FAQs on DA

What is Delegate Assembly?
The Delegate Assembly (DA) governs the organization in all of its activities. It is the largest meeting of the union membership, and is held every other year - during even-numbered years - at a time and place established by the IFO Board (between mid-March and early April, beginning mid-morning on a Friday and continuing until late afternoon the following Saturday).

The DA has the authority to establish policies, approve budgets, create special committees of the organization and review actions of the IFO Board of Directors. (When the Delegate Assembly is not in session, the IFO Board of Directors has the full power to act for the IFO.) Resolutions that are passed by the assembly serve as the primary source of contract-related goals for the organization. Delegate Assembly is where the IFO membership gets to shape what will appear in subsequent contracts.

Who gets to go?
The Delegate Assembly is composed of the members of the IFO Board of Directors and certified delegates or alternates elected or appointed by each local Faculty Association. Delegates and alternates must be union members.

Each FA President is entitled to appoint up to five delegates and five alternates, and in addition, one delegate and one alternate for each 15 IFO members on the campus.

Alternate delegates are selected according to the provisions of the local Association Constitution and in the absence of a Constitutional provision on alternate delegate selection; alternates are to be selected by the local Association delegates.

What is the difference between delegates, non-delegates, alternates, and non-voting alternates?
Only delegates may vote on matters before the DA. Alternates may only vote if they are taking the place of an absent delegate. If a delegate is unable to attend or needs to leave while the assembly is in session, an alternate would be able to vote in the place of a delegate.

Non-delegate attendees would include IFO staff, and any IFO union members who are not delegates but desire to attend to observe the proceedings. (The standing rules that are adopted at the beginning of each DA typically provide that non-delegate IFO members shall be seated as space permits.)

Why go to DA?
Delegates shape the direction of the union for the next two years, by establishing internal policy mandates, setting budget priorities, and by adopting external goals for desired academic affairs policies, contract negotiations and legislative changes that will benefit
faculty and students. By attending the DA, you are able to provide input in this process and to be heard on matters of importance to you.

Once at the DA, you will have unique opportunities to network with colleagues across all 7 state universities and to become informed about union activities and benefits. Informational and social events at DA often include an IFO Presidential candidate’s forum, an opportunity to schedule an individual meeting on retirement with a TIAA-CREF representative, a reception for delegates of color, and guest speakers and other presentations of interest to faculty.

What is the role of the DA in the election of the IFO President?
The IFO Presidential election occurs every two years in even number years, the same year as the Delegate Assembly. IFO presidential candidates are given space at the DA to meet delegates and distribute campaign literature and are provided speaking opportunities during the DA to express their views and answer questions. The IFO presidential vote is conducted electronically; polls usually open on the Saturday of the DA and close on the second Tuesday in April.

What has been achieved through Delegate Assembly?
(Examples of accomplishments of previous DA resolutions)

- DA resolutions seeking legislation favorable to faculty and students that were realized:
  - DREAM ACT
  - Opposing a Constitutional Amendment to prohibit same sex marriage
  - Supporting marriage equity legislation
  - Seeking legislation to adopt favorable retirement investment products for IFO faculty, such as a Roth type investment
  - Seeking legislation that would allow faculty to change the initial retirement plan selected by faculty when they achieve tenure

- DA resolutions to improve working conditions and benefits that were negotiated into the contract:
  - Including a recognition of multiculturalism, anti-oppression and inclusion work as evidence of positive performance in each of the five criteria
  - Paid parental leave for birth or adoption of a child
  - Continued seniority accrual during unpaid parental leave
  - Option to delay tenure year by extending probationary period for faculty taking parental leave or extended medical leave
  - Severance and early separation incentive payments contributed to a tax free post-retirement health care savings account
  - Reducing the teaching load for first year probationary faculty
  - Including performing arts productions in the workload provision requiring reassigned time for theater productions
Internal positive changes in IFO governing structure that resulted from DA resolutions:
- Establishment of the Multicultural Issues Committee
- Creating an IFO legal staff position of Equity Advocate to work on issues of equity within the IFO and to assist faculty in dealing with issues of discrimination
- Creating a benefits equity taskforce to concentrate IFO efforts on achieving equal benefits for domestic partners and to address other areas of disparity in benefits
- Establishment of the GLBTA Issues Committee

What is a resolution?
A resolution establishes organizational goals by requesting IFO action in one of five areas: Academic Affairs, MnSCU Budget, Contract Goals and Policies, Government Relations (legislation), and Miscellaneous (internal governing structure and external policies and practices).

Who gets to submit a resolution?
Union members.

What does a resolution look like?
A resolution has four sections. Section I begins with the words, “Be it resolved that the IFO....” which is followed with a description of what action the proposer desires. Section II requires the proposer to provide an explanation for the action sought, and Section III requires the proposer and seconder to sign and date the resolution. The final Section IV indicates in which of five areas the resolution falls (Academic Affairs, MnSCU Budget, Contract Goals and Policies, Government Relations or Miscellaneous).

Examples of a drafted resolution
Be it resolved that the IFO…Supports legislation to provide in-state tuition to all students graduating from Minnesota high schools, after having attended for two years, regardless of the immigration status of the student and/or their parents.

Be it resolved that the IFO…Seeks to clarify existing contract language on advising to provide opportunities for electronic student advising and other contacts, and posting of contact hours.

What is the process of getting a resolution considered?
Proposals for new resolutions that contain the signature of a proposer and a seconder, each of whom is an IFO member, may be submitted to the IFO office for inclusion in the DA packet. Campus faculty associations and IFO statewide committees may also submit resolutions for inclusion in the DA packet. Committee resolutions/those submitted by more than one person will be considered to have been seconded and thus will not require two signatures. The DA will consider and vote to adopt or reject all proposed new resolutions that are contained in the DA packet. Resolutions that are presented in the packet need to pass by a majority of delegates present during the session.
When are resolutions due for inclusion in DA?
The IFO Executive Committee and the IFO state office staff establish the date by which the state IFO office must receive a proposed new resolution in order to have it included in the DA packets provided to each delegate at the assembly (typically three to four weeks in advance of the DA meeting). The date for DA16 New Resolutions should be announced by the end of fall semester and presented to faculty with the information about registering for the 2016 delegate assembly.

How do resolutions from the floor work?
Proposed resolutions that are not in the DA packet may be presented in writing from the floor to the presiding officer. Floor resolutions will be considered by the assembly if at least one half of the delegates vote to consider it. Once the floor resolution receives a favorable vote for consideration, it must pass by a 2/3 majority of delegates present during the session for adoption.