



A Union of Professionals

Metropolitan State Faculty Federation

# Newsletter

[MSUDENVERFF.ORG](http://MSUDENVERFF.ORG) • FALL 2023



## TOP FACULTY ISSUE

### **Out-of-Load Teaching (Banking Policy)**

The President’s office rejected a university-wide banking policy, which it was hoped would provide an easy and stopgap means of reducing faculty workload. Overload teaching policy [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScnCqtCBoXoojL2uoZq7AXVqqVm5SP-xn7Y0-YecSbehC0H\\_g/viewform?pli=1](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScnCqtCBoXoojL2uoZq7AXVqqVm5SP-xn7Y0-YecSbehC0H_g/viewform?pli=1)

Read the full Resolution at the link below.

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## TOP FACULTY ISSUE

### **Provost Search Update**

MSFF is represented in the Provost Search by Steering Committee member Alex Boodrookas. Faculty is well-represented on the committee, which has deliberated thoughtfully and democratically. Unfortunately, however, the final round of the search will be secret. None of the usual town halls or events with faculty and students will be held; instead, only the “final candidate” will be publicly vetted on campus.

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# FALL UPDATE FROM MSFF



Top issues among our members continue to be workload, compensation, and shared governance. President Davidson's promise to address the workload issue rings hollow in light of the decisions to veto the banking policy and limit participation on the **Provost search**. Perhaps a meaningful shared governance role by faculty will come to fruition when (not if) the Colorado legislature expands collective bargaining rights to higher education faculty. In the meantime, we have a voice which is growing with increased membership. Over the past year, the MSFF has gained a designated seat at a few tables (e.g. Handbook Committee, Provost Search, Faculty Leadership Team), but progress on these fronts is, as always, limited by these committees' advisory roles. One exception is that MSFF was able to get language into faculty contracts explicitly stating teaching obligations as up to 24 credits per academic year. In the past, 24 credits has been treated as a minimum rather than a maximum. We will encourage our members to "work to rule"; that is, not teaching an extra class or other instruction such as internships or supervised student research, without extra compensation or earned course release. We encourage faculty to meet, but not exceed, contractual obligations across all three areas of evaluation as defined in the *Handbook* and department guidelines. It is difficult to press the University for fair compensation for our work when we have a tradition of providing so much labor for free; labor

that is necessary to achieve our mission.

The issues of workload and compensation for faculty are essentially two sides of the same coin representing a long-term disinvestment in faculty despite a growing budget. Based upon our review of financial audits from 2012-2022, operating expenses have nearly doubled but these resources have disproportionately been devoted to non-instructional activities. Annual increases in "Instruction" have averaged less than 2%, annually, compared to greater than 10% annual increases in "Institutional Support" and "Academic Support". In other words, there has been a long-term disinvestment in faculty. Our Interim Chief Financial Officer, Jim Carpenter has kindly offered his office's assistance in elucidating the breakdown of these defined categories. We will report those findings as we receive them. While the increase in administrative positions has been apparent, we may soon finally have a transparent view of the university expenditures. Given the shift of funding away from instructional activities over the past decade, we remain skeptical that an authentic **Workload Reduction** proposal, rather than a workload redistribution as was proposed by the former provost, is not affordable. Budgets tell us what the institution really values. Transparency in the financial statements will help us understand how those values have shifted over time and to what extent MSU Denver is committed to its faculty, its students, and its mission.

MSU Denver Faculty are invited to

# MSFF HAPPY HOURS!

Hear about what your union is doing, provide input and feedback, and learn how to get involved!

**5 PM | TIVOLI**  
**WEDNESDAY 18 OCTOBER**  
**THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER**  
**TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER**

For more information, visit us at  
<https://msudenverff.org/>



# MEMBERSHIP HAPPY HOURS

This semester, the Membership Committee is organizing three Happy Hours to give our members a chance to learn what the union is doing, to provide input and suggestions, and to get more involved. We are also pursuing our primary objective - to grow our membership - by conducting one-on-one organizing conversations with faculty members. This is time-consuming but important work. Organizing has always relied

on individual connections, so these conversations are critical. Please reach out to Alex Boodrookas at [alexboodrookas@gmail.com](mailto:alexboodrookas@gmail.com) or Richard Wagner at [drwags59@gmail.com](mailto:drwags59@gmail.com) if you would like to help grow the union. Joining the Membership Committee is an excellent way to get involved, and we can always use more help. Our strength as a union is directly proportional to the size and engagement of our membership.

## RECENT WINS OF THE METRO STATE FACULTY FEDERATION

**Grievance Committee** - A charge of Bullying was dismissed from a faculty member involved in a grievance with the institution.

**Membership Committee** - Membership has grown significantly with the support of AFT Colorado and a lot of work by the committee members.

**Legislative** - Affiliate faculty can now 'combine' their work from multiple institutions to qualify as full-time employees for federal student loan forgiveness programs. [Read the Bill](#) here.



## FALL 2023 COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

### Steering Committee

- Friday, Sept. 8, 3-4 pm MST ([Zoom link](#))
- Friday, Sept. 22, 3-4 pm MST ([Zoom link](#))
- Friday, Oct. 6, 3-4 pm MST ([Zoom link](#))
- Friday, Oct. 20, 3-4 pm MST ([Zoom link](#))
- Friday, Nov. 3, 3-4 pm MST ([Zoom link](#))
- Friday, Nov. 17, 3-4 pm MST ([Zoom link](#))
- Friday, Dec. 1, 3-4 pm MST ([Zoom link](#))
- Friday, Dec. 15, 3-4 pm MST ([Zoom link](#))

### Membership Committee

- Thursday, Oct. 19, 5-6 pm MST ([Zoom link](#))
- Thursday, Nov. 16, 5-6 pm MST ([Zoom link](#))
- Thursday, Dec. 7, 5-6 pm MST ([Zoom link](#))

### Grievance Committee

As needed, and private. These are confidential meetings to protect members seeking counsel.

# PROVOST SEARCH UPDATE

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The decision was made without the input or assent of the search committee. The administration has argued that this is “best practice,” and that confidentiality is required in order to attract quality candidates, as some administrators have been fired or demoted after it was revealed that they were applying to other jobs. The Steering Committee, however, is skeptical of this logic, which threatens to place the career

advancement of high-level administrators above the principles of transparency and shared governance. It also undermines trust between faculty and the Provost’s office at a moment when it is particularly fragile. MSFF will continue to represent faculty interests on the committee, and to fight for a more transparent hiring process. Please share your views on the search with Alex Boodrookas at [alexboodrookas@gmail.com](mailto:alexboodrookas@gmail.com). He will do his best to represent them to the administration.

**WE ARE STRONGER  
TOGETHER.  
GET INVOLVED**

## DID YOU KNOW?

MSFF restored tenure rights at Metro State College of Denver.

In 2003, the newly formed Board of Trustees rewrote the *Handbook* to eliminate tenure at MSCD. The Union sued the College and won, restoring tenure rights for faculty.

## Don't Know Where to Start?

- 1. GET INVOLVED BY:**  
[Sign our current petition](#) in support of a formal banking policy for overload teaching and other uncompensated teaching instances.
- 2. GET INVOLVED BY:**  
Attend one of our meetings. The Steering Committee meets biweekly at 3 pm on Fridays. If you would like to attend a meeting, join us on Zoom.
- 3. GET INVOLVED BY:**  
Join one of our committees to find out what we do and how we advocate for faculty. The **Membership Committee** can always use more help. Our strength as a union is directly proportionate to the size and engagement of our membership. Please reach out to Alex Boodrookas at [alexboodrookas@gmail.com](mailto:alexboodrookas@gmail.com) or Richard Wagner at [drwags59@gmail.com](mailto:drwags59@gmail.com) if you would like to help grow the union and shape our activities.

# OUT-OF-LOAD TEACHING (BANKING POLICY)

## A Resolution In Support of College and School-Level Banking Policy Implementation

*Sponsored by MSFF*

**Whereas:** The work of the Faculty Senate Welfare Committee, the Provost's Workload Committee, and the Cross-Functional Task Force all identified uncompensated teaching as both ethically problematic and a source of faculty dissatisfaction;

**Whereas:** The Deans' representative on the AY 2022-2023 MSU Denver Faculty Handbook Committee supported Handbook revisions to establish a University-wide banking policy to address uncompensated teaching;

**Whereas:** There is no prohibition on Colleges and Schools establishing a banking policy; and

**Whereas:** Overwhelming majorities in the Faculty Senate as well as the Steering Committee of MSFF approved such a policy;

Therefore Be It Now Resolved that each College and School of Metropolitan State University of Denver shall develop, establish, and publicize a banking policy by Spring semester 2024, to compensate faculty who teach more than their contractually obligated credit hours in any academic year and/or overseeing internships, independent studies, and other personalized credit-bearing instruction;

And Be It Further Resolved that such policies may include monetary compensation, banking for future release time, or any other policies that reflect the specific teaching needs of any particular College or School while properly compensating faculty for work beyond their contractual obligations.

# BENEFIT SPOTLIGHT

## Student Loan Debt Clinics

As a union, we are fighting to make college affordable and student debt manageable. However, more than 45 million people in the United States are saddled with student loan debt. We offer ways to help our members and affiliates.

## Trauma Counseling

In April 2020 AFT launched a new benefit made available at no cost to all active working members of AFT. The trauma counseling program is available to working members, free of charge, in the one-year aftermath of a covered traumatic incident.

## Legal Services

For personal matters, members can choose from two levels of legal savings: a prepaid legal plan with full coverage on a wide range of services, or free access to a discount legal plan that includes a half-hour consultation.

## Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance

AFT has arranged for all members in good standing to have a \$5,000 accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D) insurance policy from Federal Insurance Company, a member insurer of the Chubb Group of Insurance Companies, effective Jan. 1, 2022. The AD&D coverage is a benefit of you being an active or retired member in your local union, so no application is necessary.

[Learn More.](#)

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

At our August Town Hall, Joe Goldhammer, our longtime attorney and an MSFF member, discussed a new Colorado statute that protects your right to engage in organizing and political action as an employee at a state institution of higher education. The statute protects “protected, concerted activity for the purpose of mutual aid or protection” and the right to “organize, form, join, or assist an employee organization or refrain from organizing, forming, joining, or assisting an employee organization.” If any colleagues are still concerned about facing retaliation for joining MSFF, this new statute adds another layer of protection. It also exemplifies a growing acceptance of public-sector labor organizing in Colorado politics, which MSFF is seeking to advance.

You can read more about the bill here: <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb23-111>



## Quick Guide to Discipline Procedures

What would you do if your department chair tells you that you are under investigation for unprofessional conduct or has issued you a formal written warning? Possibly, you would pull up Chapter X of the Handbook and try to decipher the procedures. The MSFF has prepared a *Quick Guide* to highlight the important protections you have. The Guide highlights the importance of **ACADEMIC FREEDOM**, **DUE PROCESS**, and **PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE**.

MSFF Grievance Committee members can answer questions about procedures, provide advice, accompany members to interviews or hearings. Members can be assured that we maintain confidentiality concerning case information. We often consult with our MSFF attorney on specific cases, and on rare occasions are prepared to defend our members in court in cases of suspension or dismissal. Our efforts through the years have resulted in reduction or dismissal of proposed sanctions, and reversals on tenure and PTR decisions. We have frankly had less success with complaints against administrators (inequitable treatment, retaliation), with the perception that administrators reviewing complaints protect their own.

We would like to thank Cath Kleier, who worked to ensure that chairs and deans properly document disciplinary sanctions against faculty members. Dr. Kleier is a good resource for questions on discipline procedures and complaints. The Grievance Committee also suggests that faculty consult with a Grievance Committee member prior to sitting for an interview in the case of an investigation.