

Montana Tech Faculty Senate

Meeting Minutes

November 12th 2025 • Mill 201 • 12:00 p.m.

Senators in attendance included Scott Risser, Janet Cornish, Foued Badrouchi, Brahma Pramanik, Chris Roos, Charie Faught, Courtney Young, Atish Mitra, Bryce Hill, Doug Galarus, Chris Gammons, Naim Rashid, David Gilkey, Matt Egloff and Jason Herndon. Guests attending the meeting included Provost Tim Elgren; Michele Hardy, Dean of CLSPS; Tammy Burke, Dean of Highlands College; Kristel Koukoua, Center for Academic Innovation and Shauna Goodell, Student Affairs.

- I. Welcome and Minutes – The meeting commenced at 12:00 p.m. and a quorum was established. Senator Egloff moved, and Senator Hill seconded a motion to adopt the minutes of October 29th, 2025. The motion carried.
- II. Reserved – Senator Rashid moved, and Senator Mitra seconded a motion to amend the agenda to allow for the consideration a request to confer the title of Professor Emeritus of Environmental Engineering upon Dr. Kumar Ganesan. (See attached.) The motion carried. Dr. Ganesan will retire in December of 2025. Following the Faculty Senate’s action the matter will be considered by the Board of Regents. Senator Egloff moved, and Senator Gilvey seconded a motion to recommend Dr. Ganesan for Emeritus status. Senator Young commented that the title of Emeritus was well-deserved. The motion carried.
- III. Committee Reports – Senator Roos reported that the Curriculum Committee had not yet received any proposals from Department Heads and urged everyone to submit their proposals to the Committee prior to its next meeting, which will be held on Monday, November 24th at 1:00 p.m.

Senator Risser reported that the Chancellor’s Cabinet has amended the proposed Policy for Naming of Buildings (attached to these minutes) in response to the concerns raised by the Faculty Senate. In an effort to streamline the policy-making process and to make it more collaborative, the Cabinet asks that, in the future, the Faculty Senate review the policies and then do one of two things:

- a. Accept those provisions with which it agrees (as written)
- b. Offer new language that would be acceptable for items if finds concerning

The Employee Relations Committee (ERC) has prepared a draft Professionalism Statement (attached to these minutes) for the Senate’s review. The ERC includes both faculty and staff members, including Senator Young, who noted that the Statement would also be reviewed in light of the Chancellor’s Culture Statement for Montana Tech. Provost Elgren explained that the Statement had also been discussed in the collective bargaining process and would be further considered by the Labor Relations Committee. The various versions would ultimately be reconciled.

- IV. Faculty Workload – Senator Gilkey, explained that, in response to an incident regarding the hiring of a retired faculty member, it became apparent that Montana Technological University had no consistent policy regarding faculty course assignments. Particularly, he pointed to whether full-time faculty had the right of first refusal (before a part-time or adjunct instructor was considered) when a new course was being offered. Senator Egloff thought it would be a

good idea. Senator Cornish, representing the Writing Program noted that such a policy would be difficult to implement given financial limitations. She also noted that it was important for Department Heads to maintain the administrative authority to select whatever instructor was best for a particular course.

Tammy Burke, Dean of Highlands College, explained that the College did have a policy under which full time faculty *did not* have the right of first refusal. She explained that at Highlands a three-credit course may have many more contact hours than the number of credits would imply; additional course assignments may be too much for full-time faculty to manage.

Senator Gilkey noted that most faculty members do not want to teach additional classes. He asked that Senators take this issue back to their respective Department for discussion. No action was taken.

V. Request from the Writing Program Regarding Course Material Accessibility – The Writing Department is currently working on making its course materials accessible in compliance with University requirements, by April of 2026. In association with this effort, the Department has generated a wish list (shown below in italics), which the writing faculty shared with the Faculty Senate. Kristel Koukoua, Center for Academic Innovation and Shauna Goodell, Student Affairs responded to each of the items as follows:

- a. *A fully accessible Canvas template.* Kristel has placed a template in the “Syllabus” tab on Canvas, which is downloadable with a statement as described under “c” below.
- b. *A check box built into the Canvas template that says something along the lines of, "I have read the agree to the accessibility statement presented on the syllabus." It would be nice if Kristel/Shaina/Jennifer could compose that accessibility statement and present it right at the top of the Canvas course shell landing page so that it's a built-in feature.* Kristel is working on this.
- c. *A standardized accessibility statement that can go onto every syllabus that asks students to contact the instructor if they need further assistance with accessible course materials beyond that already provided.* (see “a”, above)
- d. *An accessible Microsoft Word syllabus template; many folks on campus do not use Google Docs (a syllabus template was recently sent out in that format).* Kristel noted that the templates she uses are not taken from Google Docs.
- e. *A straightforward accessibility checklist that includes the simple fixes faculty can apply to their Microsoft Word and PowerPoint documents from the start to help make them accessible on Canvas.* Shauna provided the checklist, which is attached to these minutes.
- f. *To bring the acceptable Canvas accessibility score down to 60-65% (from 70 percent) if possible.* Kristel explained that this was not possible. However, she is working with Panorama to make the software less strict regarding certain issues.

For example, Panorama would not flag documents for smaller fonts used in super- or subscript formats.

Senator Faught asked whether the score was per item or in the aggregate. Kristel explained that it was a per item score, and we had to work to achieve a green icon for each one. Senator Faught pointed out that achieving greater accessibility was a “heavier load” for faculty members teaching on-line courses.

Senator Mitra asked about accessibility associated with electronic white boards and Senator Egloff noted that there were some ongoing technical issues with smartboards in general. Senator Cornish commented on the need for accessible templates for PowerPoint © presentations. Kristel is working on the templates and intends to provide more assistance and training on a departmental basis to address issues such as accessibility for smartboards.

Senator Pramanik asked about sharing links to One Drive. Kristel suggested that if One Drive documents were not accessible, they could be made so using Panorama or the instructor could provide a note to students asking them to alert the instructor of the need for an accessible version.

VI. Course Evaluations – Senator Risser explained that the next step in developing course evaluations was to consider the platform we would use, what we must have with respect to the design of the evaluations (such as making them accessible) and any preferences beyond the “must haves”. Senator Egloff asked how this effort would affect the existing work. Senator Risser explained this was more about the delivery rather than the content. Senator Egloff noted the low response rate currently. With respect to platforms, Senator Risser noted that there were many examples to draw from. The group working on this needs more volunteers; no one representing CLSPS is currently in the group. Senators Roos and Herndon both volunteered to help.

VII. Full Faculty Meeting – Senator Risser suggested the following options, given that we had poor attendance at the Spring 2025 meeting. The options include:

- a. Cancel the full-faculty meeting entirely
- b. Use Senate funds to hold a social event
- c. Host a 30-minute presentation on Chancellor’s “Four-Lane” project
- d. Host a series of round table workshops.

Senator Cornish suggested we might focus on accessibility, where faculty members, working with Kristel and Shauna could share and learn and offer treats. Provost Elgren discussed specific types of accessibility training for the STEM courses.

VIII. For the Good of the Order – Senator Risser noted this was our last regular Faculty Senate Meeting for the Fall 2025 semester and would begin planning Spring 2026 Semester meetings, based on everyone’s schedules as indicated in Outlook. Senator Young moved, and Senator Cornish seconded a motion to adjourn at 1:00 p.m.

Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus of Environmental Engineering; Montana Technological University

THAT

Upon the occasion of the retirement of Dr. Kumar Ganesan 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 Environmental Engineering, and the state of Montana by recommending the rank of Professor Emeritus in the Department of Environmental Engineering be conferred upon him by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System.

EXPLANATION

Professor Ganesan began his career at Montana Tech in 1983 as an Assistant Professor of Environmental Engineering and became a full Professor in 1992. In 1996, he was appointed Department Head, a position he held for 29 years. He holds a BS in Civil Engineering and an MSc in Public Health Engineering from India. Prior to joining Montana Tech, he worked as a Scientist at NEERI, a leading Environmental Engineering Research Institute in India, for six years. He earned his doctoral degree in 1981 from Washington State University (WSU), Pullman, Washington, and subsequently worked for a research consulting company before moving to Montana Tech.

During his tenure at Montana Tech, Dr. Ganesan received numerous accolades, including multiple faculty achievement awards, the distinguished researcher award, the lifetime distinguished researcher award, and Montana Tech's Mentor of the Decade award for his exceptional mentorship of graduate students. He is a long-standing member of the Air and Waste Management Association (AWMA), an international professional organization, where he served as president of the Regional Organization (AWMA-PNWIS) and received the Robert Stockman Distinguished Award for his contributions to Air Pollution Engineering. He is currently a Board of Director of AWMA and holds the title of "Fellow" within the organization. In 2011, AWMA honored him with the Lyman Ripperton Environmental Educator Award for inspiring students to excel professionally and socially while teaching with enthusiasm, humor, humility, and pride.

Dr. Ganesan has also received faculty fellowships from US AID, US DOE, and AAAS/US EPA. In 1999, he founded the Center for Environmental Remediation and Assessment (CERA) and served as Director of the Montana US EPA-EPSCoR program. He initiated an NSF-EPSCoR-funded Biomedical Engineering initiative, collaborating with cardiac surgeons from the International Heart Institute (IHI) in Missoula, Montana, which led to five graduate students completing research on heart valves. Additionally, he served as an ABET Accreditation program evaluator for over a decade. He served as the Director of the MPEM online degree program at Montana Tech from its inception in 1998 until 2022.

Dr. Ganesan has an extensive portfolio of technical publications, conference presentations, technical reports, and has authored and co-authored five books.

Dr. Ganesan'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 Environmental Engineering is honored to nominate Dr. Kumar Ganesan for the rank of Professor Emeritus of Environmental Engineering at Montana Technological University.

Montana Technological University Naming of Property, Programs, and Campus Areas

Subject:

Section 1000 - Physical Plant

Number:

1004

Effective date:

November 1, 2025

Review date:

November 1, 2028

Responsible Party:

Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance

Historical versions: [Link if applicable.](#)

Introduction and Purpose:

This policy governs the naming of Montana Technological University property, programs, and campus areas per [Montana Board of Regents Policy 1004.1](#).

Authority:

The Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance is responsible for managing this policy and for maintaining procedures related to this policy.

University Policy:

The Board of Regents of the Montana University System considers the naming of property, programs, and campus areas in honor of a living or deceased individual, corporation, foundation, or organization to be one of the highest and most distinct honors that it can bestow. All naming honors by and for Montana Technological University shall be in accordance with [BOR Policy 1004.1](#).

- I. All requests for naming buildings, colleges, schools, departments, centers, athletic stadiums, athletic fields, auditoriums, and theaters with seating for 500 or more, and campus areas which have historic distinction to the campus must first be submitted to the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance for review and guidance. The proposal will then be submitted to the Chancellor of Montana Technological University. If approved, the Chancellor will submit the proposal to the President of the University of Montana whom, if approved, will submit to the Montana Board of Regents for final approval.

- II. All proposals for naming classrooms, conference rooms, auditoriums, and theatres of less than 500 capacity, internal libraries, rooms, hallways, floors, and features, as well as other enclosed or conditioned space(s) within buildings shall be submitted first to the Vice Chancellor of Administration for review and guidance; and then to the Chancellor for approval, with agreement by the President of the University of Montana.
- III. All proposals for naming academic programs or units subordinate to colleges, schools, departments, and centers, shall follow the procedures outlined in the Academic Affairs Procedural Guidebook, and they shall be submitted to the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for review and guidance, Proposals shall be submitted to the Chancellor for approval, with agreement by the President of the University of Montana.
- IV. Per BOR Policy 1004.1 Naming Honors shall specify the term that the name will exist or specify that it is in perpetuity. Perpetuity means the useful life of the property or program or as long as the program or property has not substantially changed. Naming in perpetuity should only be considered for transformative gifts. Exceptions may exist and must be approved by the Board.
- V. Per BOR Policy 1004.1, where naming authority lies with the Board, the Board may remove the name under certain circumstances. The Chancellor or University of Montana President, where naming authority lies with the Chancellor or University of Montana President, may remove the name under the same circumstances as listed in BOR Policy 1004.1.
- VI. Naming a property or program based on a charitable gift to the campus shall be done in accordance with the Montana Technological University Foundation Gift Acceptance Policy as approved by the Montana Technological University Cabinet.

Procedures:

The Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance will manage all naming requests for property and shall establish procedures accordingly. The Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor will manage all naming requests for academic programs and shall establish procedures accordingly. All procedures shall include discussion and feedback from appropriate shared governance bodies and shall align with existing campus processes governing academic changes.

Adopted by: (Chancellor)

Date

Professionalism for entire campus, including faculty, staff, and students

Professional behavior refers to the set of attitudes, actions, and standards expected of someone in a professional or workplace setting. It encompasses how individuals conduct themselves to demonstrate respect, competence, reliability, and integrity in their role. Standards of professional behavior apply to all Montana Tech employees, including administrators, faculty, staff, and student employees.

Key Elements of Professional Behavior:

- 1. Respect**
 - Treating everyone with courtesy, dignity, and civility
 - Being aware of differences in culture and ability
- 2. Accountability and Dependability**
 - Taking responsibility for one's actions and decisions
 - Meeting deadlines and fulfilling commitments
 - Being punctual and reliable
 - Owning mistakes and working to correct them without deflecting blame
- 3. Integrity and Ethics**
 - Practicing honesty, fairness, and transparency in all interactions
 - Treating all individuals equitably regardless of role, background, or belief
 - Demonstrating respect for and adhering to all applicable laws, policies, and procedures
 - Avoiding conflicts of interest or unethical practices
 - Maintaining confidentiality and privacy when appropriate
 - Communicating transparently when sharing one's views that those views are not those of the University
 - Conforming to the highest ethical standards of one's profession
- 4. Competence and Professional Development**
 - Demonstrating the standards, skills, and knowledge required of one's profession
 - Maintaining credentials required by one's profession
 - Pursuing opportunities for continued learning and development
 - Accepting constructive feedback positively
 - Staying current with technological and procedural advancements
- 5. Communication Skills**
 - Listening actively and valuing different perspectives
 - Speaking and writing clearly and professionally
 - Using respectful and appropriate tone and language
 - Avoiding discriminatory or inappropriate speech
 - Being mindful of nonverbal cues
 - Practicing appropriate digital communication etiquette
- 6. Appearance and Presentation**
 - Dressing appropriately for the work environment
 - Maintaining personal hygiene
 - Representing the organization well in public or professional settings
- 7. Interpersonal Relations**

- Maintaining and demonstrating collaborative, empathetic, and unbiased demeanor
- Handling conflict in a calm, courteous, and constructive manner
- Avoiding negative commentary and behaviors such as vindictiveness and retaliation
- Practicing appropriate interaction and language and being mindful of personal space
- Being flexible and willing to compromise when priorities shift or assistance is needed

Everyone is expected to understand and adhere to these key elements of professional behavior. The following governing policies and procedures must also be understood and adhered to including but not necessarily limited to:

- Board of Regents <https://mus.edu/board>
- Montana University System <https://mus.edu>
- Campus Safety <https://www.mtech.edu/campus-safety>
- FERPA <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/ferpa>
- Title IX <https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/civil-rights-laws/title-ix-and-sex-discrimination>
- Title VII <https://www.eeoc.gov/statutes/title-vii-civil-rights-act-1964>
- Collective Bargaining Agreements <https://www.mus.edu/hr/cba/collbarg.html>
- Faculty / Staff Handbook <https://www.mtech.edu/facultystaff/fac-staff-handbook-acc.pdf>
- Montana Code Annotated <https://archive.legmt.gov/bills/mca/index.html>
- Administrative Rules of Montana <https://rules.mt.gov/>

Contact the office of Human Resources when the need arises:
<https://www.mtech.edu/about/admin-services/human-resources/>

WCAG 2.1 for PDF

Basics in Plain English

1.1 Text Alternatives - No Images of text without a text alternative. However, Stuffing 150 words into the Alt-text field for a screenshot would not be appropriate.

1.1.1 Non-Text Content - If there is an image, chart or graph, provide meaningful alt-text that tells the same story. (A)

1.3 Adaptable - Do not force the user to interpret the PDF in only one way.

1.3.1 Info and Relationships - The visual representation must match the tag. Heading, List, Graphic, Table, etc. (A)

1.3.2 Meaningful Sequence - If it matters what order things are in, make sure your tags and reading order follow that sequence. (A)

1.3.3 Sensory Characteristics - Do not use an attribute that cannot be interpreted by a screen reader as the ONLY way to differentiate it from other objects like color, orientation, text size, etc. Example: Items in red are 50% off. (A)

1.3.4 Orientation - Make sure your content doesn't lose read order or structure if the user decides to reflow the document or change the orientation when possible. (AA)

1.4.1 Use of Color - Do not use color as the only way to tell the difference between two or more objects. (A)

1.4.3 Contrast Minimum - Text must have enough contrast to be read against the background color. 4.5 to 1 for regular text (14pt and below) and 3:1 for large text (14pt and Bold or 18pt and above). Logotype and incidental (background) text are excluded from this requirement. (AA)

1.4.4 Resize Text - If you have low-res images of text and they are so blurry at 200% you cannot read them, you fail this criteria. (AA)

1.4.10 Reflow - Content must maintain structure and info even if document is put in reflow (Acrobat: View > Zoom > Reflow or Control+4) This new requirement is what supports setting the Order (Read Order). (AA)

1.4.11 Non-Text Contrast - Objects that have visual meaning (graphical objects) containing a fill color or stroke color must have enough contrast (3:1) to be individually identifiable. (AA)

1.4.12 Text Spacing - Does not apply to PDFs. It's about webpages. (AA)

2.1.1 Keyboard - The document must allow a user access to all the meaningful information via keyboard controls without a mouse. (A)

2.1.2 No Keyboard Trap - Avoid pop ups and other dynamic content that can cause a user to be "stuck" in a window they cannot get out of or that does not allow them back to where they were. (A)

2.4.2 Page Titled - Make sure your document has a descriptive title. Set your document title in Acrobat File > Properties > Description. (A)

2.4.3 Focus Order - This is a companion to 1.3.2 Meaningful Sequence and supports setting the Order (read order) panel. (A)

2.4.4 Link Purpose in Context - Make your links descriptive. Avoid "Click Here." or "More Info." "More about WCAG" would be better. (A)

2.4.6 Headings and Labels - Headings should be sufficiently descriptive. A Heading titled "Chapter 1" would not be sufficient. "Chapter 1 - Introduction" would be better. (AA)

3.1.1 Language of a Page - The default language should be set for your document. File > Properties > Advanced > Language. (A)

3.1.2 Language of Parts - Set the language attribute for phrases or words not in the base language of the document. (AA)

4.1 Compatible - Your document must be able to be read by current and future programs, not just NVDA and JAWS.

4.1.1 Parsing - Your tag structure and your formatting should be correct. This is particularly important for things like TOC, Lists, annotations and other items that require a specific nesting order (one tag or structure inside another). (A)

4.1.2 Name, Role, Value - Form fields, links, and other interactive elements can be properly identified as checkbox, button, form field etc. and have meaningful tool tips. (A)



CERTIFIED INSTRUCTOR



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10 Things you can do to improve accessibility without being an expert!

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We hear it all the time. Accessibility is too hard! You have to be an expert! The truth is there are lots of things you can do to improve the accessibility of your document and digital content. Accessibility starts with small steps. Use these 10 simple actions to improve your content. You might be surprised at how easy it can be.

1 Title your Documents

Choose a meaningful title that identifies the document or its content.

2 Describe your images

It is pretty easy to right click on an image and enter a descriptive sentence or two. Answer the questions "What is important in this image? What do they need to know?"

3 Use Headings

Headings are anchors or outline levels for content that people using assistive technology use to navigate by. Keep your headings logical and in order. Heading Level 1, Heading Level 2, etc. Headings make your document more readable for everyone.

4 Avoid excessive bullet levels

Every list level change is announced by a screen reader. Imagine having to keep track of where you are when you hear "List Level 1, List Level 2, List Level 3, List Level 2, List Level 3, List Level 4, List Level 3."

5 Use descriptive links

Use meaningful link text instead of "Click Here" or long URLs. "Download the Checklist" is far more accessible than download http://www.accessibilityunraveled.com/content/PDFs/Checklists/MSWord_071222.PDF

6 Avoid images of text

Images may make our text look fancy with drop shadows and bevels or highlights but screen readers cannot detect the text inside a jpg or png. If you forget to add descriptive text sometimes title.jpg is all the user gets for a description.

7 Keep tables simple

This is a much deeper subject but at its core, keep your tables simple. Heading rows at the top or in the first column instead of using them to visually separate rows of content will make your table much more accessible without any heavy accessibility work in the PDF.

8 Avoid faded color schemes

People with low vision are a substantial portion of those with disabilities. Use darker colors for headings and meaningful content. Avoid pastels, faded colors, oranges or yellows for headings as they can be hard to see.

9 Avoid red and green indicators

As many as 1 in 8 males are Colorblind. Avoid using red or green as differentiators. Example: "Items in red are required." If you have to use them consider adding a symbol or other method to help differentiate them.

10 Use simple language

Use plain language when possible. It will improve the reading rate for everyone. In item 9 we used "differentiate." We could have used "tell them apart" to be more accessible!



For more tips and accessibility chat listen to our podcast on all major streaming platforms: A11y Podcast

Accessible Podcast Transcripts at chaxchat.com