

# MONTANA TECH FACULTY SENATE

Thursday, March 29, 2012

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Members present: Laurie Battle, Merle Benedict, Chris Danielson, Jerry Downey (Chair), Charie Faught, Gretchen Geller, Katie Hailer, Rajendra Kasinath, Mike Miller, Tom Moon, Mary North-Abbott, Vicki Petritz, Bill Ryan, Celia Schahczenski, Glenn Shaw, Heather Shearer (Vice Chair), Kirk Waren

Members absent: Hugo Bertite-Aguirre, Jon Chesbro, Bill Good, Scott Juskiewicz, John Nugent, Shane Parrow, Miriam Young

Attending without vote: Doug Abbott, Matt Egloff, Keri Jaynes

The meeting was called to order just after 7:00 am

### **Review and Approval of Minutes from the February 23, 2012 Meeting**

The minutes for the Feb. 23, 2012 meeting were approved.

### **Administration**

1. Review of newly signed budget process document – VCAAR Abbott  
By mutual agreement, this topic was not addressed.
2. Faculty advising

Keri Jaynes, co-chair of the Advising and Retention Committee, explained efforts being made in the realm of advising students. A questionnaire was provided to faculty senate members. Discussions followed, addressing many aspects of advising students and training professors on advising students.

Jerry will send the questionnaire to Faculty Senate members, and ask them to solicit comments from their departments on the faculty advising process. Jerry will organize the resulting comments and provide them to Keri.

Keri noted that information on advising for faculty members and students has been placed on the Montana Tech website. The links for faculty and students, respectively, are:

<http://www.mtech.edu/academics/advising/facultyadvising.htm>

<http://www.mtech.edu/academics/advising/studentadvising.htm>

### **Discussion**

1. Academic Standards and Integrity:

Course substitution policy – Jerry notes that he will be requesting some statistics to find out if the course substitution policy is a problematic issue that the Faculty Senate should pursue.

Dual-credit courses - Heather Shearer brought up the topic of dual-credit courses being taught at High Schools, and whether the students are getting the appropriate level of training from appropriately qualified instructors. Doug Abbott noted that this is a Regents issue, and Montana Tech has dual-credit agreements with numerous high schools across the state. He explained further details about the program. College professors need to have a Class 8 license or certification to teach dual-credit classes. There is a group addressing a request by Butte High School for more dual-credit offerings by the high school. This group has met once, and Doug offered Heather the opportunity to join this group for its next meeting, which she accepted.

## 2. Research

Academic Faculty Research Policy – Jerry has received comments on the policy from two departments, and is awaiting further comments. He plans to consolidate the comments and provide them to the administration.

Institutional Research Board – Heather Shearer noted that Montana Tech might consider establishing its own Institutional Research Board, especially as new programs and funding sources are considered. Doug Abbott felt that this was a great idea, and that we will have to develop a board as the new programs grow. Heather will be looking into the issue and contacting faculty members knowledgeable in research board activities.

University Sponsored Research Appointment – Jerry noted that this topic was brought up near the conclusion of the March 9<sup>th</sup> Instructional Faculty Meeting. Discussion is deferred to a later time. Jerry might forward a link regarding the issue to Faculty Senate members to see if this is something relevant to Montana Tech, and if it's something we can consider incorporating into the comments regarding the Academic Faculty Research Policy.

Available Research Space – Jerry noted that there are no instructional faculty members, or faculty senate members on the Space Committee. Doug Abbott explained that the Space Committee deals with space concerns outside of the department level, and asks persons bringing space requests to specify what seemingly unused space is being requested for use. Jerry suggested that for the Faculty Senate to be better involved in space issues, perhaps something like a resources committee be developed, either independently or possibly starting from the existing Space Committee. Doug agreed with the concept, and suggested Jerry visit with him further about how to proceed.

Matt Egloff mentioned that he proposed priorities for campus space, with student labs and space having the top priority, followed by faculty research, and finally storage. He added further details, and suggested a policy should be developed to establish priorities.

## 3. Academic Calendar

Jerry reminded the group that senate officers intend to request a meeting with the Dean's Council regarding the academic calendar, and specifically looking into why the length of our semesters is sometimes different than those of other university system campuses.

## 4. Moodle:

The pros and cons of Moodle were further discussed by the senate. Jerry reports that most of the faculty at UM are quite satisfied with the software. Doug Abbott noted that it will not

be easy to replace Moodle, and it is unlikely to happen. The chancellor is unconvinced that the software is “unworkable,” and came away from the Instructional Faculty meeting with an impression that numerous faculty members are satisfied with the software, and that some had even offered assistance in using it. Doug suggested that more and better training needs to be provided. Jerry and others later added that better support would help, so that users could get help with specific tasks. It was suggested that a list of specific issues and problems be compiled so that the university can look into potentially modifying the software as needed, and to determine what kind of Moodle training would best suit the needs of the Montana Tech faculty.

### **New Business**

1. New faculty concerns and issues
  - The issue of the disparity of online pay at Montana Tech compared with other UM universities was brought up. Further details will be provided to Jerry after this meeting.
2. Other new business items (proposed agenda items for the Senate meeting in April)
  - Establishing a quorum for Faculty Senate meetings (recommend 80% of voting members). This issue is still on the list of new business items to address. It was noted that if a quorum were established to be 80% of voting members, we have not achieved a quorum at any of the recent Faculty Senate meetings.
  - Scheduling a special Senate Meeting for May 2012. This will be a planning session for potential summer business items. We will plan to pick a date during the next regular meeting.

### **Scheduling of the next Faculty Senate Meeting**

The next Faculty Senate meeting is scheduled for 7:00-8:00 a.m. on Thursday, April 26, 2012.

The meeting was adjourned just after 8:00 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kirk Waren,  
Secretary