

# Faculty Senate Agenda

## September 22, 2021

- I. Welcome and Minutes (<https://www.mtech.edu/facultystaff/facultysenate/minutes/index.html>)

Approvals for September 9, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Introduction of Faculty Senators and other Attendees

### Action Items

- II. Secretary Nominations
- III. Representative on Faculty Service Committee (see below)
- IV. Resolution to Faculty Senate (see below)
- V. Online evaluations switch to opt out instead of opt in.

### Informational Items

- VI. None at this time

### Discussion Items

- VII. Marvin Speece Emeritus Recommendation (see below)
- VIII. OCHE Discussion and BOR
- IX. Live, zoom, or hybrid meetings
- X. Activities/Goals for the academic year:
  - a. Review of Faculty Staff Handbook
  - b. Faculty Satisfaction Survey
  - c. Strategic Planning
  - d. Other?
- XI. Other Items

III. Representative on Faculty Service Committee (see below)  
From the Faculty and Staff Handbook.

### **Faculty Service Committee**

The Faculty Service Committee assures proper professional tenure of administrative officers and members of instructional and scientific staffs, and promotes efficient service to the Institution. At the direction of the Chancellor of the Institution, or upon the request of any staff member whose removal is proposed, or who is under suspension, the committee inquires into the case and submits a report of its findings to said Chancellor and to the staff member involved. The Chancellor transmits a copy of such report for the consideration of the Board of Regents of Higher Education. The committee consists of three faculty members on permanent tenure, one selected by the Chairman of the Board of Regents of Higher Education, one selected by the faculty, and one appointed by the Chancellor. The committee members shall elect the chair.

The committee members shall serve a twelve-month (12) term, to commence on September 1.

## IV. Faculty Senate Resolution

### *Acta non Verba*

While the recently announced mask requirement for indoor instructional spaces at Tech was a positive first step but, in itself, it is an insufficient step forward in combating Covid. Alone, an indoor mask mandate only for instructional areas will not curb the spread of Covid on campus. No health professional with whom I have spoken thinks that simply mandating masks indoors only in instructional areas will be sufficient. Why does Tech continue to proffer incomplete and inadequate solutions to this crisis? Why the timidity of response? An indoor mask mandate for instructional areas is insufficient to provide a safe working and learning environment on campus. The administration is obligated to provide such an environment.

I have been following the weekly Health Department Dashboard regarding Covid statistics and we are, as a community, either in the critical zone or moving in the wrong direction, soon to be in the critical zone. Cases on the Tech campus are moving in the wrong direction. Personal responsibility has failed. Pious wishes will not alter this direction. Bozeman is in crisis. Missoula is in crisis. We are heading into crisis; wouldn't it be right, fitting and proper to act before people are sick, hospitalized or dead?

To the above point, MSU has just announced a mask wearing mandate for virtually all indoor spaces on campus. MSU has done this in response to conditions that we are beginning to see in Butte and on campus--Covid numbers going precipitously in the wrong direction. MSU has acted. Why can't Tech act? If MSU sees the seriousness of the situation, why can't Tech? Why is MSU's will to combat this pandemic stronger than Tech's? It is better to prevent disease than it is to deal with the consequences. The current policy will not prevent disease.

Tech needs to do the following and the Faculty Senate so requests and urges:

1. **Extend the mask mandate to all indoor areas of Tech.** I fail to see the logic of only having the mask mandate apply to instructional spaces. If the goal is to control the virus, this administration's position of only addressing instructional areas makes no sense. An indoor mask requirement only in instructional spaces shows a callous disregard for the health of our staff who interact with us and students and the public outside of instructional areas and, consequently, have no mandated mask protection. This administration position really doesn't show much concern for faculty and students either in that the virus is active in areas other than instructional. What I am seeing is students being mask less until they get in the classroom and then as soon as they leave

class ripping off their masks. Students congregate in the halls and entrances waiting for class with no masks. Faculty goes into non-instructional indoor areas at Tech. No one should seriously argue that the indoor instructional mask mandate provides protection.

2. **Ensure strong enforcement of the mandate for instructional areas.** The email from the Provost had too many loopholes. The enforcement mechanism needs to be strengthened and needs to be applied to faculty and staff who do not comply. There needs to be consequences for non-compliance.
3. **Vigorously promote and make readily available vaccinations.** The pandemic will never be fully controlled until vaccinations are almost universal. We mandate a host of vaccinations for students, why not this one? While the administration probably cannot mandate vaccines on its own, we need a renewed effort to promote vaccines on campus. The efforts at the beginning of the semester have dissipated and we seem to be stuck with a one and done publicity campaign. Let us get serious about vaccines. OCHE could be more pro-active here.
4. **Stop promoting super-spreader events.** We have not returned to normal. We are collectively going in the wrong direction. We don't need to be promoting the spread of the virus.
5. **Improve the reporting system on campus.** I suspect, with some evidence, that there are many cases where students have tested positive but have not reported to Oredigger Rx. In part this could be due to home testing. I expect we are understating the number of cases on campus.
6. **Reintroduce and require social distancing**
7. **Promote and pursue contact tracing**

**Provide full, public disclosure of Covid statistics pertaining to the Tech Community-- numbers of cases on campus and infection trends on campus.** The public has a right to know. This is a public institution, and this is a major public issue.

My point is we have a long way to go. I get the impression from the administration that they do not really embrace the vigorous pursuit of public health measures. If they did, we would have gone far beyond just requiring masks in indoor instructional areas. The administration gives the impression of only grudging action to control the pandemic. The administration sets the wrong tone. The administration's wish that all is normal gets translated into acting as though all were normal. I thought Montana Tech dealt with reality not myth.

It would be nice to be back to normal, but we are not back to normal and wishing and hoping will not make it so. Given that the administration has admitted that personal responsibility is not working, more dramatic steps are needed. Simply requiring

masks in instructional settings is not enough but the administration intimates that should be enough. It isn't.

The rhetoric about the "Tech Family" and the tech community, needs to be matched by deeds, not just words. An atmosphere of fear still permeates the campus. This fear is increasing given the recent information about the waning efficacy of the vaccine and the need for boosters the status of which are still in limbo.

We need to ask the administration to address the question: Are the safety measures in place with reference to the Covid pandemic sufficient to guarantee a safe working environment and learning environment?

Are we doing all that we can do? Are we doing all that we should do? Is an instructional area indoor mask mandate the best we can do? If we continue to reside in Fantasy Land, reality will crash upon us with disastrous effects that could have been avoided if we act boldly now.

Perhaps somewhat naively I ask the Tech administration to examine their conscience and ask: Is the decision to only mandate masks in instructional spaces a just and moral response to this Covid crisis?

*Virtue is bold, and goodness never fearful.* Shakespeare

VII. Marvin Speece Emeritus Recommendation (see below)

THAT: Upon the occasion of the retirement of Dr. Marvin A. Speece from the faculty of Montana Technological University, the faculty wishes to express its appreciation for his years of dedicated and valued service to the institution, the Department of Geophysical Engineering, and the state of Montana by recommending the rank of Professor Emeritus in the Department of Geological Engineering be conferred upon him by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System.

EXPLANATION: Professor Marvin A. Speece received his BS degree in Geological Sciences from Wright State University in 1982, his MS in Geology from University of Michigan in 1984, and his PhD in Geophysics from University of Wyoming in 1992. In 1992 Dr. Speece came to Montana Tech as an Assistant Professor in the Geophysical Engineering Department. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 1996, awarded tenure in 1999, and promoted to Professor in 2001. He served as department head from 2005-2008 and 2013 to 2020. He was also a Visiting Fulbright Scholar in the Geophysics Department at Ain Shams University in Egypt from 2002-2003. He was a NASA Dragonfly Mission consultant from 2020-2021.

At Montana Tech, Dr. Speece taught applied linear systems, seismic prospecting and processing, physics of the earth, field geophysics within his department, and he also taught physics service courses for engineering and science students. He has taught a significant number of special topics courses and other departmental courses (24 courses not mentioned by name in this letter). For years, he worked diligently in organizing physics instructors and geophysical engineering faculty for freshman and sophomore physics courses being taught on campus. Dr. Speece has won several campus and off campus awards. Examples include the United States Antarctica Service Medal (2011), a Montana Tech Merit Award (2021), and the Montana Tech Lifetime Distinguished Researcher Award (2021).

Dr. Speece's research at Montana Tech has focused on a wide range of geophysical approaches to answer difficult questions in earth sciences. Dr. Speece has published 40 peer-reviewed journal papers, one book, two book chapters, 13 peer-reviewed proceedings papers, and 8 additional reports. He has remained active in presenting and publishing work with students his entire career including 109 abstracts and 27 invited talks. He has also remained active in peer-reviewing scientific literature for many journals. Dr. Speece has also brought ~\$3.6 million in research grants to Montana Tech.

Dr. Speece's tenure at Montana Tech can be characterized as outstanding with significant service to the University and to the State for which he is to be commended. For these and numerous other contributions, the Department of Geological Engineering are pleased to nominate Dr. Marvin A. Speece for the rank of Professor Emeritus of Geological Engineering at Montana Technological University.

