



Faculty position eroding as higher education becomes market driven

As you read this, The Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education is winding down to the end of its deliberations. Popularly known as the Spellings Commission, this group, dominated by upper level college and university administrators and business leaders, is pondering a series of Issue Papers created by staff or members of the Commission at the direction of Chairman Charles Miller. The reports are on the Web at <http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/index.html>. Click on "Reports" – reports written by or for the commission.

The sixth Issue Paper, *Frequently Asked Questions About College Costs*, written by Robert C. Dickeson comes across as a very disturbing attack on many aspects of faculty roles and presence in the university. In Section 1, "Why Does College Cost So Much," he writes: "Faculty salaries are especially expensive,

particularly in high-demand subject-matter areas, like business and engineering." Later in that section, Dickeson claims that "Colleges do not always have control over their personnel expenses.... In some public systems, faculty union contracts are negotiated at the state or system levels, and are not controlled by individual institutions."

This is followed by a series of attacks on tenure, on faculty control of curricular matters, on the "abuse" of released time, and on the subsidization of intercollegiate athletics.

Dickeson attempts to strike a positive note later on as he praises community colleges for keeping

By Larry Oveson

MSCF
President



costs down by having faculties dominated by "...part-time instructors, who cost less."

This paper and five others like it are to form the foundation for the deliberations of the Commission. What could this mean for our profession and for our students? I think the Commission is likely to add to the negative pressures on higher education, furthering the arguments of those who claim that higher education must be completely dismantled and rebuilt. I believe we have already taken several significant steps down a path to the complete unbundling of the faculty position as we know it.

Colleges across the country now employ instructional/curriculum designers. These folks are typically not faculty members but are charged with writing and preparing course outlines and programs of instruction. At the other end of the spectrum that represents the faculty job, colleges in Texas are

"...the Commission is likely to add to the negative pressures on higher education, furthering the arguments of those who claim that higher education must be completely dismantled and rebuilt."

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The unbundling of the faculty position

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involved in a pilot program to have student papers written for English Composition evaluated by software programs.

But that leaves our core duty, the interaction with students, right? Think again. Consider the classic course redesign being sold across the nation by the Carol Twigg crowd. In that redesign, faculty are ideally removed from student interactions that are not directly related to course content. The faculty member is to deliver content and act as the content expert only, and other, less expensive personnel become the students' resource for all other course matters. Our jobs are being segmented and the pieces are being doled out.

A similar phenomenon appears to be happening within the curriculum. Perhaps we are coming round on some big circle in these matters in some way. When we consider that the disciplines we find so fundamental were first recognized in the late 19th century, individual courses within the disciplines came about as recently as 100 years ago, and the notion of college credits was created about 20 years after that, we should not be surprised that forces now exist that could break down these new-fangled barriers to an efficient education system.

Outcomes and their individual assessments are the first ingredients of the recipe to undo the current structure of the college curriculum. How long will it be until students, whom we know most often value the award

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not the learning inside it, demand to pick and choose and pay for discreet outcomes or skills? If the four-credit English Composition course and the three-credit Modern Literature course share five outcomes, why should I pay for all three credits of Modern Lit? I'll pay for just two credits and get the ten outcomes or competencies not covered in the English Composition. Of course, the faculty will have to arrange the teaching of the outcomes so that I can do that with some time efficiency. Close behind this is the demand to pay not for credits but for individual outcomes or competencies.

Policy makers are not concerned about coherence or about a meaningful, complementary program of study. As they see it, the student consumers will make the decisions, and it is our job to make our wares available to them in any way the market demands. It's all about a massive public subsidy for business, assuring it of a steady supply of trained, efficient workers.

Motions passed – March 31, 2006

MSCF Board of Directors

1. The MSCF Board of Directors endorses the K-12/Higher Education Task Force report as submitted.
2. The MSCF Board of Directors approves the MSCF Budget and MSCF portion of dues for 2006–2007.
3. The MSCF Board of Directors certifies the results of the March 2, 2006, election for MSCF Secretary, MSCF Technical Vice President, and MSCF Liberal Arts Vice President.

MSCF Delegate Assembly

Resolutions:

WHEREAS Registered Parliamentarian Ginny Altman has observed that MSCF's process of block voting "opposes the democratic process," as the practice of block voting can potentially eliminate smaller chapters from the decision-making process

BE IT RESOLVED THAT MSCF supports the observation of Parliamentarian Ginny Altman, and that MSCF purposes to reconsider our block-voting process.

Delegate Assembly largest ever

On March 31, 2006, MSCF held its largest Delegate Assembly ever with over 200 delegates in attendance. All officers and committee chairs reported on the year's activity. The reports displayed for the assembly the intense involvement of the union in a wide array of issues of academic, contractual, political, organizational, and professional concern.

The Delegate Assembly, often likened to the union's House of Representatives, is a great event to introduce new faculty to the scope of their union's activity and advocacy and for faculty to see how their union dues are spent. Consider attending the event next year.



Delegates from Minnesota State Moorhead, above, and St. Cloud Technical College, left, listen intently to year-end reports.

Representative for insurance committee is needed

MSCF is seeking a member to take on the role of principal representative to the Joint Labor Management Committee on Insurances. This work has been done very admirably for years by Cheryl Avenel-Navara, but Cheryl is not going to be available for this duty after the 2006-07 year. We would have the individual work alongside Cheryl for the 2006-07 year to provide the background and information necessary.

Our health and dental insurances are the result of negotiations between a caucus of representatives of all state employee groups and the State of Minnesota. The job includes participating in the preparation of the state employees' proposal, bargaining the package with the State of Minnesota representatives, and problem-

solving for members in the interim. It includes substantial reading of proposal materials, travel to St. Paul about four times per year for meetings of the Joint Labor Management Committee, and participation/reporting at our Board of Directors meetings. In addition, we refer members with particular problems relative to the insurance coverages to this individual, who refers them on to the appropriate Department of Employee Relations staff.

MSCF compensates our representative with an annual stipend. If you are interested in this position, please contact President Larry Oveson at (651) 767-1270 or (800) 377-7783 or larry.oveson@education-minnesota.org.

'Dedicate yourselves to stay united and hold on to this contract'

This is my last article for the Green Sheet after twenty-two and one-half years. I want to use the space to say thank you to the leadership and the members of MSCF. I have met thousands of faculty who teach in the public community and technical colleges of Minnesota. The one thing that you all need to be very proud of is that our faculty members are wonderful teachers and really do care about the success of the students who walk through the doors each and every year.

You also need to remember and be very proud of the fact that your elected leaders have provided you with a wonderful labor agreement. I realize that some members are not always pleased with the results of the negotiations process, but the biennial agreement still remains one of the best higher education contracts in the country and, in some cases, the very best in the country. I ask that you dedicate yourselves to stay united and to hold on to this contract, to make improvements when and where you can, and then to make sure that each and every college, campus, and member honors the contract by never knowingly agreeing to violate the terms and conditions provided in it.

I want to sincerely thank all of you who contributed to the retirement gifts that I have received and a special thanks to Kerry Duncan, English instructor at Mesabi Range,

A farewell article
by
**William L.
Newton**



and Jim Kehoe, counselor from Rochester, who actually made them happen.

For those of you who do not know what I am writing about, I will enumerate them. I have received a significant gift certificate to be used at Giants Ridge golf courses, and have also received gift certificates for the Wilderness golf course at Fortune Bay including one night at the Lodge, Deacon's Lodge at Grandview including two nights at the Lodge, and Superior National, north of Duluth, including one night at the Blue Fin Lodge on Lake Superior. For those who do not know it, I love the game of golf and will thoroughly enjoy playing these specific courses before the

"New leaders need to be recruited and developed as the natural process of retirement creates vacancies to be filled."

end of this season.

I have agreed to assist the MSCF this coming fall by providing training for a cadre of faculty from each of the large colleges in Membership Recruiting. I will be contacting each of the Board Members and the Chapter Presidents to name a membership chair for the fall and then will work with these faculty members to identify the cadre for each chapter involved in this project.

One of the challenges I would like to leave to you is to read the entire contract, ask questions of the leadership regarding the history behind many or all of the provisions contained in the contract, and share the history of where the MCCFA and the UTCE came from to form the MSCF. The two-year college system hires between 100 and 300 new faculty members each year. Contacting them, providing the information regarding membership benefits, and including them into the chapter and college activities is a primary need of the organization to continue to be strong in the future. New leaders need to be recruited and developed as the natural process of retirement creates vacancies to be filled.

I want to wish you all the very best during your career as a faculty member of the Minnesota State College Faculty. I want to urge you to begin your planning for your own retirement very early. I want to say thanks again for the wonderful memories, the extraordinary

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Parting words:

Call or e-mail with concerns before manufacturing a crisis

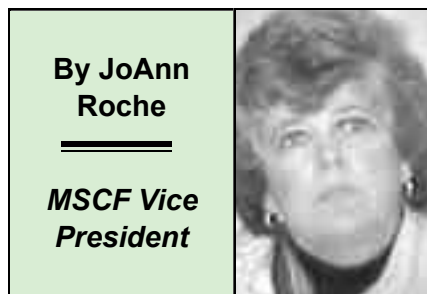
A while ago, a friend and colleague asked me a question something like this: “So, what are your parting words as you leave MSCF office after all these years?” I realized that was a great question for a farewell editorial as I hand off the vice presidency and editorship of *The Green Sheet* to others.

A wonderful thing happened at the Delegate Assembly this year, and I think it bodes well for the union. There was only one mention of the “former blue/former green,” and it was in my Credential Committee report. As the words fell from my lips, I stopped mid-sentence, realizing that I had not heard those words that day. I interrupted my report and immediately passed on my observation to the assembly.

The group broke into applause. That “high” coupled with the total absence of plotting, whispering, huddled groups of discontented members in the back of the hall during the assembly leads me to believe that our union has finally turned a corner. It was a great day!

Biggest threat is from within

My feeling for a long time has been that the biggest threat MSCF has faced has not been from the hostile, anti-union environment outside but from discord, suspicion, and sniping from within. Along those lines, there is some advice, born of observation and experience, I would offer as I remove my name from my office door in St. Paul. Contrary to the



opinion of many, there is no conspiracy in the office against half of our academic household. With that in mind, I would like to humbly petition some of you against manufacturing a crisis and spreading it like a spring grassfire. I ask you, instead, to call or e-mail the officer or committee chair you perceive as the source of the concern – the person who most likely has the answer to or the explanation of the situation.

The explanation of the situation tends to be logical and disarming. The political and economic environment the union works in today is difficult indeed. The effort made in bargaining to bring all of us under the same contractual provisions faces many impediments, not the least of which is disagreement within our own ranks as to what is the desired outcome.

It is easy for a naive person to think that because s/he suggests something or wants something, the leadership or negotiators should simply get it and that they fail the member if they don't immediately produce the desired benefit or fix. Give your representatives the benefit of the doubt. Call or e-mail them

for an explanation. You may gain a greater understanding of the issue, and your hostility will probably be put to rest. Over and over, I have seen antagonists retreat when confronted with facts and reality.

The ‘all for me’ attitude

Speaking of hostility, I detect another disturbing tendency developing within our ranks which is problematic to the basic idea of unionism. Union members traditionally sacrifice for the greater good over time. But the “all for one and one for all” attitude has morphed into “all for me.” “It isn't fair” has become the rallying cry. Instead of rejoicing at the good fortune of our fellow union members who gain a benefit the union has fought for for them and succeeding members, we bemoan the fact that we didn't benefit, or the cut off date or beginning date disenfranchised us, or the benefit wasn't retroactive.

A progressively improving contract always leaves some without a benefit. New benefits must start at some date certain giving something to someone another simply doesn't get. When my father, a steelworker, went on strike for weeks and one time struck for three months, he never made up what he lost in that work stoppage, but he and his union brothers handed a better contract to their younger members and to all who followed them.

I do not make a habit of spouting my religious philosophy (even

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Best wishes and thank you, Bill and JoAnn!



JoAnn Roche was honored as Outstanding Woman of the Year in 1992.

The departure from office of JoAnn Roche, Liberal Arts Vice President and editor of *The Green Sheet*, is a great loss to our organization and to me personally and professionally. JoAnn has guided, advised, and helped me throughout my tenure as a state leader, and I will miss her work greatly. As much as I will miss her work, I will miss her spectacular wit and sense of humor.

The grace, good nature, and spirit with which she handled the very difficult and complex credentialing debate is an example of her unique mix of personality, philosophy, and talents. JoAnn has been a constant force in making the organization more inclusive of women, though her work in that has gone unnoticed by many. Her sacrifice over many years of time and effort on behalf of the members sets a standard for all of us. Thank you, Jo.

—Larry Oveson



William L. Newton

For the last twenty-two and one-half years, MCCFA and MSCF have had the benefit of the talents, skills, energy, and “attitude” of Bill Newton. On June 30, 2006, Bill will be leaving us to pursue in earnest his many and varied interests.

Our best wishes, Bill, for a long, healthy, fulfilling retirement.

Education Minnesota Foundation awards classroom grants

Two MSCF members were recently awarded classroom grants by the Education Minnesota Foundation.

Sharon Melvie, Ridgewater, received \$2,670 for her proposal for PDA use in clinical preparation. Personal digital assistants are being used in health care systems to facilitate health care delivery at the site of delivery. Nursing students in this project will have the opportunity to learn to use this technology to access medical information – from drug formularies to medical terms. Students from diverse backgrounds and English language learners will readily benefit from learning to use the technology and the ready availability of the content.

Margaret Rejto, Normandale, received \$3,000 to help defray the cost of a Future Teachers Conference.

Normandale Community College’s Teachers of Tomorrow Club members are involved in planning and carrying out the arrangements for a Future Teachers Conference. This conference is intended to introduce high school students to the teaching career and to recruit current college students to education as a major. An emphasis is placed on attracting minority students to the conference and to the field. Funds will pay for publicizing the event and transportation of high school students to the event.

Sharon and Margaret were recognized at the March Education Minnesota Representative Convention.

If you would like information about the Foundation grant program, please e-mail Pat Reisenger, Foundation Director, at patricia.reisenger@educationminnesota.org

Parting words

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though it is in vogue now), but I would refer all of you to a very pertinent biblical parable which deals with a number of “fairness” issues if meditated on. Read Matthew, Chapter 20, a parable which tells of a vineyard owner who goes out several times in a day to hire men to work in his vineyard. . . .

Another issue about which I have voiced a private concern I would now like to express openly as a caution to our members. The issue comes up often in venues such as credentialing and alternate column movement discussions where the union and management interface. We as educators who literally sell the concept that educa-

tion improves the lives of people lose all our credibility as professionals when we say to management things like “Education doesn’t make us better teachers.” We either believe in what we do as applicable to all segments of society – including ourselves – or we don’t. We damage ourselves professionally and as members of an educators’ union when we don’t believe in the power of our own product.

My final editorial comments are about what some refer to as the “new unionism.” There are some out there who believe we are not hard-core union. Granted, there are many within our fold who are weak. But hard-core unionism cannot be hard-headed unionism. In the anti-union world we live in today, we must pick our battles judiciously. We have as much, actually more, to gain with our institutions being successful than our management does. We must

use our contractual and bargaining tools well and be known as problem solvers for our own survival. A few days ago, I sat and watched the rushing water in a spring-engorged creek. A huge boulder sat in the middle of the stream. Its belligerent, unmoving mass did nothing to hold back the rushing water, which simply found another path around the obstacle and slipped easily around it. We can be big and imposing and immovable, but that no longer serves us.

So. . . a long answer to my friend’s question. Thanks for indulging me. Thanks for the rewarding challenge of serving all of you. Thanks for the very generous parting gift you gave me. This union has been an integral part of my professional and personal life throughout my entire career, and I am grateful for all the experiences I have had.

Carry on!

Bill Newton

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experiences, and the long-standing friendships I have had the opportunity to experience during the past twenty-two and one-half years. Finally, I want to especially thank your President, Larry Oveson, for the opportunity to serve during his leadership which spans over twenty-one years of my employment as the Director of Labor Relations and now as Higher Education Field Representative. I have always been amazed in how Larry has conducted business in this Union. The one

constant event that I have observed in this organization is that the members have always elected the right person for the office of President for the times. Larry is the ultimate confirmation of this action taken by the membership.

So good-bye, God bless, and remember Justice is getting “what you deserve,” Mercy is not getting “what you deserve,” and Grace is getting “what you do not deserve.”



An affiliate of Education Minnesota

The GREEN SHEET

The Green Sheet is published five or six times a year by the Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF). Chief editor is MSCF Liberal Arts Vice President JoAnn Roche, with MSCF officers, staff, and faculty contributing.

Letters to the Editor and requests for information should be addressed to the MSCF office, 55 Sherburne Ave., St. Paul, Minnesota 55103. Telephone toll free: 1-800-377-7783; or 651-767-1262 in the Minneapolis-St. Paul local calling area.



An affiliate of the National Education Association
and American Federation of Teachers

Introducing...

Anne-Marie Ryan-Guest, Liberal Arts Vice President-Elect

Thank you for your vote of confidence by electing me as Vice President for Liberal Arts. I look forward to serving all of our members. As an elected representative of our organization, I believe it is essential to be in the office and available to members, staff, and fellow officers. I have asked for seventy percent release time. Outlined below is how I intend to spend my time.



I plan to visit all of our campuses so that I can get to know you and you can get to know me. Communication is the greatest tool to moving our organization forward as one.

For major projects, I am interested in undertaking a statewide review of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum. I believe the review will be a time intensive project since it will involve organizing and conducting meetings with the AASC chairs from across the state, preparation of helpful documents, answering e-mails, and traveling to discuss the project with the AASC chairs.

I would like to be involved with the Faculty Rights Committee. In this role, I would attend the meetings and assist the committee members in whatever capacity they need assistance.

Current committees/responsibilities that I would like to continue with are MnSCU Policy and Procedures Committee, Salary Equity Taskforce, and Contract Negotiations.

Gregory Wright, Secretary-Elect

I am looking forward to serving faculty during my term as Secretary. In addition to keeping the minutes of meetings in good order, I have an interest in supporting faculty in several ways:



- I have been active on the Joint Committee on Credential Fields. Now that MnSCU Policy on credentialing is in place and the column movement has been assured through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the committee is gearing up to establish the credentialing for new and emerging fields as well as to review current fields. I will do my part in assisting the

proceedings so that faculty are guaranteed a voice in this critical process.

- Another area of interest that I have is Labor/Management relations. I will assist the union as it continues to cultivate a positive relationship to ensure that our contract is honored and that faculty interests are protected.
- Local campus leadership in Membership, AASC, and Shared Governance are paramount issues for faculty presidents. In my capacity of Secretary, I have a special interest in consulting with and supporting campus presidents on these issues.

I am anxious to fulfill my role on the Executive Committee. I appreciate the support that MSCF faculty members have extended to me.