

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

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 at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities are not unionized. The U of M campuses at Crookston and Duluth are affiliated with Education Minnesota. 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. To become an IFO member, you must 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). Dues can be deducted from your paychecks over the year.

Q: What does “Fair Share Faculty” mean?

A: “Fair Share” refers to faculty members who are not members of the IFO. Non-members still 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 as a member of the standing sub-meet and confer committees and other committees, task forces, etc. on the college, university or MnSCU system level*
- Participate on administrative search committees
- Participate and vote in the Delegate Assemblies*
- Vote to ratify or reject contracts
- Participate and vote in the MSU Faculty Association meetings every semester*
- 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
- Vote for the state IFO President

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

A: This 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*. 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.

* See attached governance chart

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 above the department level, you must be an IFO member since only the IFO has the contractual right to represent the faculty. See Article 20 at <http://www.ifo.org/contract09/webFINALIFOCBA07-09.htm#20>.

Q: How can I participate in committees and shared governance?

A: Elections for Faculty Association officers and open Sub-Meet & Confer committee positions are held every spring. Throughout the year, the Faculty Association also sends out calls for volunteers for other committees and groups. Those volunteers are then chosen and appointed by the Executive Committee. If you see a call for volunteers that you are interested in, send a brief statement of your interest and experience to Donna Blom at donna.blom@mnsu.edu.

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. The next contract negotiations will begin during the 2010-2011 academic year. 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. Due to the developing state budget deficit, the 2009-2011 contract is substantially the same as the 2007-2009 contract, which you can find online at <http://www.ifo.org/contract07/ifomnscu0507.htm>. Specific changes in the current contract are listed at <http://www.ifo.org/09-11tentativeagreement.pdf>.

Q: Will there be any salary increases under the current contract?

A: The IFO accepted a pay "freeze" for most faculty in this contract. However, faculty who receive promotions or who are eligible for "career steps" by having completed 10, 20, or 30 years of employment will receive step increases.

Q: If I am not on the Faculty Association Executive Committee, how can I have a voice in how the IFO represents me?

A: Besides participating in IFO and FA elections, there are at least three other ways to make your voice heard:

1. Come to the General Faculty Meetings held at or near the beginning of Fall and Spring Semesters.
2. Volunteer for the IFO Delegate Assembly, which will be held this March in Roseville. The Delegate Assembly proposes and adopts resolutions that direct the actions of the IFO and the negotiations team.
3. Make an appointment, or call or email your Faculty Association officers and representatives. (See the contact information at the end of this document.)

Q: I am a new faculty member and my position is described as “nine-month faculty.” What does that mean?

A: Under the 2009-2011 contract, all faculty members hired after July 1, 2009 are designated as “nine-month” faculty. (See Article 10, Section D, Subd. 1.1 of the contract: <http://www.ifo.org/contract09/webFINALIFOCBA07-09.htm#10>.) In theory, this means that you can be appointed for any continuous nine-month period for two years at a time, not necessarily coinciding with the regular academic year that begins on August 17 of 2009. However, a University task force has recommended against making any appointments outside of the academic year because of practical difficulties of implementing such positions.

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). Any changes are then incorporated into the contract.

Q: Do you ever have any fun?

A: We try to! During the year, watch for social events sponsored by the Faculty Association. 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 or ifo@mnsufa.org	Faculty Association Administrative Assistant
Don Larsson donald.larsson@mnsu.edu	Faculty Association President
Jim Grabowska james.grabowska@mnsu.edu	Faculty Association Vice President and Grievance Officer
Chris Corley christopher.corley@mnsu.edu Jean Haar Jean.haar@mnsu.edu Roger Severns roger.severns@mnsu.edu	IFO Board of Directors, Mankato Representative
Jim Petersen james.petersen@mnsu.edu	Unit Representative Allied Health & Nursing
Dick Liebendorfer richard.liebendorfer@mnsu.edu	Unit Representative Arts & Humanities
Georgia Holmes georgia.holmes@mnsu.edu	Unit Representative Business
Andy Johnson andrew.johnson@mnsu.edu	Unit Representative Education
Becky Schwartzkopf rebecca.schwartzkopf@mnsu.edu	Unit Representative Library Services & Unaffiliated Faculty
Dan Toma daniel.toma@mnsu.edu	Unit Representative Science, Engineering & Technology
Jeff Bumgarner jeffrey.bumgarner@mnsu.edu	Unit Representative Social & Behavioral Sciences

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

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

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

Governing Structure of the Inter Faculty Organization and the Faculty Association

STATEWIDE
See http://www.ifo.org/ifooperationshome.htm 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
IFO Delegate Assembly (meets every two years and when special meetings are called)
<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
IFO Board of Directors (meets at least six times during the academic year)
<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://www.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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include representatives from each Unit (the six colleges plus Library/Unaffiliated Faculty) and university administration • The standing committees are set in the FA By-Laws: Assessment & Evaluation**, Budget**, Extended Learning, Faculty Development, Faculty Improvement & Sabbatical, General Education & Diversity, Graduate, Planning**, Research, Undergraduate Curriculum & Academic Policy

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