

MSCF Key Messages, 2009 Legislative Session

MSCF members, your voices are needed to tell the story of the importance of higher education in Minnesota. We are the ones who will train and re-train Minnesota's workforce of tomorrow. If our institutions are funded properly, we can play the key role in helping our state and our communities emerge from these challenging economic times. And because of our strong faculty, we are positioned to do it better and faster than almost any other state.

Whether you are speaking to legislators, MnSCU officials, or members of the public, your message must be clear:

It all begins with faculty, counselors, librarians and classroom instructors who work together to provide the core mission of MnSCU schools. That mission and its faculty must be protected.

- **Focus on the essential:** When a system is facing cuts, the core mission must be protected. Cuts simply must not reach the faculty and programs. We need to save the core curriculum and program development, but most important, protect the learning experiences which faculty provide.
- **Students must have the opportunities they need** to be successful in the workforce of today and tomorrow.
- **Minnesota and its communities need its MnSCU schools** to educate and re-educate a workforce that will help the state in its economic recovery. MnSCU schools provide Minnesotans with the unique skills that can attract businesses to our state. The best economic stimulus is a well-educated workforce.

Great things are happening in MnSCU schools. We need to keep it that way.

- **MnSCU schools produce more than:**
 - o 92 percent of the state's new mechanics
 - o 89 percent of the state's construction graduates
 - o 89 percent of the state's law enforcement graduates
 - o 82 percent of the state's nursing graduates
 - o 50 percent of the state's teacher graduates
 - o 41 percent of the state's business graduates

These are the workers that will build our economy and strengthen our communities.

- **Minnesota's military veterans provide an invaluable public service to our state and our nation. Minnesota, and the MnSCU system, must do everything possible to support our veterans' educational future and economic security.**
 - o In conjunction with the Minnesota National Guard, the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and MN OnLine, MnSCU is implementing a statewide Veteran's Reintegration Program to provide higher education information and services through the entire "deployment cycle" for military personnel and to returning military and their families.

Minnesota needs to maintain its longstanding investment in higher education, which will provide quality and affordability for its students.

- **Since 2003, cuts to higher education of more than \$239 million have threatened Minnesota's status as a national leader.** Much of that burden was taken on by students in the form of large tuition hikes. Minnesota public college students now pay the nation's second highest tuition-and-fee rates. And Minnesota now ranks 38th out of 50 states in state appropriations for higher education over the past 10 years.
- **Any budget solution must include a mix of cuts and additional investment in Minnesota's higher education system.**
 - o Higher education in Minnesota must remain within the financial reach of the students who need it.
 - o Minnesota must provide adequate resources for that to happen.

