

Montana Tech Faculty Senate
Meeting Minutes
October 15th, 2025 • Mill 201 • 12:00 p.m.

Senators Present: Scott Risser, Scott Juskiewicz, Janet Cornish, Foued Badrouchi, Brahma Pramanik, Dave Gilkey, Andrew Traut, Chris Roos, Matt Egloff, Charie Faught, Courtney Young, Atish Mitra, Bryce Hill, Doug Galarus, Chris Gammons, Naim Rashid and Gary Wyss. Guests attending the meeting included Chancellor MacLean, Provost Elgren, Dean/ Vice Chancellor Hailer, Vice Chancellor Muffick, Jennifer Simon and Kristel Koukoua

- I. Welcome and Minutes – The meeting commenced at 12:00 p.m. and a quorum was established. Senator Young moved, and Senator Gilkey seconded a motion to adopt the minutes of October 1st, 2025. The motion carried.
- II. Reserved Section on the Agenda
 - a. General Education Review Committee – The Committee is currently working on redefining its charge and its composition with changes proposed for the Faculty-Staff Handbook forthcoming.
 - b. Curriculum Review Committee (CRC)– Per the agenda, the CRC announced its fall meeting schedule per the dates below. Senator Risser asked that the Senators review the meeting announcement distribution list to assure it is complete.
 - i. October 22nd 8:00 a.m.
 - ii. November 6th 4:00 p.m.
 - iii. November 24th 1:00 p.m.
- III. Resolution to recognize Joe Medicine Crow in honor of Indigenous Peoples Day – Senator Egloff introduced a motion to recognize Joe Medicine Crow, who was a World War II veteran, the last War Chief of the Crow people and a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Obama. He died in 2016 at the age of 102. Senator Cornish moved, and Senator Faught seconded a motion to approve the motion. The motion carried.
- IV. Plan to establish a new PhD in Energy – This program would follow modular structure, with initial tracks in Petroleum, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering. – Senator Badrouchi explained that discussions regarding this program began last spring with the support of Jack Skinner, Dean of the Lance College of Mines and Engineering. Senators Badrouchi and Hill noted that others were working on the proposal as well. The program courses would be entirely taught on the Montana Tech campus. The modules will likely include Petroleum Engineering, Power Systems and Energy Chemistry. Applicants with an existing Master’s degree would be required to complete 60 credits, while applicants with an existing Bachelor’s degree would be required to complete 90 credits. The planning group will present its proposal to the CRC committee. Other faculty members are invited to be part of the process.

Senator Egloff pointed out that the faculty was already stretched too thin, and additional faculty would have to be hired to implement this program. Senator Hill agreed that new faculty was needed to make this effort feasible. Senator Juskiewicz noted that the Library does not have the resources to provide support to the Mechanical and Electrical Engineering components of the proposed PhD program, which would cost approximately \$150 thousand; the Petroleum Engineering Program already contributes to the electronic journal data base. Senator Juskiewicz also explained the cost of providing resources increases with the degree level. Senator Young urged the planning group to contact Montana State University as soon as it would be comfortable as MSU will likely want “a piece of this.”

- V. Pay Equity Process – Vice Chancellor (VC) Muffick explained that Montana Tech is working toward achieving pay equity and reducing discrepancies across campus. He noted that the effort was driven by equity, was intentional and market driven. The draft objectives of the group working on this include:
- a. Assuring compensation is equitable and competitive
 - b. Addressing internal pay discrepancies
 - c. Providing clear communication
 - d. Addressing the changing labor market

VC Muffick noted that Tech’s increased enrollment had helped increase the University’s overall revenue by \$100 thousand, enabling movement towards achieving pay equity. He noted that adjunct pay had increased \$100 per credit for each of the last two years to the current rate of \$1200.

VC Muffick also noted that their effort was following faculty guidelines established by the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources or CUPA and were striving to achieve 80 to 90 percent of CUPA’s salary ranges. He said that their work was data driven, objective and professional, subject to annual review and available funding.

Senator Cornish asked whether the retirement withdrawal (TIAA) could be optional for adjuncts; VC Muffick said he would research that question and get back to the Senate. Senator Roos noted that the full-time faculty did not yet have contracts. VC Muffick noted that contracts would be issued once collective bargaining had concluded next week. Faculty members are getting paid in the interim.

Senator Faught asked where we are with pay equity. VC Muffick explained that it has been sporadic and uneven. Previous efforts to hire employees at Tech had set compensation in the low range and we are now playing catchup. This is Step 1 in a long-term process. Senator Bryce asked about inversions, which describes when new hires are paid more than existing employees as part of recruitment efforts. VC Muffick did not have an answer to this question. Senator Traut asked about CUPA licensing and Senator Egloff asked about occupational codes.

Senator Young pointed out that it takes one year to resolve CUPA data and the information may not be disseminated for another year, meaning the data is two years old. If we are striving to achieve 80 percent of CUPA compensation, we may actually be aiming lower than that.

Senator Roos noted that we should shoot for 90 percent. If our Chancellor is asking us to strive for excellence, then pay equity is an important first step.

- VI. First Read of Policy Review on 10-29-25 – Naming of Buildings – Everyone recognizes that we need better building names, particularly because of the similarity of the acronyms. Senator Egloff noted that his students were suggesting an app that would tie building locations and best routes for accessibility to Google maps. Senator Hill echoed these remarks concerning the confusion over names. Chancellor Maclean explained that Montana Tech can call buildings whatever it wants; however, a policy needs to be in place for higher level approval, e.g., for officially naming buildings after donors.
- VII. Update on digital accessibility progress, process and resources – Kristel Koukoua of the Center for Academic Innovation (CAI) will be offering workshops and one to one sessions to help us meet the April 2026 deadline. She encourages Departments to champion training for the members of their departments. Shauna Goodell of Disability Services will also be able to help. The software that will be examining files for accessibility is called Panorama and is embedded in Canvas, per a question from Senator Gilkey. Kristel will assist each of us in enabling the Panorama functionality. We are striving for 70 percent accessibility in the aggregate.

Senator Cornish asked if there was a “master switch” to enable Panorama for everyone. Kristel noted that courses were individualized to protect academic freedom, so sweeping changes as a whole are not possible. Senator Gilkey asked if IT could make the switch and the answer was no. Senator Traut noted that the accessibility process had raised concerns in his department. Senator Atish asked about material written on Smart Boards ©. Kristel said that issue was challenging and had yet to be resolved.

Provost Elgren noted that Kristel would be the point of contact for Canvas, Jennifer Simon for IT and Amanda Badovinac for the website. The Provost will be the contact for other digital issues that arise. Kristel can be reached at CAI@mtech.edu. Senator Risser will convey information to departments so that training meetings may be held. Provost Elgren also noted that syllabi should contain a note that encourages students to seek help with accessibility issues. Kristel has a template to share.

Senator Gilkey moved, and Senator Hill seconded a motion to adjourn at 12:05 p.m. The remainder of the agenda will be addressed at a later meeting.