the MnSCU system, university or college level.

Q: What do you mean by “shared governance”?

A: The term is widely used in relation to higher education in the United States and can mean different things to different people. Basically, it refers to participation in decision-making and policy processes by different groups of “stakeholders” in the institution. In relation to the IFO and FA, we are referring mainly to the faculty’s role in those processes along with the university and MnSCU system administrations.

Q: How does shared governance work at MSU Mankato? Does MSU have a faculty senate?

A: Instead of a traditional faculty senate, shared governance at MSU Mankato works through a process called “Meet & Confer.” About once a month during the academic year, the university’s President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and other key members of campus administration meet with members of the FA Executive Committee. At these meetings, administration and faculty representatives share information, review policies and procedures, and refer different items for action to the appropriate offices or committees. Most of the

real work on campus is done by the standing “Sub-Meet & Confer” committees, which currently include Budget, Extended Learning, Faculty Development, Faculty Improvement & Sabbatical, General Education & Diversity, Graduate, Planning, Program Review & Assessment, Research, and Undergraduate Curriculum & Academic Policy. Other temporary committees, task forces, work groups, etc. are also established as needed. The FA Executive Committee discusses issues arising from these groups and elsewhere in shaping the agenda for the main Meet & Confer sessions.

Q: What role do department chairs play in shared governance?

A: Under our contract, department chairs are considered to be members of the faculty and not administrators as such. They are expected to coordinate department activities and represent their departments’ interests and recommendations, but actual administrative decisions are made by college deans or other upper-level administrators. Chairs usually meet with the deans of their colleges on a regular basis.

Q: Do I have to be an IFO member to participate in departmental committees or chair my department?

A: No. Article 20 of the contract guarantees that all qualified faculty in a department shall have input into departmental matters through a democratic process. However, in order to serve on any committee or in any other capacity that involves working with administration on the college or university level, you must be an IFO member since only the IFO has the contractual right to represent the faculty.

Q: Who negotiates our contracts? What happens if the contract term has expired without a new contract??

A: The IFO has a Negotiation Team that includes a representative from each campus. Our current representative is Donna Brauer, from the School of Nursing. The team negotiates with a MnSCU team comprised of system and campus administrators and staff members. Because salaries are tied to the amount of money appropriated for MnSCU by the state legislature every two years and because contract settlements still have to be ratified by the IFO membership and by the legislature, it often can take six months or more until a new contract is settled. In the meantime, the provisions of the previous contract still apply. The 2009-2011 contract lapsed in July but is still in effect until the 2011-2013 contract is settled and ratified. You can find the current contract online at <http://www.ifo.org>

Q: Are health care provisions part of contract negotiations?:

A: Not directly. The IFO bargains on health care provisions as part of a consortium of state employee unions, including the Minnesota State College Faculty, the American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the Minnesota State University Association of Administrative and

Service Faculty (MSUASF), and the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE).

Q: Do you ever have any fun?

A: We try to! During the work week, bring your lunch, snack, and/or laptop by the Heritage Room in the Centennial Student Union, which the Faculty Association has reserved for faculty use during weekdays.

Q: If I would like to serve on a committee or if I have questions about the contract or other matters, whom should I contact?

A: The following are key people to contact:

Name and Contact Information	Title
Donna Blom; phone: 389-2479 donna.blom@mnsu.edu	Faculty Association Administrative Assistant
James (Jim) Grabowska james.grabowska@mnsu.edu	Faculty Association President
Mary Visser mary.visser@mnsu.edu	Faculty Association Vice President and Grievance Officer
Bridget Cooper bridget.cooper@mnsu.edu	Unit Representative Allied Health & Nursing
Richard (Dick) Liebendorfer richard.liebendorfer@mnsu.edu	Unit Representative Arts & Humanities
Georgia Holmes georgia.holmes@mnsu.edu	Unit Representative Business
John Seymour john.seymour@mnsu.edu	Unit Representative Education
Robert (Bobby) Bothmann robert.bothmann@mnsu.edu	Unit Representative Library Services & Unaffiliated Faculty
Gregg Marg gregg.marg@mnsu.edu	Unit Representative Science, Engineering & Technology
Kevin Parsneau kevin.parsneau@mnsu.edu	Unit Representative Social & Behavioral Sciences

For more information, see the MSU Faculty Association web site and the IFO web site:

<http://mnsufa.org/>

<http://www.ifo.org/>

Governing Structure of the Inter Faculty Organization and the Faculty Association

STATEWIDE
See http://mnsufa.org/ and http://www.ifo.org/OperatingProcedures/OPhome.htm
IFO Membership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IFO members at all seven state universities constitute the supreme authority for the organization
<p>IFO Delegate Assembly (meets every two years and when special meetings are called)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delegates from each state university meet to set policies and priorities for negotiations, approve budget and dues schedules, and deal with all activities not determined by the membership at large. Last DA was March 2012 – next will be in 2014)
<p>IFO Board of Directors (meets at least six times during the academic year)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes the IFO President, the seven FA presidents, and a proportional number of representatives from each campus. MSU Mankato has three IFO Directors in addition to the FA President. • The Board acts as the designated authority for the Delegate Assembly when it is not in session.
IFO Executive Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes the IFO President and the seven FA presidents • Acts as the IFO’s personnel committee (for IFO staff matters) and engages with MnSCU administration in the state Meet & Confer sessions.
The Negotiations Team and other designated statewide committees or positions

MSU MANKATO FACULTY ASSOCIATION
See http://mnsufa.org/ and http://www.mnsufa.org/Documents/Constitution&Bylaws.html
IFO/FA Membership at MSU Mankato
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is at least one general membership meeting each semester. • IFO members are the supreme authority for the Faculty Association at MSU Mankato
Faculty Association Executive Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, 3 IFO Directors, 7 Unit (College) Representatives, and Chairs of the standing sub-meet & confer committees • Meets on a regular basis throughout the academic year on behalf of the MSU faculty and IFO membership • Discusses and acts on items brought before the committee on issues related to the MnSCU system, the state IFO office, contract negotiations, and issues relating to MSU Mankato • Reviews actions and issues brought from the standing sub-meet & confer committees, other groups, and individual faculty • Determines items to be brought forward for discussion or action at the main Meet & Confer with MSU administration

Standing Sub-Meet & Confer Committees

- Include representatives from each Unit (the six colleges plus Library/Unaffiliated Faculty) and university administration
- The standing committees are set in the FA Operating Procedures: Budget*, Extended Learning, Faculty Development, Faculty Improvement & Sabbatical, General Education & Diversity, Graduate, Curriculum & Academic Policy (GCAP) Planning*, Program Review & Assessment, Research, Undergraduate Curriculum & Academic Policy.

*Includes representatives from other campus bargaining units and the Minnesota State Student Association