

Faculty Senate Minutes

November 3, 2021

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Zoom: Charie Faught (Chair), Peter Lucon (Vice-Chair), JoAnna Reeves (Secretary), John Ray, Douglas Galarus, Jackie Timmer, Ryan Stapley, Linda Granger, Matt Haynes, Chris Gammons, Jessica Andriolo, Daniel Autenrieth, Sue Schrader, Hilary Risser, Lonnie Horn, Courtney Young, Tamara Hart

Zoom Guests: Angela Lueking, Scott Risser, Karen Van DaVeer

Quorum @ 9:00 am.

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

Approvals for October 20, 2021 Meeting Minutes. Motion made for acceptance with slight modifications due to misspelled names. Seconded. **PASSED.**

Action Items

- II. CRC ITEMS:
 - a. HC Civil Engineering Technology (101421-1)- course removal
 - b. CLSPS Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences (101421-2)- pre-req change
 - c. CLSPS Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences (101421-3)- pre-req change
 - d. CLSPS Nursing Department- name change

Discussion: As Charie Faught is the faculty representative for the Nursing Dept., Vice-Chair Peter Lucon presided over this portion of the meeting. No discussion of items “a” through “c”. There is some discussion of item “d” regarding the decision to make the name change for this donor but necessarily other donors, and also in regards to the wording itself. Does changing the name of the department to the “Sherry Lesar School of Nursing” indicate the nursing program will become its own school with its own dean, master’s programs, etc. or does it remain a department within CLSPS? Karen Van DaVeer joined the meeting to clarify these questions and to additional information with the faculty senate. Based on the size of the donation to the nursing department and the Lesar family’s continued support of the nursing program, the name change is warranted and the name change is tied to the donation and the department will continue as it has as a department in CLSPS. As for what this means for the future of Tech’s nursing program, funds from this gift could lead to the development of a nursing master’s program.

These CRC items must also be approved by CRC committee at their meeting on 11/04/21.

Approvals: Motion to accept all four CRC items made and seconded. Motion **PASSED.**

- III. Testing Space:

Disability services is planning to create a designated testing space, though such a space is not ready yet. The space could be ready as soon as spring semester. Once it is ready, Shauna Goodell from disability services has agreed to give a presentation to the faculty senate about the new testing center. No action is being taken on this item today, as the issue is already being addressed. Matt Egloff spoke about this issue at the

last faculty senate meeting. He will be contacted to see whether there are any other actions he would like the senate to take on this item at this time.

IV. Faculty Governance at Tech (See Below)

Discussion: No action taken on this item as it was already addressed by Chancellor Cook's visit to the Faculty Senate meeting on October 20, 2021.

V. Resolution: The Montana Tech Faculty Senate endorses the following resolution of the Montana University Faculty Association (see below)

Discussion: There is some discussion regarding feedback from faculty across campus, and not all faculty members view mandatory vaccination favorably. Is it the responsibility of academic institutions to mandate vaccination or should it be left to individual choice and personal responsibility? Other higher education institutions around the country are viewing this as an ADA issue, in that some individuals may not be able to safely participate without a vaccine mandate. These institutions are taking the view that vaccination is part of their responsibility to provide an environment that is ADA compliant. It is also pointed out that we teach our students to look at data and to follow the peer review process rather than personal opinion, and that we should be basing our decisions on factual information.

Approval: A motion is made to endorse the resolution passed by MUSFAR urging the Montana Board of Regents to institute a vaccine requirement on Montana Campuses. Seconded. **PASSED** with two opposed and one abstaining.

VI. Request That the Montana Tech Faculty Senate create a special committee to describe and delineate the Faculty Senate Position on what constitutes shared Faculty Governance at Montana Tech: What it is; why it is important; what it encompasses and entails; what it will require; and how it will be implemented.

Discussion: John Ray briefly spoke on the issue and his reasoning for bringing forward the resolution. There is some discussion regarding the role of faculty governance and also the role of senators as representatives.

Vote: A motion to accept the resolution to form this special committee is made and seconded. **DEFEATED** with three voting in favor, 11 voting against, and three abstaining.

Informational Items

VII. None at this Time

Discussion Items

VIII. BOR Discussion Items

At the next BOR regents meeting, representatives will discuss the following:

- a. Faculty Salaries: Salaries have not kept up with cost of living or national averages based on information from the Oklahoma State survey.
- b. Diversity and Inclusion: What are campuses doing to create diverse and inclusive environments. Salary concerns also play a part in this, as low salaries make it more difficult to recruit faculty from diverse backgrounds.

IX. Activities/Goals for the academic year:

- a. Review of Faculty Staff Handbook:
Not discussed.
- b. Faculty Satisfaction Survey
Not discussed.
- c. Combined Faculty Senate/Staff Senate Meeting:

A poll has been sent out to both senates to identify the best date for the combined meeting. We are still waiting for responses from a few people. Everyone is encouraged to respond to the poll at their earliest convenience.

- d. Strategic Planning
Not discussed.
- e. Other?
None

X. Other Items

There are concerns that campus communication has deteriorated since the implementation of the new App. Updates are not coming out as frequently and it is more difficult to use the app for communication among departments. There is also no way (that we know of) for instructors to make changes to their Moodle courses from within the app

There are concerns that the webpage is being updated frequently and things are being moved around, making it more difficult to find, access, and work in Moodle.

These concerns will be added as future agenda items for further discussion.

Motion made to adjourn and seconded at 9:54 am.

IV.

Faculty Governance: Does it Exist at Tech? NO

Consider the following from the By Laws of the Montana Tech Faculty Senate.

By Laws Montana Tech Faculty Senate

Article II. Purpose, Functions and Duties

SECTION 1: Purpose

The purpose of this organization shall be:

To participate as an advisory body in the formulation, implementation, and review of institutional policy and to provide the means for the faculty to initiate action on matters with which it is directly concerned.

SECTION 2: Functions

Within the framework of rules and regulations set forth by the State Board of Regents, the functions of this organization shall be (*these are selected functions listed in the by laws that would pertain to the resolution the faculty senate overwhelmingly adopted with regard to Covid policies*):

- a. To study and discuss institutional problems referred to it and, where appropriate, to make recommendations to the administration.
- b. To initiate suggestions for changes in the area of institutional policies affecting the instructional program of the college.
- c. To serve as a channel of communication between faculty and the administration and, through the administration, to the State Board of Regents.
- d. To aid the students, the faculty, the administration, and the State Board of Regents in developing policies coordinating the total college community.

AAUP provides additional guidance as to what is shared faculty governance:

AAUP Statement

What is shared governance?

Shared governance refers to the joint responsibility of faculty, administrations, and governing boards to govern colleges and universities. Differences in the weight of each group's voice on a

particular issue should be determined by the extent of its responsibility for and expertise on that issue.

What is the role of the faculty in shared governance?

The role of the faculty is to have primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and aspects of student life which relate to the educational process. The responsibility for faculty status includes appointments, reappointments, decisions not to reappoint, promotions, the granting of tenure, and dismissal. The faculty should also have a role in decision-making outside of their immediate areas of primary responsibility, including long-term planning, budgeting, and the selection, evaluation and retention of administrators.

Discussion of Resolution

While the role of the Faculty Senate is advisory, the implication is that the Administration will listen to, take seriously and meaningfully respond to Faculty Senate input. There should be some efficacy in regard to our input. Our input should be meaningful and help shape Montana Tech policy.

We are not supplicants begging the administration for some action. We are co-equal partners and have particular province with regard to academic issues on campus.

Administration after administration at Tech has articulated support for shared faculty governance but these words have not translated into deeds. That regrettable record continues today.

It is obvious that the Administration dismissed with little consideration our input regarding campus coping with Covid. The only response was a general missive from the Chancellor to the whole Tech community that in part referred to the senate resolution, said it had been received and that it had been dismissed. (Like the ghost in Hamlet: *Tis here, tis there, tis gone.*)

We need to proactively express our chagrin at being treated so dismissively

We are not and should not accept the role of supplicant. We should demand accountability from the Administration and a true, substantive, respectful response.

I also have concern about the Faculty Senate in that we seem to be too complacent in accepting rebuffs without explanation or justification from the administration. We are far too timid in our approach to the administration.

While some may relish and be content in the role of, for example, reviewing the work of the CRC that reviews the work of departments that reviews the work of faculty members who are

experts in their fields; while some may be content to spend endless meetings discussing a faculty satisfaction survey that has little efficacy, there is more much more to what we should be doing. Some are too unwilling to confront the administration when we need to confront them.

This is one case, the safety of the Tech campus, where we need to confront the administration and hold it accountable. (In passing, our chairperson has constantly pointed out that there was dissent regarding the resolution. By my count only three senators voted against it while 14 approved—an overwhelming majority. Rarely, regarding any controversial issue, will you have unanimity, which is why we have majority rule. Given the overwhelming support of the resolution, we have great justification in demanding accountability from the administration.)

Of course, the administration is going to be loath to give up any power to the Senate but we have a legitimate place in the power structure at Tech and should use it to discuss and act upon issues of significance.

I therefore offer the following resolution to be approved by the Montana Tech Faculty Senate:

The Senate respectfully requests that the Chancellor appear before the Faculty Senate to address and answer the following

1. Why, specifically, was the resolution of the Faculty Senate regarding additional Covid protection measures, which passed by an overwhelming majority, rejected by the administration?
2. What is the Chancellor's position on shared faculty governance at Montana Tech?
3. What role does Faculty Input play in administration decision making with regard to an issue such as the Covid crisis?

v. Resolution: The Montana Tech Faculty Senate endorses the following resolution of the Montana University Faculty Association:

The Montana University Faculty Association Representatives (MUSFAR), which represents the faculty of the Montana University System, urges the Board of Regents to institute a vaccination requirement to help end the COVID pandemic.

Numerous vaccines are already required for the Montana University System and the Montana Annotated Code Title 20, Chapter 5, Part 4 states that postsecondary schools “may impose immunization requirements as a condition of attendance that are more stringent than those required by this part.” Further, the constitutional authority and moral responsibility to implement a vaccine requirement for the campuses in the Montana University System lies with the MUS Board of Regents. The Regents “*have full power, responsibility, and authority to supervise, coordinate, manage and control the Montana university system*” according to Section 9 of the Montana Constitution. To date, the Board of Regents has not publicly discussed their position or justification for *not* requiring vaccines to protect the entire campus community. The Board of Regents is charged with the health, safety, and wellbeing of the Montana University System. Why is the Board of Regents failing to act? Why are they not requiring vaccinations, which we know is the best-known solution to end the pandemic?

Communities across the state are in crisis and our campuses are at risk. Every county in the state with a MUS campus is at a “high level of community transmission for COVID-19” as defined by the CDC. Our hospitals are at capacity, considering “crisis of care standards,” and the National Guard has been deployed to help support our healthcare system. Montanans are dying each week because we are well under the vaccination percentage required to limit and end the spread of the disease. We implore the Montana State University Board of Regents to require vaccinations for students and staff across the Montana University System to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus in our campus communities. We are gravely concerned about the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff. We are watching COVID cases rise, following reports on the rising deaths in our communities, and continue to stress the necessity for evidence-based mitigation

strategies, at the system-wide level. Vaccinations are the most effective means to end the pandemic.

With the full FDA approval of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine on August 23, over 1,000 public institutions across the country have instituted vaccine requirements for all members of their campus communities. We now have the best tool available to end this pandemic in an effective and safe vaccine.

Colleges across the nation, and in Montana, already require students to be vaccinated against viral diseases like mumps, measles, and rubella. These measurements are required for public health and the wellbeing of students and the campus. The COVID-19 vaccines are FDA approved, safe, and effective, and they should be required in the Montana University System.

There are no logistical barriers to providing vaccines. Indeed, it has never been easier to provide access to vaccinations as the infrastructure to administer vaccines in Montana is already up and running. Healthcare providers across our communities already provide vaccination clinics, many of them on college campuses. There is no shortage of vaccinations, they are easy to get, and free for everyone. We urge the Board of Regents to utilize the systems in place and require vaccinations for everyone in the Montana University System.

Without a vaccination requirement we are putting our students lives at risk, we are failing to provide them with access to a safe education; we are contributing to the crisis in our communities; and we are damaging the long-term health, safety, and economic stability of our state.

We want to work collectively towards ending this global pandemic and ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of our communities throughout Montana. We implore the Board of Regents to expand vaccination requirements to include the FDA approved COVID-19 vaccine.