

Staff Senate Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 19, 2019
Mt. Con Room, Student Union Building
9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Present: Frances Holmes, Peggy McCoy, Kathy Stevens, Casey Vanatta, Kinsley Rafish, Tristan Sewell, Debbie Luft, and Marcia Lubick

Absent: Marilyn Patrick, Denise Herman, Niki Wilcox, Angela Stillwagon

Guest: Chancellor Les Cook

Introductions and welcoming remarks: Frances Welcomed Chancellor Cook and thanked him for attending our meeting. Chancellor Cook assured Staff Senate that he will come to our meetings at least twice a year and more often if requested. Staff Senators then introduced themselves.

Chancellor Cook shared that he grew up on a ranch in Utah and he goes to Kinetics. The job that started him on his journey to Montana Tech was with the Salt Lake Community College where he built long lasting relationships and still has many friends. Now in his 12th week at Montana Tech he finds the student body to be refreshing. Our students are not shy about stopping the Chancellor to visit. On his way to the meeting this morning a group of Nursing students stopped him for a visit and asked him to get his picture taken with them.

He reiterated what he said at the Open Forum he held on September 6, the focus for the near future is on enrollment, recruitment and student success. We want the student experience at Montana Tech to be meaningful and valuable. Career Fair is one of his favorite student-centered events. It is a time when we can be proud. Our students are in demand and they are presenting themselves professionally to potential employers.

Minutes: Minutes were approved as corrected.

Subcommittee Reports: Casey pulled statistics for Ask the Senate and Pat on the Back to share with Chancellor Cook.

Ask the Senate: (Casey, Frances, Peggy)
6 questions have been asked in the past 3 years.

Pat on the Back: (Frances, Marcia and Casey) Casandra Welsh is the newest recipient of the award. 29 classified and professional staff have been nominated for *Pat on the Back* in the past 4 years. Staff who have been nominated receive a certificate and \$5.00 coffee card. Their photo is taken and an article is written for the Staff Senate Newsletter. Marcia writes many of the articles for the Newsletter and Denise designed a card included with the certificate which encourages the recipient to pay it forward by nominating a deserving co-worker.

New Employee: (Frances, Marcia, Peggy) Peggy picked up the new candy for the welcome packets. New Employee welcome packets containing a Staff Senate pen, bright colored post-it-note pad, candy, and pamphlet of useful information about campus are given to new classified and professional staff employees. After they complete their 6-month probationary period they receive a mug and congratulations note.

Lunch and Learn Update: (Debbie, Niki, Kathy)

The September 17, 2019 Lunch and Learn presentation, Wildflower Reflections: Legacy Planning (Wills, etc.) by guest speaker Marsha Goetting from the MSU Extension, was attended by 37 staff and faculty. This was the largest attendance ever at a Lunch and Learn. Marsha was very well received and several attendees have requested that we ask her back to cover material that she was not able to speak on in the confines of one hour. She left the extra handouts with Kathy which is wonderful as Frances has received requests for copies of the handouts. MSU will invoice us for Marsha's mileage.

Staff senate gave a round of applause to Kathy and the Lunch and Learn committee for all of their work.

All staff and faculty are invited the 4 to 6 Lunch and Learn presentations hosted by the Staff Senate each year. Programs have been presented on Suicide Prevention, 25Live room scheduling software, IT policies and tips on email management, campus safety, personal finance, alumni engagement.

Scholarship: (Casey, Peggy)

Peggy reported that there has been no change to the balance \$133.00. Day One receipts are still being calculated so we don't know if donations were made to the Staff Senate Scholarship. The Staff Senate Scholarship goes to a staff member's child.

Financial Report: (Peggy, Marcia)

We received our regular budget of \$1,100.00 Invoices from the Lunch and Learn have not been received.

The Staff Senate budget pays for the lunch at the Lunch and Learns, welcome packets, mugs, Pat on the Back supplies and shirts worn by Senators when representing Staff Senate at meetings and other campus functions.

In the Past Chancellor Blackketter chipped in \$1000.00 to help with the Lunch and Learn lunches.

Dr. Cook believes that professional development for Faculty and Staff is important to the campus. Currently, funding everything that merits attention is tricky as the budget is tight. Chancellor Cook believes in sending faculty and staff to conferences and he also envisions instituting a professional development program similar to the program that he implemented at his last institution. At his previous institution he promoted a bi-annual Professional Development Day and a Technology Development Day. These functions included 3-4 sessions and a keynote speaker from outside of campus.

Chancellor Teams:

Executive Team (former Executive Council)
Leadership Team/Cabinet (former Cabinet)

Chancellor Committees:

- Recruitment
- Student Success
- Marketing/Communications
- Professional Training & Development
- Campus Refresh/Space Planning

The Chancellor would like a recommendation for staff representation on the Professional Training and Development Committee.

Events Committee: (Kathy, Peggy, Marcia, Niki, Frances)

Over the years Staff Senate has participated in Homecoming – clothing drive, home coming parade, Xmas wrapping with Circle K, campus clean-up, new student check-in, graduation, TGIF and Career Fair.

Homecoming – clothing drive – donation boxes will be put out in the dorms. HPER, HSB, Mill, Library and Highlands to collect gently used clothing, sheets, bath towels, toiletries and individually wrapped snacks for the homeless shelter. A complete list will be sent out.

Distribution of the boxes will be done before September 25 and picked-up October 14.

Shared Governance

Elections: (Marcia and Peggy)

Each spring, the Election Committee recruits staff to apply to join the Staff Senate. Recruitment is done with a campus wide email, and personally by contacting staff recommended by sitting senators. We have never turned down an applicant. We acknowledge that the current makeup of the senate is not diversified; in the past year, two of our male senators both resigned due to work schedule conflicts.

It was suggested that we try to recruit Kramer Ungaretti.

Bylaws Review: (Frances, Peggy)

The Bylaws have recently been reviewed and updated.

Staff Recognition Committee: (Peggy, Casey, Kathy, Denise)

For years staff were only recognized once they reached 15 years of service when they were presented with a certificate and \$15.00 gift card to the bookstore. Two years ago, Staff Senate worked with Dr. Blacketter to begin presenting 5-year pins and 10-year pen and pencil sets. This was met with push back from staff members wanting the awards to be retroactive; our progress was almost derailed.

Staff Senate would now like to implement an annual Staff Recognition Award that would be present at the annual Employee Service Award Reception TGIF. The intent is to have a staff award that carries the same type of prestige as the Faculty's Rose and Anna Busch award.

The committee has started working on criteria to determine qualifications, the award pool and how voting would be done. One idea is to narrow the pool to Pat on the Back awardees for the year.

The goal is to build a campus culture where staff are recognized for the important work and contributions they make to the institution. This past spring the students gave out their First Annual

Staff Recognition Award. Staff Senate is cognizant that we need to be careful not to diminish the importance of the student award as we develop our own staff recognition award.

Chancellor Cook supports the idea and recommends more research into how our peer institutions recognize and reward deserving staff. He also noted that there are meaningful non-monetary ways of to demonstrate appreciation. The value and importance of a hand written thank you card should not be overlooked. A sincere thank you has a major impact. It is important to recognize staff at same level that we recognize faculty.

Chancellor Cook envisions an awards lunch or dinner for the awardees in conjunction with the TGIF.

Newsletter Committee: (Niki, Denise, Angela) Articles due September 20.
Debbie hasn't had time to write the recruitment article – she will let Niki know.

Old Business:

Committee Roster: Frances noted that Peggy is still on almost every committee. As Staff Senate President it was necessary for Peggy to serve on all of those committees. Frances asked Peggy to let her know if she wants to drop any of the committees. Peggy will review and let Frances know next meeting.

Staff Senate Photo: Shirts have still not arrived and Senators traveling on campus business for the next two months. We will take the Staff Senate photos in December.

Round Table/Updates:

Staff Front Line:

Staff are the frontline and don't get included in important decisions that impact student and staff interactions.

Case in point, a decision was made to stop giving free printing to students. This past week a student had a meltdown in the Library over having to pay for prints; her budget is extremely tight and she was not planning to have this extra surprise expense. The Student was unconsolably upset with library staff.

Kinsley Rayfish also stated that she received a call from an upset student ranting about the printing policy change. This is distressing for both the student and staff.

Chancellor Cook believes that staff should be empowered to do what is right. Customer service training should be part of campus policy. Staff should have the authority to do what it takes to make something right and resolve an issue to the mutual benefit and satisfaction of both parties.

Career Ladders: We don't have any way to be upwardly mobile after reaching a certain point on the career path. When someone has gone from Tech I to Tech II, and Tech II is the end of the path, even as the employee has continued to gain more skills and take on more responsibility, without the Career

Ladders being used the employee has been dead ended, they are at the end of the path with no meaningful future for increased earnings. Ladders were supposed to alleviate this, however they are not used on this campus. On top of that reclassification is almost unheard of.

It is difficult for new employees to make it on entry level wages and it seems that because of the low wages new staff keep looking for a job even after being hired. They are often leaving for a dollar or three more per hour within a short period of time. The revolving door is taking a toll on morale.

Chancellor Cook has salaries for staff and faculty on his radar. Part of the issue is Montana but it goes beyond that; the Regents need to be educated about this issue. Dr. Cook wants to work toward bringing salaries in line with peer institutions.

How do we keep staff on campus – advertising and training are expensive.

MUSSA Report: This past Spring when MUSSA attended the Board of Regents meeting in Great Falls for their annual meeting with the BOR, and after weeks of preparing a presentation based on the findings of MUSSA's Spring Staff Survey, just hours before the meeting, the Commissioner of Higher Ed told MUSSA that they could not share the results of the Spring Staff Survey with the BOR. The reason given was that the Unions needed to officially approve the release before the results could be shared. All Staff Senates have now received the approval of all of the Unions and OCHE has given permission to share the information. Peggy has cleaned up the report, removing the data from the other campuses to only reflect Montana Tech's portion of the survey. She will send a copy to the Chancellor and Frances.

Dr. Cook suggests a letter to Commissioner Clayton Christian asking to make the presentation to the Regents at the next meeting.

Chancellor Cook is data driven. In his former position he would send out quarterly pulse surveys to campus staff and faculty – the surveys took about 4 minutes to complete and gave him good feedback on the temperature of the campus. These surveys were valuable.

Foundation Accounts and Credit Cards: Dr. Cook was asked if he could help get permission once again for key members of departments to have Foundation approved credit cards for purchases made against department foundation accounts. From around 2001 until about 2012, approved staff members could get a credit card that was tied to their department foundation accounts. This made it easier to make purchases for department events. Local business no longer take purchase orders and it is a hardship on staff to make out-of-pocket purchases and wait for up to a week (depending on the timing of the purchase) to be reimbursed with a check from the Foundation.

The Foundation is great about getting the checks processed on Wednesdays. However, depending on the timing of the purchase a staff members personal funds can be tied up for six days before reimbursement is even processed. That is a burden.

Search Committee for CFO/VCAF: Staff representation is important on this search committee and we would like staff to have more involvement on the committee. Ideally include several of the directors that report to that position on the committee.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 1, 2019 at 9:00 a.m., Mt Con Room of the Student Union Building.

**Respectfully submitted,
Marcia Lubick, Staff Senate Secretary**