

MSCF Minute



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Welcome Back!

by Kent Quamme, MSCF Treasurer

The summer of 2015 has been interesting, and not necessarily in a good way. In July, the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) decided to hear the case of Friedrichs vs. the California Teachers Association.

The Friedrichs' case states that public sector unions, as in the Minnesota State College Faculty, are suppressing the freedom of speech of members through the assessing of agency fees or fair share dues. The plaintiffs complain that through the assessing of these fees, they are subsidizing union activities (political lobbying, promoting social issues, and even just the act of collective bargaining) with which not all faculty agree. SCOTUS upheld the assessing of agency fees in the 1977 *Abood vs. the Detroit Board of Education* ruling, stating that since all faculty benefit from the collective bargaining agreement, all faculty should pay their fair share of negotiating and enforcing it.

If SCOTUS rules in favor of Friedrichs, fair share faculty would no longer pay ANY dues to MSCF but would still benefit from the very mature and very impressive master agreement that all faculty enjoy. We need to impress



upon faculty that everyone needs to pull their weight. Without the strength of numbers, everything we have worked for in the past can disappear.

What can we do in preparation for a possible bad ruling in the Friedrichs' case? Organize. Plain and simple. We need to turn potential members into members and get them active. We need to find those new faculty and show them the benefits of the union. Tell them your story. Tell them why you are a member and how the MSCF benefits ALL faculty.

And we need to turn current members into active members. Get them involved in AASC and Shared Governance. Get them

involved in recruiting new members. Remember the \$20 gift cards?

Finally, we need to turn our active members into leaders. Ask them to become members of the local executive committee first, maybe as a Secretary/Treasurer or a VP. Inform them of the statewide committee work that is available. These faculty will be the future of the union, and we want them to be able to hit the ground running.

Organizing will be most successful at the department level. Faculty know the others in their hallway better than anyone. These faculty are the first points of contact for many potential members. Act as department mentors to new faculty, get to know them as a

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person and as a colleague. Visit with them on a one to one basis. Show them how the department functions and introduce them to other faculty. Think of a department as an affinity group. You all share a core value, your passion for teaching in a specific field. New faculty will have questions about the college, the union, and MnSCU, and as an active union member, the faculty mentor can answer those questions by drawing on their own experiences. At this level, we can focus on issues the new faculty have and build relationships with them. The more these new faculty feel comfortable with their union colleagues, the more active they will be as members. The more members we have, the stronger we will be.

As individuals, others control our present and future. Organized, we control our destiny.