

MSCF Academic Affairs Statement of Core Values

MSCF believes that it is essential for quality education that all classes be taught by qualified, professional instructors. We believe in faculty control and direction of an academically rigorous curriculum. We value equitable opportunity for students guaranteed by broad educational access. We honor time-tested best practices—not fads or short-sighted political agendas (i.e. [McKinsey](#), [ALEC](#), [Koch Brothers](#)). These values are carried out when faculty control curriculum, decisions are made at the local level, and academic freedom and professional standards are upheld.

Faculty Control Curriculum

MSCF upholds faculty as experts in their fields; therefore, faculty must determine the content and oversight of curriculum. We reaffirm the Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC) as the essential contractual mechanism that ensures faculty control. Faculty expertise stems from extensive training and continual practice of their discipline and trade. Faculty interact daily with students and understand how best to impart their skills and knowledge to diverse learners. The combination of expertise and practice uniquely positions faculty to develop and improve curriculum. Community partners are valuable sources of practical insights and local faculty are best positioned to integrate these into ever-changing curriculum. An externally determined common curriculum burdens innovation, inhibits collaboration and reduces flexibility. A common curriculum assumes that all students are the same. It teaches students what to think rather than how to think.

We oppose all efforts by non-faculty to impose curriculum in our classrooms.

Academic Freedom

MSCF defends the long-standing tradition of academic freedom in higher education. We recognize that faculty are responsible scholars entrusted to build quality curricula based on the standards of their professional disciplines. We believe that faculty have both the right and the responsibility to develop and present content related both to their

discipline and the missions of their colleges and the Minnesota State System. Similarly, faculty must be the ones to assess student learning in order to measure the effectiveness of various teaching and learning strategies with their current student population.

Academic freedom enables faculty to use their professional judgments to best present the curriculum to their students—whether orally or in writing—without fear of repercussion or retribution. There are times when academic speech may be offensive, discriminatory, explicit, oppressive, or inflammatory simply due to the nature of the curriculum.

Academic freedom contributes to quality instruction by making it possible for the classroom to be a contentious environment: it is a place where faculty can challenge students' assumptions—not because it is necessary to change these assumptions, but so that students can learn how to think about different perspectives and better understand their world views. The goal of a controversial environment is to enhance students' abilities to think about the information they are bombarded with on a daily basis and to encourage students to take an active role in shaping the world as they think it should be. Academic freedom contributes to a civil and democratic society.

We resist any attempts to infringe on this fundamental faculty right.

Local Control

MSCF believes that the higher educational needs of the citizens of Minnesota are best served when colleges maintain local control of their programs and missions.

MSCF acknowledge allegiance to the regions we serve, reflecting the needs and values of those communities. Student goals are most effectively achieved when campuses are allowed flexibility and autonomy. One-size fits all centralized mandates ignore the diverse needs of Minnesota communities. Central mandates to streamline and simplify curriculum threaten the ability of a campus to respond swiftly to local needs as conditions require. Our colleges must operate within the values and norms of their communities. Preserving independent educational programming is the best way to ensure that our campuses remain in and of the community. MSCF believes an

autonomous campus guided by faculty and administrators working collaboratively provides the best opportunity for student access and success.

We vigorously defend local control against ill-conceived top-down mandates.

Shared Governance

We value the principle of local shared governance. Faculty expertise enables them to be advocates for the resources and policies necessary to provide students with the best possible education. Administrative practicality keeps the institution viable and functioning. It is the intersection and balance of faculty idealism and administrative practicality that produces the best possible outcome for our students and our campuses.

We affirm our status as equal partners with administration in the governance of our campuses.

Maintain Professional Standards

MSCF firmly believes that high quality instruction stems from credentialed faculty in *all* teaching positions (unlimited, temporary, concurrent) who work in an environment where academic freedom is valued.

Credentialing is the best means to ensure that the level of instruction is appropriate. Faculty who have a minimum of a master's degree and/or eighteen graduate credits in field (for liberal arts) and industry experience (for technical fields) not only understand the content, they also have a more advanced understanding of the skills employed by the discipline, and are able to teach those skills at a level appropriate to the baccalaureate students.

With continually emerging research and advances in all discipline fields, professional development for faculty is necessary to provide high quality, extraordinary education to the citizens of Minnesota. Supporting faculty with the opportunities, time, and funding to grow professionally enhances and enriches the education they provide.

We will fight to preserve our professional standards.

Fair Hiring Processes

MSCF firmly believes that the majority of faculty work in unlimited positions and that our contingent faculty are treated professionally and ethically.

Unlimited positions ensure that faculty are able to devote their full energies to their students and the institution at which they are employed. Unlimited faculty are able to freely and openly contribute to the department. Unlimited faculty can better maintain a standard of rigor: they have less fear of losing their job regardless of how popular they are with students, the faculty in the department or college administration. Not only are individual professional credentials fundamental to uphold, academic programmatic standards are also vital to student success. Faculty need the time and resources to adequately maintain the high standards set by academic program accrediting or licensing agencies to ensure students are receiving rigorous and relevant content.

Contingent faculty are our professional colleagues, and they deserve to be treated as such both by faculty and administration. They are not temporary conveniences, but people dedicated to the teaching profession. We stand for hiring practices that do not exploit our contingent faculty.

We resist attempts to divide and separate unlimited and contingent faculty.