

IFO 2010 Legislative Goal

Legislative Actions

Bonding

1. Support the MnSCU 2010 Bonding Request. *The legislature passed a \$239.9 million bonding appropriation for MnSCU—However, the governor vetoed 16 MnSCU's projects, reducing the final bonding appropriation to MnSCU to just \$106.2 million. MnSCU did receive \$52 million in HEAPR funds, and Metro State did receive \$5.9 million for new classroom center.*

Funding Issues

2. If there is a budget shortfall next session, any cuts that state legislature makes to the MnSCU budget should come from the budget of the MnSCU central office, in particular the technology allocation and central administration, with no charge backs to the campuses. *The central office was cut \$500,000 in the supplemental budget bill that passed and another \$2,079,000 in the final supplemental budget bill. There is a higher education policy bill awaiting the Governor's signature that will, if passed, direct the downsizing of the central office by eliminating functions that duplicated efforts at the campus level.*
3. If special funding is sought for the "Students First" initiative, finding should go first for the common pay module. *No special funding was sought.*
4. Advocate that the state budget shortfall be resolved through revenue increases first, then cutbacks and cost shifting second. *The legislature passed a budget balancing bill that raised income taxes on taxpayers earning over \$200,000, which raised \$435.4 million in revenue; the bill also included \$2.54 billion in accounting shifts and budget cuts. The Governor vetoed the bill.*
5. Support a change to the tax structure so that Minnesotans earning over \$105,000 pay a higher percentage of Minnesota state and local taxes than those earning less than \$105,000. *The legislature passed legislation to increase income taxes on the highest income Minnesotans to make the tax system more progressive while reducing the state revenue shortfall—the legislation was vetoed.*
6. Oppose Pawlenty's Constitutional Amendment to not exceed the revenue from the previous biennium. *This legislation was introduced by two Republican senators in the Senate and never got out of committee. It was not introduced in the House.*
7. Oppose any waivers from the ARRA (federal stimulus) requirement of maintaining state support for higher education at or above the 2006 funding level. *No waivers were sought.*

8. Oppose any efforts by the legislature to cut MnSCU funding below the 2006 funding level. *Passed into law. Instead of cutting MnSCU and the U of M an even dollar amount, the legislature and governor chose to reduce each system back to its 2006 funding level—which meant a \$36.5 million cut to the U of M and only a \$10.5 million cut to MnSCU.*
9. If MnSCU receives cuts to its appropriation in 2010, the MnSCU central office appropriation should be cut by at least the same percentage as the cuts to campus appropriations. *MnSCU central was cut \$2,579,000 in FY 11 by the legislature. While this is a proportionate share of the total MnSCU budget (including tuition and fees), it was not a proportionate share of the MnSCU total appropriation.*

IRAP/Supplemental Retirement Reforms

10. Support legislation to eliminate the requirement that the State Board of Investment selects the IRAP investment options. *Passed in the pension bill.*
11. Support legislation saying the consultant that selects the IRAP/Supplemental Vendors must not sell investment products and must publicly disclose any relationships (such as consulting contracts or accounting services) they have with firms that seek to be vendors under the plan. *Passed in the pension bill.*
12. Require that the contracts with vendors under the IRAP/DRC plans be made available to the public and the unions representing public employees covered by the plans. *Already required under data practices law.*
13. Allow the option of including one or more State Board of Investment accounts to be offered under IRAP/Supplemental Plans. *Passed in the pension bill.*
14. Support allowing TRA buybacks to the beginning of the fiscal year for new faculty members. *No action.*
15. Support sweeping small IRAP accounts from the past into the SRP accounts. *MnSCU is doing this through the DCR Committee--they don't need legislation.*

TRA Reforms

16. Support a two year suspension in the TRA cost of living adjustment to improve the TRA funding ratio. *Passed in the pension bill.*
17. After suspension of the TRA COLA, cap the COLA at actual inflation, but not to exceed 2.5% per year. *The pension bill drops the COLA to 2% in future years.*
18. Support a 2% employer/2% employee TRA contribution increase, phased in over a two year period, to improve TRA's funding. *Passed in the pension bill.*

Bargaining/Contractual Protection

19. Oppose any legislative efforts to limit sabbaticals, tenure and promotion, or other contractual rights. *No attempts to change these rights.*
20. Oppose creation of new performance pay. *Legislators were highly critical of MnSCU administrative bonuses—no new performance pay authorized.*

Equality Issues

21. Support legislation that would require the state to provide spousal benefits to same and opposite sex domestic partners of state employees.
 - Legislation that would require the state to provide health insurance coverage and tuition waiver benefits for domestic partners of state employees.
 - Legislation that would provide long term care coverage, and pension and retirement benefits to employees and their domestic partners and dependents, consistent with coverage and benefits provided to employees and their spouses and dependents”. *The legislature heard two bills for gender neutral marriage and one bill for civil unions, but never took a vote. With this being an election year, I don’t think legislators wanted to vote on this legislation this year. The Governor vetoed legislation that provided for minor expansion of domestic partner rights (allowing domestic partners rights to the disposition of a deceased partner’s remains) and stated he would continue to veto legislation that made domestic partner rights and benefits comparable to the rights and benefits of married couples.*
22. Support the Dream Act at both the state and federal levels. *This is likely to be dealt with at a federal level as part of immigration reform—therefore, legislators did not seem too interested in fighting this battle again at the state level—knowing Pawlenty would oppose the legislation.*

Other

23. Support legislation to amend Minn. Stat. Sec. 13.32, Subd. 1(a) to amend the definition of educational data 1) to clarify that the current exclusion for personal instructional records covered electronically stored personal notes, and 2) to allow such personal instructional records to be retained beyond the end of the school year. *This legislation was introduced, but we have been unable to get a hearing from (or even a meeting with) Sen. Mary Olson.*