Colleagues,

Welcome to the Spring Semester 2015 – it is good to have the students back on campus. This email is a brief newsletter overviewing what is “going on” around campus community, MUS, and the State.

1. Board of Regents Meeting Overview

Montana Tech has a number of items on the agenda for the March Board of Regents meeting. The Academic, Research, and Student Affairs (ARSA) will consider the following submissions at their meeting in Helena on March 5-6:

- Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing (BSN): Montana Tech proposes to be the second state supported 4-year BSN program in the state. MSU-Bozeman and Carroll College are the other two schools in the state that offer a 4-year BSN. The proposal calls for phasing out the current ASN nursing degree and replacing it with a 4-year BSN degree. The campus will continue to offer our BSN Completion degree to students that have earned an ASN degree from another institution and are looking to complete a BSN degree.
- Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering: Since 1999, we have had an option in Mechanical Engineering in our Engineering Science or now, General Engineering Degree program. Our alumni, current students, and companies that recruit (or do not recruit) on campus have asked for this change.
- Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering: Since 1999, we have had an option in Civil Engineering in our Engineering Science or now, General Engineering Degree program. Our alumni, current students, and companies that recruit (or do not recruit) on campus have asked for this change.
- Option in Natural Resource Management within the Business & Information Technology (BIT) Degree.
- Applied Health Science and Safety Degree: This degree will replace the old Applied Health Science option under our current OSH degree. ABET mandated this change.

2. Budget Process

The campus has started our budget development process for our FY 2016 and 2017 budgets. While we will not know exactly how much money we will receive from the State Legislature until April, but are required to submit a draft budget by middle of March. For the campus this year, on the academic side of the house, the Deans will spend more time with their individual departments in drafting their respective college budgets. In other words, the departments will not meet individually with the Executive Council as we have done in the past. The Deans along with Heads will present their requests to the Executive Council. The same process will happen on the non-academic side of the house. The Directors of each area will be responsible for drafting their budgets to present to the executive council. All Dean and Director budget hearings will be open to the campus. Don and Doug will be meeting with each department and units prior to the completion of the budget process.

3. Faculty Development Grant Initiative

In response to an invitation from the Provost in early November, 21 faculty submitted proposals requesting over $121 K to jump start innovative research and scholarly efforts. Thirteen faculty development grants totaling $70 K were awarded in December 2014. For the names of the faculty and their project titles please contact Provost Abbott.

4. Natural Resources Research Center

Hopefully you have seen the announcement of the $5M in matching gifts against $5M from State of Montana for the new addition/building that will be east of the ELC. The three donors are ConocoPhillips, Halliburton, and Anadarko who split the support equally. This is really good news and a special thanks to Ryan Lance of ConocoPhillips for working with us to make this a reality. Construction will begin in April on what is currently called the Natural Resource Research Center (NRRC). The building will house research laboratories, instructional labs for General Engineering and Occupational Safety and Health, an interdisciplinary student project area that includes a fabrication shop, and collaborative space for students and faculty teams. It is expected to be completed by August of 2016.

5. Enrollment

Enrollment is strong this spring - headcount is up 53 and FTE is up 75.4 compared to this time last year. Grad students are up 18 at 189. In Fall 2014 semester, 146 degrees were awarded. The Aerospace Welding program has enrolled its first students this semester. Congratulations to us as a campus for making recruiting and retention a focus – our efforts are paying off to the benefit of the campus and the students.
6. MUS Legislative Priorities

The legislative session is underway and Commissioner Christian and the MUS have four priorities that include: A pay plan (potential raises), $15M in MUS-wide research funding, Present Law Adjustment that would keep tuition at no increase, and the long range building plan that includes $10M for Tech in renovation funds for engineering facilities targeted at one or more buildings in front of Leonard Field.

7. Personnel Searches

The search for a Director of Human Resources and an Administrative Associate to the Provost is underway. PRA’s are in development for Montana Tech’s positions of Director of Distance Learning (new) and Director of Enrollment Management.

8. Summer Camp

The Women in Stem Camp for high school students will be held on the Montana Tech campus this coming summer. A special thanks to BP who has again funded this event.

9. Swimming Pool Update

Physical Facilities has completed an updated study and cost estimate of the HPER swimming pool maintenance and renovation requirements. Specific needs and components have been assigned to a three phase plan for completion. The first phase is under design, for replacing the pool liner, upgrading the main drains, and replacement of the return gutters. The first phase construction drawings will be submitted to the Montana Department of Health (DPHHS) for review and approval by late February. Phase 1 construction will be advertised for bid Upon DPHHS approval. Phase 2 includes room and equipment painting and piping upgrades, and phase 3 will be lighting replacement and improvements.

10. Parking Planning

An enhanced Traffic and Parking Committee has been appointed by the chancellor. New members include Chad Okrusch, (Faculty Senate), Fred Sullivan, (Staff Senate), Scott Juskiewicz, (Library), and Joe McClafferty, (Foundation). Their first meeting was held January 7 and was very productive. Ideas discussed included temporary parking changes resulting from the construction project of the new NRRC building addition. The committee will meet frequently throughout the year and make recommendations for both short term and long term campus needs. The next meeting will be held in early February.

Finally, please join me at the State of Tech to be held on January 27th at 3:00 pm in the Bob and Pauline Poore Room at the URC.

We hope that you find the information provided in this newsletter of value and welcome input on improvements and/or areas of interest that you believe are important to the campus.

Sincerely,

Don and Doug