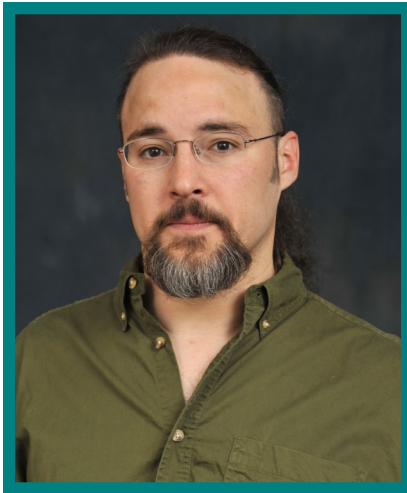


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On some issues, presidents think alike: or, why I endorse President Kaler's budget proposal strategy

By Michael William Pfau
President, UEA-D



When people think of unions, they often assume that such organizations are stubborn and intransigent opponents of “management.” Such an opposition between unions and management is natural, but it is not the only kind of relationship that is possible. And unlike the private sector, where the interests of unions are almost always in opposition to the interests of the stockholders represented by “management,” in a higher education setting we can sometimes craft a less-adversarial relationship. University administration, after-all, represents the Board of Regents, the State Legislature, students and voters – each of which is a constituency that faculty ought also consider. And while we maintain a vigilant defense of our contract and our members, in my opinion, recent proposals by University of Minnesota President Eric Kaler are worthy of not just our consideration but our strong support.

At the September meeting of the Board of Regents, President Kaler unveiled his budget proposal for the next biennium (the two-year cycle in which state budgets are created and approved by the Legislature) – a proposal that, if adopted, would reverse the many years of declining state support for the university system. As is well

known, declining state support has resulted in harm to both faculty and students. Faculty have been forced to endure furloughs, lack of deserved raises, and uncertainty about the future of higher education in the state. Students, meanwhile, have been asked to pay costly tuition increases in order to make up for the tax-cutting penchant of recent political leaders in the governor’s office and Legislature.

Kaler’s budget proposal, if adopted, promises relief to faculty and students alike. In exchange for relatively moderate proposed increases in the university budget in the next biennium, Kaler promises to freeze tuition for the same period. Kaler’s proposal makes sense on a number of levels:

► First, it identifies the actual culprit in tuition hikes. While the foolish, dishonest and uninformed in the public and the Legislature blame allegedly cushy faculty salaries and benefits as the cause of rising tuition, Kaler accurately recognizes that the problem has been, in fact, decreased funding from the Legislature.

Continued on Page 2



Using fact checkers to sort out the campaign rhetoric

By Michael Mullins
Legislative Liaison



Well, with the "debates" behind us many of you may be asking how can the Donkeys AND the Elephants all be cutting health care by \$716 million? Here are a few websites that may help you navigate the campaign rhetoric. Why not try the official "Factcheck.org" site, sponsored by The Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Penn-

sylvania, and get unbiased answers to your questions?

<http://www.factcheck.org/>

In response to a good deal of political posturing and mind-numbing number crunching, we now have two large groups trying to either "write, cut and paste" legislation for state legislatures or provide a clear critique of issues important to understanding this fall's political campaign. Here are the websites and how they describe themselves.

<http://alicelaw.org/>: "The American Legislative and Issue Campaign Exchange, or ALICE, is a one-stop, web-based, public library of progressive law on a wide range of issues in state and local policy. As our name may suggest, ALICE may be understood as a very partial antidote to ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council)."

<http://www.alec.org/>: "Following the end of the Reagan Administration, the Task Forces, under the leadership of Delaware State Senator Jim Neal, gradually began to shift from clearing-houses of ideas submitted by ALEC members into freestanding think tanks and model bill movers."

And finally, the League of Women Voters makes available each campaign season a very well-respected paper providing candidates' positions on political topics:

<http://www.lwv.org/blog/creating-more-dynamic-league-nationwide-protect-our-democracy>

You now have several resources: YOU decide. But please the most important thing is you simply go vote.

Happy Autumn!!

Michael William Pfau
President, UEA-D

Continued from page 1

► Second, Kaler recognizes that a tuition freeze must be accompanied by increased funding if we are to maintain the quality of a university education in Minnesota. Indeed, a tuition freeze without increased funding can only result in serious harm to the quality of instruction and the value of a U of M degree. Absent tuition or state revenues, the university would have little choice but to cut salaries, benefits and faculty lines. Such measures would damage the quality of our students' education, requiring that students at public universities be educated "on the

cheap," corralled into more, large lecture classes or crammed into massive online class sections. Either result would make us unable to compete, quality-wise, with private colleges, and help to create a two-tier system in which low and moderate income Minnesotans are forced to accept a lower quality of education, even as well-off students at private universities continue to enjoy the smaller class sizes and individualized attention.

For all of these reasons I feel quite comfortable, as president of the Duluth campus' faculty union, endorsing the plan of

the university system's president. And I hope that we follow his lead in our conversations with students, parents, Regents, legislators, and taxpayers, and emphasize that, absent increased state support, a tuition freeze will harm not only faculty, but our students as well.

Conflict resolution comes through open, respectful communication

By Aydin Durgunoglu
Grievance Officer



My name is Aydin Durgunoglu and I have just started serving as the Grievance Officer. First I would like to thank the previous officer, Jannifer David, for her work this past year. Jannifer prepared me for this job gently but realistically so I am grateful for her guidance. Also, the UEA Executive Committee has been very helpful with its insightful analyses and knowledge about

the contexts of events and the contract.

A little about myself: Trained as a cognitive psychologist, I am a professor in the Psychology Department, and I have been here since 1993. Time truly flies—I am shocked to realize that I have suddenly moved from the category of “new faculty” to the category which can now be described kindly as “one with institutional memory.” Across the years, I have seen UMD grow and begin to find its niche in the bigger U of M system. At every chancellor’s breakfast, as new faculty are introduced, I am amazed by their depth and quality. As a result, we are no longer solely a teaching university but have very active research and creative activities in addition to our great teaching.

Throughout all this growth and change, one factor has remained constant at UMD: The UEA is still dedicated to providing a

peaceful, just and productive workplace and still paying close attention to faculty concerns and issues. I want to encourage new faculty, tenure track or term, to consider being full members of UEA and to contribute to making UMD an even better place to work. You can contact/email any one of us to ask about membership.

As a grievance officer, I firmly believe one can resolve many conflicts through open and respectful communication. Therefore, in many cases, facilitating the communication between faculty and different levels of administration is the most important step. As we listen to each other’s perspectives, we can find ways to resolve our differences.

I look forward to hearing your comments, suggestions, and—of course—concerns. My email is: adurguno@d.umn.edu.

Have a great semester.

Reason No. 604 your union membership is a good deal

By Scott Laderman
Contract Administrator, UEA-D



As the new contract administrator for UEA-D, I would like to welcome everyone to the new academic year. Those of you returning to UMD may already be familiar with the sort of work handled by the contract administrator. For those of you just joining our faculty, however, I thought a brief introduction might help.

As a unionized faculty we work under a

collective bargaining agreement (CBA), a copy of which can be found on the UEA website (<http://uea.locals.educationminnesota.org/>). The CBA, which represents years of gains negotiated by your colleagues on your behalf, is a legal document that governs your terms and conditions of employment. Confusion sometimes arises over how to interpret these terms and conditions, or on occasion administrators overlook them, and it is the contract administrator – often with the president, grievance officer, or others – who, among other things, seeks clarification or reminds administration of its obligations.

Most faculty have plenty of things to keep them busy, so reading the contract from cover to cover is a low priority. But it can be enlightening reading.

Did you know, for instance, that faculty have the right to paid parental leave? Under section 604 of the CBA, faculty with a new child enjoy rights that go beyond the federal Family and Medical Leave Act, which provides certain workers unpaid leave. Our rights also go beyond the benefits offered to our nonunionized colleagues on the Twin Cities campus. Under our CBA, a female faculty member may, following the birth of her child, take six weeks as *paid* leave (a male member may take four paid weeks, as may a member adopting a child), or she may take three months of *paid* leave if she agrees to teach an additional three to five credits beyond her normal load upon her return.

This is not a perfect arrangement. There are holes in the contract that need to be filled, and we still have gains to make. But our faculty enjoy benefits that most workers in the United States do not. For that, we can thank our union.

UEA-D RESOLUTIONS

Whereas there is a proposed Minnesota constitutional amendment on the November 6 ballot that would limit the status of marriage to opposite-sex couples; and

Whereas the membership of the University Education Association – Duluth (UEA-D) includes people who identify themselves as gay or lesbian; and

Whereas the denial of marriage rights to those members is a violation of their civil rights; and

Whereas the UEA-D believes that civil rights should be strengthened, not weakened, for members of the LGBT community;

Therefore be it resolved that the University Education Association – Duluth, in accordance with our colleagues in Education Minnesota, opposes any constitutional amendment prohibiting same-sex marriage.

Whereas there is a proposed Minnesota constitutional amendment on the November 6 ballot that would require all voters to present valid photo identification in order to vote; and

Whereas there is no credible evidence of significant voter fraud in Minnesota; and

Whereas the passage of a voter identification amendment would present barriers to electoral participation by numerous people, including students, seniors, and the poor; and

Whereas passage of the voter identification amendment could negatively affect Minnesota's current system of same-day voter registration on which many of our students rely; and

Whereas as educators we have a special responsibility to ensure that the rights of our students are fully protected; and

Whereas passage of the voter identification amendment would necessitate millions of dollars in state spending that could reduce existing state expenditures for education;

Therefore be it resolved that the University Education Association – Duluth, in accordance with our colleagues in Education Minnesota, opposes the Minnesota voter identification amendment appearing on the November 6 ballot.

An overview of changes to medical and wellness benefits

By Jennifer Schultz

Benefits Advisory Committee Liaison



I want to briefly point out some changes in our medical and wellness benefits. You will be able to find details of each in the UMN Employee Benefits (EB) September newsletter that was distributed via campus mail on Oct. 1. A wellness booklet also was mailed to your home. Here are things to note:

- The St. Luke's care system moved to Tier 3 (the most expensive tier) from Tier 2 in the UPlan Insights plan (an optional plan). This will mean higher copayments. St. Luke's continues to be in our base health plan.
- The U has extended the medical premium relief program. If you were enrolled in the program in 2012 you will be automatically enrolled in 2013.
- There is a new medical benefit called "Consult A Doctor 24/7." This program gives UPlan members access to physicians via phone and online (for diagnoses and prescriptions).
- The U has contracted with a new administrator for our flexible spending account program. Next year, employees will be receiving a debit card linked to their FSA.
- There are additional medical and pharmacy benefits for 2013. For instance, there will be no copayments for select contraceptives and prescribed OTC preventive medications, and there will now be coverage for breast pumps (not previously covered).
- There are new options for the UMN Wellness Program. For instance, you can earn points by self-reporting exercise activities you do at home or outside the Fit Choices program. You can lower your **2014** health insurance premiums by \$300-\$400 if you participate during this academic year.
- The new medical premium rates appear in the EB newsletter. Note that two sets of rates are reported: rates for those who achieved 300/400 wellness points last academic year and premium rates for those that did not. Medical premium employee rates increased 5.1% from last year (excluding the rebate). Approximately 32% (or 5,592 members) of UPlan qualify for the wellness rebate.
- The dependent eligibility verification process is being finalized. Approximately 200 dependents have been dropped from UPlan coverage in phase 1. The projected cost savings is \$500,000.
- The UMD health & benefits fair is Thursday, Nov. 1 in the UMD Ballroom from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

I am thoroughly enjoying being your BAC representative and particularly the debates with EB representatives about wellness administrative costs, cost sharing and premium increases. Please contact me if you have questions or comments regarding your medical, dental or wellness benefits (email: jschultz@d.umn.edu; phone: x6695).





Here is the UEA-D Executive Committee for 2012-2013. Front row from left: Michael Mullins, Jill Torres (past Rep Council Liaison), Rudy Perrault, Dan Martin, Linda Grover, Celeste Dallman and Al Roline. Second row, from left: John Hatcher, John Hamlin, Scott Laderman, David Schimpf, Jennifer Schultz, Michael Pfau and Karen Gran.

Not pictured: Lynn Brice

We're on the Web
uea.locals.educationminnesota.org

UEA-D EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President: Michael Pfau, x8886, *mpfau*
Vice President: Dan Martin, x6709; *dmartin*
President-Elect: John Hamlin, x6387, *jhamlin*
Past President: Al Roline, x8550, *aroline*
Treasurer: Linda Grover, x7723, *lgrover*
Member-at-Large: Rudy Perrault, x8215; *rperrault*
Head Negotiator: David Schimpf, x 7265; *dschimpf*
Contract Administrator: Scott Laderman, x7207, *laderman*

Grievance Officer: Aydin Durgunoglu; x6885; *adurguno*
BAC Liaison: Jennifer Schultz, x6695, *jschultz*
Legislative Liaison: Michael Mullins, x6155, *mmullins*
Information Officer: John Hatcher, x7325; *jhatcher*
Safety Officer: Steve Sternberg, x6165 *sternbe*
Rep Council Liaison: Lynn Brice, x6815; *lbrice*
Rep Council Liaison: Karen Gran, x7406, *kgran*