August 8, 2011

TO: MSCF Faculty Members, and; MnSCU Administrators,

Recently in the negotiations process, questions arose about the rights and responsibilities of faculty members with partial or entirely online assignments. While the parties have generally agreed about the answers to these questions, those answers have not been communicated as widely and effectively as we would like. Therefore, we are sending this letter to clarify faculty rights and responsibilities in the hope it will help avoid disputes and/or grievances over faculty assignment.

Faculty members, regardless of online or onsite assignments(s), are expected to meet the professional obligations described in Article 11 of the Contract.

Faculty members with partial or entire online assignments are expected to use paid leave exactly as onsite faculty do, e.g., to take sick leave when sick.

Faculty members, regardless of assignment, are required to post and maintain office hours in compliance with appropriate Contract language and to inform their students of those hours. If a faculty member’s entire assignment is online, the office hours can be held online. If the entire assignment is onsite, the office hours are held onsite. If the assignment is mixed, the office hour locations are mixed in reasonable proportions to allow for faculty availability to students. The intention is to create a rational mix for student needs, not an exact mathematical proportionality. In short, the location—online or onsite—of office hours tracks generally with an instructor’s assignment.

Faculty with partial or entire online assignments and office hours are not required to be available to students 24/7. Their obligations mirror the obligations of onsite faculty. However, faculty are strongly encouraged to inform their students of this and of their availability via their syllabi.

All faculty, regardless of assignment, are expected to attend administratively assigned duty days or take personal leave if they do not attend these days.

We hope this resolves any questions. If you wish further clarification, please contact us.

Sincerely,

/S/
Greg Mulcahy, President
Minnesota State College Faculty

/S/
Jeffrey O. Wade, System Director
Employee Relations Division
Office of the Chancellor
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities