

Montana Tech Faculty Senate Meeting

Thursday, April 3, 2014

7:00-8:00 a.m.

Location: Kelley-Steward Room (Student Union Building)

MEETING MINUTES

Senators present:

Hugo Bertete-Aguirre, Sally Bardsley, Laurie Battle, Tom Camm, Chris Danielson (V. Chair), Bill Drury, Jerry Downey (Chair), Gretchen Gellar, Tim Kober, Mary North Abbott, Vicki Petritz, James Rose, Bill Ryan, Celia Schahczenski (Sec.), Glenn Shaw, Jack Skinner, Rita Spear, Miriam Young

Senators absent:

Ronda Coguill, Bill Good, Katie Hailer, Schott Juskiwicz, John Nugent, Chad Okrusch, Bill Ryan, Rita Spear

Vacant senate seats:

Electrical Engineering

Guests:

Doug Abbott (Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, VCAA)
Hank Pratte (Association of Students at Montana Tech, ASMT, President)
Scott Rosenthal (Senator elect for Mining Engineering)
Sue Schrader (Senator elect for Petroleum Engineering)

Call to Order (7:00 a.m.): Jerry Downey, Chair

Roll Call: Celia Schahczenski, Secretary

I. Senate Business (7:00)

- A. Review and approval of minutes from the 5-Mar-14 Senate meeting.

Approved unanimously

- B. March 2014 Senate actions

Outcome of electronic vote:

- Approval of Curriculum Review Committee Recommendations (18-0)
- Endorsement of Honorary Doctorate Nominee (17-0)
- Approval of Minutes of the March 3 Instructional Faculty Meeting (18-0)

- C. Faculty Opinion & Satisfaction Survey

- Summary of March 11 meeting with Montana Tech Administration (Downey, Schahczenski, Gellar)

Downey updated the senate on the meeting with Tech administrators.

- McClafferty offered that the Montana Tech Foundation could pay for the administration of a faculty survey if the Senate would like to hire a national company to conduct the survey. It was decided that the Senate would go ahead with a follow-up survey, and think about hiring a company for next year.
 - Schahczenski had created a preamble which she suggested be used for the Faculty Opinion & Satisfaction Survey next fall. It was agreed that the preamble should be used if the Senate administers the survey again. The preamble contained bullet points about the removal of comments on the survey which are not constructive. It was agreed to remove those bullet points from the preamble.
 - Communication, research culture, trust/respect, and financial transparency were discussed.
 - The administration planned to meet again to discuss other areas of concern and provide feedback to Schahczenski. No feedback has been provided to this point.
 - It was suggested that each question on future satisfaction queries have an associated part that asks how important this issue is to the respondent.
 - Administration and Senate representatives agreed to meet more frequently in the future, maybe monthly. Also, instructional faculty meetings will be scheduled early and publicized well so it will be easier for faculty members to attend.
 - Concerns about communication were expressed and it was suggested that administrators attend the Senate meetings periodically to keep the lines of communication open.
- Presentation of MTFA Satisfaction Survey Results (Bill MacGregor)

More than a year ago MTFA administered a satisfaction survey at the request of President Engstrom. MacGregor presented a comparison of the two surveys.

The MTFA survey was only administered to MTFA members while the Faculty Senate survey was administered to all full-time faculty members (north campus, Highlands College, and MGBG). Some questions on the MTFA survey were quite similar to questions on the Senate survey. With only two surveys, however, it is difficult to see correlations. One interesting observation is that some questions the results are bi-modal, people either strongly agree, or disagree strongly. For others questions, a significant number of the respondents were neutral. MacGregor wondered about why so many people are neutral - Is it because they don't care, they don't know? He sensed that from the surveys there is a desire for more process.

MacGregor displayed the results of both surveys in an easy to understand bar charts. He also showed a graph of each survey all on one screen so that trends can be seen. The handouts and presentation will be posted on the Senate website along with these minutes.

Discussion:

- The strong "neutral" results may be a satisfied feeling; people just don't feel strongly about the issue.

- All seem to agree that the library does well, etc. but are there any trends?
Response: It is hard to see if there is a trend. Differences could be due to the different populations. A third data point would be helpful.
- An important question is “What can be done to improve relationships in the areas of communication, research culture, trust/respect, and financial transparency?”

Bill strongly urged the Senate to continue to administer these surveys. He also suggested that an indication of group membership, MTFAs, college, etc. would be useful.

- Status of Follow-up Survey (Schahczenski)

The plan is to administer a general survey in the fall and a follow-up survey in the spring. Schahczenski had compiled a list of questions suggested by senators and other faculty members for a follow-up survey. Senators were asked to provide feedback on the questions.

Action Item: Schahczenski will collect feedback on the questions posted. Based on this she will create a short follow-up survey. After the Senate has a chance to give feedback on the survey, an electronic vote will be administered as to whether to administer the survey. If it passes, the survey will be administered so that the results will be available at the next meeting.

II. Topics for Senate Consideration (7:40)

A. Proposed Revision to the Montana Tech Tobacco Use Policy

Updates to the existing Tobacco Use Policy had been distributed. The updates add the state that e-cigarettes and other nicotine delivery items are prohibited.

Discussion:

- This is about promoting healthy choices.
- Other delivery items do not include gum and patches.

A motion was made and seconded that the Senate vote on this immediately. The Senate agreed, the vote was taken, and it passed unanimously.

B. Proposed Revision of Student Course Evaluation Questions (with ASMT)

The issue of increasing the involvement of students in faculty promotion and tenure decisions has been discussed the last two meetings. It was suggested at the last meeting that students have quite a bit of influence over these decisions via the Student Course Evaluations. Pratt and Downey met and suggest that both the Senate and students work on revising the Student Course Evaluations questions.

The Senate is asked to make a list of those questions which they really like, don't like, and what other questions they would like to see. The students will be asked to do the same.

Discussion:

- Maybe there could be questions specific to the department.

- The Moodle Committee is already looking at questions that are more germane to on-line delivery.
- Possibly a “how important is this to you” question be added to each of the survey questions, similar to what is being done on the faculty satisfaction survey.
- Possibly the department performance standards could be taken into account when developing questions.
- Could ask if students think that they learned from the class, or if the instructor met the objectives of the syllabus.
- It was suggested that the survey might ask if the students like the schedule that the class was taught in, at least for classes which are taught in several different schedules.

Action Item: Gellar will forward the questions developed by the Moodle Committee to Downey. Downey will send the list of questions on the current Student Course Evaluation, along with the questions for on-line evaluation surveys, to the senators. Senators are asked to comment on what questions they like, which they would like to see removed or reworded.

Action Item: Move future meetings to the Kelley-Steward room since it is warmer.

III. Summary of Academic Items for upcoming Electronic Vote (7:50)

IV. Other Business

V. Adjournment (8:07am)

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:07am.

Reminder: the final Senate meeting of the Spring 2014 semester is scheduled to take place from 7:00 to 8:00 a.m. on Friday, May 2, in the **Pintler Room**.