Montana Tech Faculty Senate Meeting

Thursday, March 28, 2013
7:00-8:00 a.m.

Location: Pintlar Room

MEETING MINUTES

Senators present:
Hugo Bertete-Aguirre, Laurie Battle, Tom Camm, Chris Danielson (V. Chair), Jerry Downey (Chair), Gretchen Gellar, Bill Good, Katie Hailer, Tim Kober, Scott Juskiewicz, Raj Kasinath, Tom Moon, Mary North Abbott, Chad Okrusch, Vicki Petritz, James Rose, Bill Ryan, Celia Schahczenski (Sec.), Jack Skinner, Rita Spear, Miriam Young

Senators absent: Merle Benedict , John Nugent, Glenn Shaw

Vacant senate seats:
Research Faculty, Center for Advanced Mineral and Metallurgical Processing (CAMP)

Call to Order: Jerry Downey, Chair

Roll Call: Celia Schahczenski, Secretary

Academic Items for Vote

> Review and approval of minutes from the 28-Feb-13 Senate meeting
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> *Minutes were amended and approved unanimously.*

Discussion Topics

> Last minute item not on the agenda: Governor Bullock agreed to give the commencement address this year and Highlands College would like to present the Governor with an honorary Associate of Science Degree. The Administration asked if the Senate would consider making a recommendation regarding granting this honorary degree. Governor Bullock knows about this possibility and indicated that he would accept it.
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> Discussion:
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> - Is this an issue that the senate needs to address?
> - The matter could be a discussion topic at the April 4 instructional faculty meeting but that would take time away from other issues.

A straw vote was taken (because the Senate did not receive 48 h advance notice required for a formal vote) and the Senate unanimously agreed to support conferral of the honorary degree. The Chair clarified that the Senate expressed no objections to the honorary degree.

- Reinstitution of a Faculty Satisfaction Survey

  More volunteers are needed to serve on a subcommittee to develop a faculty satisfaction survey. It would be preferable to have representation from most departments. Participation on this subcommittee is not limited to senators; interested faculty members from all departments are welcome to serve.

  The survey itself could be administered via paper or survey monkey.

  Discussion:
  - Rather than just "agree strongly", "agree", "neutral" … it would be preferable to have comments.
  - Who will see the results of the survey?
      The Senate Chair offered to summarize the results and have the other Senate Officers verify his summary. The summary and aggregated comments would be presented to the Senate for a discussion of what would be published. Finally the summary could be published and the comments forwarded to the individuals.
  - In addition to providing a mechanism for faculty to evaluate Administrative personnel, the survey could also be used to solicit, record, and report faculty opinion on recurring themes such as the utility of Moodle

  Action item: Senators are requested to encourage representatives from their departments/areas to serve on this committee.

- Department Standards regarding requirements for faculty promotion and tenure and the Professor of Practice classification

  As requested by the Chancellor, the PoP subcommittee reconvened on March 26 to draft a condensed PoP description which was distributed at the (March 28) meeting. The Senate previously voted to endorse the establishment of a PoP classification on this campus, but few details have been agreed upon.

  Discussion:
  - Would PoP be under the bargaining unit? This issue is still under consideration. The PoP classification was raised as a bargaining issue and it is likely that this topic will be discussed during bargaining.
  - Since these people (PoPs) are likely to be only masters prepared, could this invert salaries?

- PRAs are drafted within the department so salary inversions resulting from a PoP classification should be considered within the department.
- Originally, it appeared that the PoP classification was proposed as a means to provide high-enrollment departments in the School of Mines and Engineering with added flexibility to staff positions that have proven difficult to fill. Some senators opined that the PoP classification is not appropriate for the entire campus.
- The American Association of University Professors warned that the PoP classification creates instability when used in the humanities.
- The situation has potential for abuse.
- There is a fear that the administration may abuse the PoP classification by using it as a method to reduce tenure.
- During the February Senate meeting, the Chancellor stated that establishment of the PoP classification would provide flexibility. For example, if research dollars are lost, it could provide an avenue for reducing the number of faculty.
- While the condensed PoP description stipulates that the parameters for PoP classification are defined in individual departmental standards, the current status and plans for these standards are unclear. Departments submitted their draft standards long ago. In some cases, no feedback has been provided; in other cases, the standards have been changed.
- A senator questioned whether we (the Senate/Senate subcommittee) hafe investigated how well the PoP concept has worked on other campuses?
- A senator questioned whether the PoP classification be limited to the College of Engineering?
- A senator stated a preference that the recommendation for an institution-wide ceiling of 10-15% of total faculty be more precisely defined as 10%.
- It was generally agreed that it would be good to have the entire faculty weigh in on this topic at the upcoming (April 4) instructional faculty meeting.
- Regardless of the details, the PoP would be an initial effort that would most likely require modification once the campus has more experience with this classification.
- A senator suggested that we make this a pilot study. A matrix of evaluation criteria could be developed to allow for periodic reviews of the PoP classification. There are only a few departments that currently want to use this classification; those departments could be used as pilot studies.
- Current faculty categories include tenure-track and tenured faculty, instructors, and 1-3 year visiting faculty. Exactly what do we gain by establishing the PoP classification?

Prior to the April Senate meeting, the Senate officers will investigate how the PoP classifications are playing out on other campuses. In addition, the Senate Chair will e-mail a matrix that summarizes the types of faculty positions on campus will be sent to

the senators. The PoP classification will be introduced as a discussion item at the April 4 instructional faculty meeting.

- Shall the Graduate Council become the Faculty Senate's review/advisory body regarding academic policies, curricular changes, certificate programs, and other topics related to graduate-level education at Montana Tech?

  Currently the process of approving graduate-level items is cumbersome. Graduate-level items are reviewed by the Graduate Council, the CRC, the faculty (via the senate), the Chancellor and the BOR, if necessary, in that order. Removing the CRC from this process is proposed. That is, the line requiring CRC approval would be removed from the form for graduate-level items.

  Discussion:
  - How is membership on the Graduate Council determined?

  The Senate decided that it requires further information to make a recommendation. This proposal will be revisited at the April Senate meeting.

Topics for Consideration

- Academic Standards and Integrity
  - Faculty concern about electronic signature process (for grade changes, etc.)
  - Penalties and potential rehabilitation of students accused of academic dishonesty

New Business

Prior to the meeting, some senators commented that a formal procedure for bringing items before the Senate should be instituted.

Recurring issues regarding Administration presence at the Senate meetings needs to be addressed and resolved. As with most meetings on the Montana Tech campus, the Senate meetings are generally conducted as open meetings. It was observed that many Administrative meetings such as the Dean's Council meetings are not considered to be open meetings.

Senate Bylaws clearly stipulate the Senate's ability to conduct closed meetings. Prior to the Senate reorganization, the practice was to hold biweekly meetings with every other meeting being a closed Senate work session. A portion of the October 2012 Senate meeting was closed, per the Senate Bylaws. The Senate must decide whether to conduct a portion of its meetings as a closed executive session.

Next Senate meeting: 7:00-8:00 a.m. on Friday, April 26 in the Pintler Room

May graduation list

CRC and other committee recommendations

Nomination and election of Senate officers for AY2013-2014

> Not all departments have declared if their senate terms are 2 or 3 years. Senators are asked to clarify this and when their terms are up.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00 a.m.