

the GREEN SHEET



VOLUME XVI, ISSUE 19

The Official Publication of the Minnesota State College Faculty

NOVEMBER 2015

The Real Problem

By Kevin Lindstrom, MSCF President

I went to counseling graduate school 25 years ago. I am often struck by how lessons learned back then are the first things that come to my mind when faced with issues today. The lasting power of that learning is a function of the extensive reading and writing we did, the deep and meaningful classroom discussions we had, and the repetitive practice we engaged in to develop our knowledge and skills, all under the direction of highly qualified faculty members. Those quality experiences are likely why I bristle today when I hear talk of “creative alternatives” to content, rigor, and faculty credentials.

One of the lessons I learned way back when was about the process of problem-solving. While there are many different theoretical models of problem-solving, they tend to have common elements. Chief among those elements is the notion that to effectively solve a problem you must first effectively define the problem. Too often, when faced with a problem, we are tempted to move to solutions while taking for granted the definition of the problem. We also tend to assume the problem is defined as presented, when, in fact, it is something entirely different. As a result, we can find ourselves focusing on the symptom instead

of the cause. When we jump to solutions before accurately defining the problem, we are prone to adopting solutions that accomplish little, at least where the real problem is concerned.

I see the dangers of not accurately defining the problem in many issues facing the system today. My concern is that we have all kinds of folks offering all kinds of solutions to poorly-defined problems. Often the solutions proposed by these folks are more a function of their agenda than the real problem. As a result, we get proposed solutions that do little to effectively address the real problem. Or, to the extent that the solutions have any positive impact, they are likely to cause at least as much collateral damage. Too often we are engaged in fundamentally faulty problem-solving.

To illustrate my point, I would offer a couple examples of perceived problems facing the system today that are not being accurately defined and, therefore, are not being effectively addressed. Further, I would suggest that each of these perceived problems, more accurately defined, are actually only one problem. Finally, I would suggest that many more perceived problems the system faces today, and will



likely face in the future, can most effectively be solved when accurately defined as this single problem.

Let me start with concurrent enrollment. Obviously, there is a lot of chatter these days about the challenges faced by all parties involved with concurrent enrollment. Many are blaming the Higher Learning Commission for signaling intent to enforce rules regarding faculty credentialing. As a result, all sorts of proposed “solutions” to the credentialing “problem” have been offered. Before we get to solutions, we need to determine if credentialing is the real problem in the concurrent enrollment realm.

Next I offer the notion of co-requisite courses. Complete College America caused quite a stir at the legislature last session with its proposal to accelerate the

(continued on page 5)

Personnel Files

By Norm Halsa, MSCF Vice President for Technical Education

Our contract gives both the employer and us, as faculty, certain rights. One of those rights gives us access to our personnel files. Page 124 of our current contract outlines the college's responsibility and our rights as employees pertaining to these files. We have the right to inspect the contents of our files. We also have the right to request that the college provide two (2) copies of our files. Now I do not want everyone to rush out and exercise that contractual right, but I would like you to consider taking a look at what is in your file.

I highly recommend that you look through your file if you have had

a contentious relationship with a supervisor. As outlined in Article 26, Section 2, any performance related item placed in the file should have an acknowledgement of receipt by you via your signature.

Also stated in the above article, upon written request, the faculty member's file should be delivered within three (3) working days to the faculty member's home campus in a secure, sealed envelope to be opened in the presence of the faculty member and the college president or designee.

Further down the page there is an established process which allows faculty members the right to request



items be removed from their file.

This is just one of many areas where we have rights via the collective bargaining process.

Thank you MSCF members and staff!

By Darci Stanford and Norm Halsa

We wanted to say thank you to all those who attended the fall leadership conference at Ruttger's. Thank you to all of the officers,

at large members, committees, and staff that presented at the conference. We also wanted to thank Jennie and John for all the work that

goes into coordinating the event. We appreciate all the help.



MSCF is an affiliate of Education Minnesota, NEA and AFT.


The Green Sheet is published two to three times a year by the MSCF. Authors include MSCF officers, faculty members and staff.

651-767-1262 or 1-800-377-7783

MSCF

55 Sherburne Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55103

www.minnesotastatecollegefaculty.org

Printed at Education Minnesota. 

Telling Our Story

By Darci Stanford, MSCF Vice President for Liberal Arts

If there was a theme at Ruttger's this year, it would be member engagement. A big piece of that is communicating to long-standing, new, and potential members. To demonstrate this, most of the breakout sessions involved activities/tools around how to tell your story, communicate what you value, and the story of self. Within these activities, we collected a variety of testimonials ranging from the benefit our health insurance plan offers to protection of our academic freedom. This theme wrapped up on Friday morning with a new addition to Ruttger's, a videotaping session provided by Education Minnesota. THANK YOU to the 10 MSCF members who participated in this project. They were asked questions

about how the presence of the union enhances the work they do and why the union is important to them. Feedback from the videographer was positive and that the responses were "extraordinarily articulate". I don't think we'd expect anything less from our members!

The videos will be used to support membership recruitment, retention, and engagement. There is discussion around development of a video collage specific to higher education, using social media tools to distribute the product, and also the possibility of some of the material to be used to support membership across the broader Education Minnesota population. Be on the lookout for a communication from the MSCF office when these are



ready for distribution.

Throughout the conference, participants were able to share experiences, connect with others, provide suggestions, and build a stronger network through the union.

At-large members of the executive committee elected at September Board of Directors meeting

2015-2016 at-large members are:

- Shirley Johnson, North Hennepin
- Gretchen Long, Hennepin Tech Brooklyn Park
- Von Rathsachack, MN West-South
- Jay Wendelberger, South Central-N. Mankato

September 11, 2015, MSCF Board of Directors Meeting Motions

MOTIONS

Motion and second from the Executive Committee to approve the 2015-2016 committee appointments as submitted. Carried

Motion and second from the Executive Committee to approve the Minnesota State College Faculty Policies as submitted. Carried

Motion to amend the meal cost to \$30. Loge/Wendelberger. Failed

Motion to amend by deleting individual meal allowance and replace with \$70 per day. Latterell/Christian. Failed
(Original motion Carried)

Layoffs

By Kent Quamme, MSCF Treasurer

Layoffs are never pleasant and can be more unpleasant when we do not understand the reason for the layoff. Usually, layoffs happen due to either program closure or declining enrollment numbers.

When layoffs are issued, the layoff procedure is spelled out in Article 22 of the master agreement. The administration, through the shared governance process, shall discuss with the MSCF any layoffs that are to occur. This meeting must take place before November 15. Unlimited Full-time faculty must be notified of layoff by November 1 for a layoff to take place at the end of the following spring semester. Unlimited Part-time faculty must be notified of layoff by November 1 for a layoff to take place at the end of the following spring semester, and must be notified by April 1 for a layoff to take place at the end of the following fall semester.

All layoffs will be based on inverse seniority in the credential field and in the following order: Post Retirement Annuitant faculty, Temporary faculty, Probationary faculty, Unlimited Part-time faculty, and finally Unlimited Full-time faculty.

Multiple-campus situations add another layer to the layoff procedures. Many times a college with multiple campuses will have duplicated programs and positions across the college. Again, in times of economic hardship, administration might identify positions to be eliminated. Remember, it is the position being eliminated and not the faculty member.

If a position that is being held by a faculty member that has seniority

across the multiple-campus college is eliminated, certain steps must occur. Layoff notices are given to the least senior faculty member(s) in the credential field starting with temporary faculty. No layoffs can be made if the college continues to employ temporary faculty in the credential field of the position being eliminated. After temporary positions have been depleted, the college must eliminate positions in the order of probationary, Unlimited Part-time, and finally least senior Unlimited Full-time. Positions shall be declared vacant in the FTE amount of the number of more senior faculty positions that are being eliminated.

What this means is that if two senior faculty members' positions are being eliminated on one or more campuses, two full-time positions must be freed up by issuing termination notices to temporary faculty, or layoff notices to unlimited faculty, and must go to the least senior faculty across the college campuses.

Example: College X has three campuses, has a cigar rolling program on all three of the campuses, and employs one UFT faculty member on each campus. Campus A has one full-time faculty that is # 1 on the college-wide seniority roster and has been issued a layoff notice. Campus B has one full-time faculty that is #2 on the seniority roster, and Campus C has one full-time faculty that is #3 on the seniority roster and two temporary part-time faculty. Campus A has decided to eliminate the cigar rolling program. All of the least senior faculty, including the faculty whose position is being eliminated, must



be issued layoff notices to create a vacant position of one FTE. The most senior faculty listed at #1 on the seniority roster will be issued a layoff/reassignment letter and must be given her/his choice of the vacated positions. The #2 faculty member then gets the next choice of vacated positions, and whatever FTE amount is left over is filled by the #3 faculty member on the roster. The most senior faculty member chooses the position on Campus C and the next senior chooses the position on Campus B. What is left is 0.5 FTE on Campus C. The faculty member that is #3 on the roster has the option of taking the 0.5 FTE position on Campus C or accepting the layoff.

If any of the faculty members decide not to take the vacated position on another campus, then they are accepting the layoff and all provisions that are applicable.

In closing, here are a few things to remember. Layoffs may occur only when necessary for bona fide, good, and sufficient reasons. Again, layoffs are positions being eliminated, not individuals, and shall not be used to get rid of unwanted faculty.

MSCF Sawbuck Club

By Rick Nelson, MSCF Legislative Steering Committee Chair

MSCF members were very active in the last legislative campaign and during the 2015 legislative session cycle, and that work paid off. However, only through ongoing engagement can we maintain both an education-friendly legislature and governor. It is not too late to join those of us who wish to have our voice heard and “Tell our Story”.

Here’s how the Sawbuck Club works. Members receive a monthly email highlighting two legislators or candidates who have demonstrated a commitment to protecting and furthering higher education in Minnesota. Sawbuck Club members then show their support for these candidates by sending a small financial contribution to one of them.

We suggest \$10, hence the name, Sawbuck. We will provide the mailing address for each candidate. You provide a check and a note of thanks that identifies you as a member of MSCF. Yes, the \$10 matters but it is your personal note talking about your college or program that means the most.

Each legislator we highlight will have been screened by the MSCF legislative steering committee. The screening process will focus on the legislator’s actions and priorities, not their party affiliation. Please encourage others at your campus to join the Sawbuck Club. Based upon the responses received regarding our efforts during the last election, it is our collective action that really



makes a difference. Just think, if 1,000 MSCF members participated what an impact this could have for all of us in and out of the classroom. If you would like to sign up, please contact John Ward (john.ward@edmn.org) to send you a form. It’s that simple!

The Real Problem *continued from page 1*

pace of completion via numerous means, including the use of co-requisite courses to shorten time to completion. Many of Complete College America’s proposed “solutions” imply that taking time to complete college is the “problem.” Before we get to solutions, we need to determine if time to completion is the real problem.

Now that we have a couple of prime examples of perceived problems, let’s ask if the problem has been accurately defined. Is credentialing the real issue in concurrent enrollment? Is time the real issue in student completion? The simple answer in both cases is, “Of course not.” Anyone with a little experience and time to contemplate will quickly conclude that neither of these problems are accurately

defined in terms of how they present. As a result, the solutions proposed in each realm do little, if anything, to address the real problem.

So then, might you ask, what is the real problem? The real problem is college affordability. Students turn to concurrent enrollment in large part because they want to save money. I have yet to hear a high school student say, “I want to have something less than a college experience, taught by someone who isn’t properly qualified.” Yet, that’s exactly what you might think those students are saying if you listen to some of the proposed solutions. College students want to get done fast in large part because they want to save money. I have yet to hear a college student say, “I want to be pushed through as fast as possible,

even if that means learning less or failing out.” Yet, that’s exactly what you might think those students are saying if you listen to some of the proposed solutions.

The real problem here is that the real problem in many of the issues we face today is not being accurately defined. The real problem is college affordability. As you consider issues that come your way in the future, I challenge you to consider how many problems we face present as something else, when, in fact, they are really about college affordability. If that’s the real issue, then the only solutions that will work are those that address affordability directly. At least that’s what they taught us in counseling school.

Over 100 faculty members attend annual MSCF Fall Leadership Training Conference



Opposite Page, clockwise from left

1. Grievance Rep Jim Biederman (Anoka Ramsey-Coon Rapids) and Grievance Rep Tammie Thell (Anoka Tech)
2. Chapter President Joe Chlebeczek (Rainy River) and Racial Equity Committee Chair Terrence Wilcox (Lake Superior)
3. Kickoff to training with all attendees
4. Chapter President Gretchen Long (Hennepin Tech-Brooklyn Park) presents during the breakout session “Organizing For A Powerful Union”
5. MSCF VP for Technical Norm Halsa (Northland-Thief River Falls) and MSCF VP for Liberal Arts Darci Stanford (South Central-Faribault)

Clockwise from top right

1. MSCF President Kevin Lindstrom addresses attendees at Thursday general session
2. MSCF VP for Technical Norm Halsa (Northland-Thief River Falls), Grievance Rep Suzette Overby (Riverland-Austin), Grievance Rep Lisa Dusek (Ridgewater -Willmar), and Academic Affairs Committee member Tom Woodhouse (Riverland – Austin) talk during the breakout session “Educators and Effective Lobbying”
3. Chapter President training session on Thursday





MSCF
55 Sherburne Ave
St. Paul, MN 55103

FIRST-CLASS MAIL
PRESORTED
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TWIN CITIES, MN
PERMIT NO. 582

the GREEN SHEET



VOLUME XVI, ISSUE 19

The Official Publication of the Minnesota State College Faculty

NOVEMBER 2015

Contact Information

Contact information for MSCF elected officers

Kevin Lindstrom, President, 651-767-1265
Norm Halsa, Technical VP, 218-686-2326
Darci Stanford, Liberal Arts VP, 507-676-3026
Kent Quamme, Treasurer, 218-280-6754
Gregg Wright, Secretary, 507-280-3515
Rick Nelson, Legislative Chair, 651-338-3288

MSCF Staff

Kari Ann Cruz, 651-767-1272
Chip Dykstra, 651-767-1277
Matt Ryg, 651-767-1270

Upcoming Meeting Dates

Board meeting
December 4, 2015
**Delegate Assembly
& Board meeting**
April 8, 2016
*Ramada Plaza
Minneapolis*