

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
October 12, 2001

Meeting convened at 2pm in the Mountain Con room of the SUB.

Attending: Chair R. Appleman, R. Donovan, J. Handley, D. Hobbs, M. MacLaughlin (recorder).
(A quorum was present.)

Guests: Chancellor F. Gilmore, Interim VCAA/R S. Patton

The Chair opened the meeting with a few statements:

- The objective of the meeting was to allow members of the Senate to ask questions, and to facilitate discussion of issues (particularly the recent “promotion” of several lab directors into tenure track assistant professorships) with the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor.
- Research has indicated that MSU has two tracks for lab instructors: those with a terminal degree are in the tenure track ranks of assistant/associate/full professor, and those without are in the non-tenure track ranks of *adjunct* instructor/assistant/associate/full professor.
- During recent meetings of the Senate, several items had been brought forward for discussion and possible addition to the Faculty Handbook. Although the full text was not distributed at the meeting, everyone present had access to it, and it is included here for completeness:
 - 1) one year terms for deans and department heads, as required for contract legalities and discussed at the first general faculty meeting of the semester, new wording:

223.1 Academic Department Head Job Description, Selection and Terms

G. TERMS

Subject to Section 206.1, Department Heads shall be appointed for 1-year terms. The faculty in each department shall evaluate their Department Head annually in a confidential but constructive manner and forward this written evaluation to the Academic Dean. The Academic Dean shall consider these evaluations when making a recommendation for renewal or non-renewal to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research who shall in turn make a recommendation to the Chancellor. The Dean (or Vice Chancellor in situations where the Department Head is also a Dean) shall respond in writing to the Department’s comments.

223.2 Academic Dean Job Description, Selection and Terms

G. TERMS

Subject to Section 206.1, Academic Deans shall be appointed for 1-year terms. The Department Heads in each College or School shall evaluate their Academic Dean annually in a confidential but constructive manner and forward this written evaluation to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research. The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research shall consider these evaluations in determining suitability for renewal or non-renewal when making a recommendation to the Chancellor.

- 2) promotion clarification, modified wording in bold blue font:

206.3 Procedures to Apply for Promotion in Rank

Montana Tech recognizes the following academic ranks:

Instructor: The rank of Instructor is generally reserved for those who teach lower-division and certificate-level courses. While levels may be available within the rank, it is not normally expected that an instructor would be **promoted to** a Professor **of any rank**. Teaching excellence and continued effort and accomplishment in the areas of professional development and service are expected for continued employment. Only instructors associated with the College of Technology are eligible for tenure.

- 3) new tenure track faculty clarification, modified wording in bold blue font:

204. Recruiting and Selecting New Faculty

Recruiting and Selecting Full-time Faculty

Each opening, resulting from a resignation, creation of a new position, **or change from non-tenure-track to tenure-track**, is an opportunity for the institution to enhance its stature or broaden its educational resources in concert with its traditional and changing roles in both teaching and research. In choosing a faculty member, a thorough search, as outlined below, shall be conducted. The Department Head and faculty of the department where the new faculty member will reside shall have primary responsibility for the search. The Department Head shall consult with the Dean or MBMG Director to establish the Search Committee.

- 4) No major changes should be instituted during the summer.

As recorded in minutes of the previous meetings, a motion had been made and passed regarding Item #1, and Items #2, and #3 were supported by the Senate. Although Item #4 had been discussed, there was no clear consensus whether the Senate was in full support of it or not. However, as it was the most contentious, and discussion opened with the Chancellor's response to that item. He indicated that this would effectively paralyze the institution, and cited the example of having to reconstitute the Computer Science Department during the previous summer as evidence. The response from the Senate was that this was handled according to the guidelines outlined in the handbook, and that accordingly, no faculty opposition to it had been brought to the attention of the Senate.

Discussion immediately turned to the issue of the "promotion" of several lab instructors into tenure track positions. The Chancellor's position was that the Handbook does not address the situation, while the Senate pointed out sections (with relevant text highlighted) which were intended to address it:

- new positions to be filled with a search

204. Recruiting and Selecting New Faculty Recruiting and Selecting Full Time Faculty

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member will reside shall have primary responsibility for the search. The Department Head shall consult with the Dean or MBMG Director to establish the Search Committee.

- procedure to apply for promotion in rank

206.3 Procedures to Apply for Promotion in Rank

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(full text of the application for promotion procedure not included here; available in the public folders)

The Chancellor contributed an explanation of how the promotions came about, which was with strong support from the Deans of the College of Math and Sciences and School of Mines and Engineering. The Chancellor was not in favor of the proposed promotions at first, but later became convinced that they would be in the best interest of the institution.

Discussion of various aspects of the issue followed, including:

- While the administration considers these contract changes as “reassignments,” they effectively create new tenure track assistant professor positions. The intent of the wording in the Faculty Handbook is to ensure that all new tenure track assistant professor positions are filled using an appropriate search process.
- The administration tried to do what was best for the employees involved.
- While the offer to all lab instructors in the letter dated June 20, 2001, appears to be a standing offer, the administration’s position is that it is NOT, and that notification to Montana Tech within two weeks of receipt of the letter was required for consideration for “reassignment” into tenure track.
- The real mistake was not keeping all faculty informed.
- There was an inconsistency in how these “promotions” were handled in that they did not incur a standard promotional salary increase, but rather a substantial increase much larger than that traditionally offered for promotion.
- The history of the instructor and lab director positions at Tech was discussed.

The Chancellor asked the Senate members what they thought should have been done. The Senate’s response was that an advancement track should have been developed for people in those positions, rather than arbitrarily reassigning them into tenure track. It was then suggested that a mechanism for advancement be developed for employees in lab director and adjunct instructor positions, with input from those currently in those positions, and added to the faculty handbook.

At 3:15, R. Donovan and J. Handley left, and the quorum was lost.

Further discussion topics included how the MUS's legal system works and issues for the Senate to address during this academic year, including:

- how to deal with the wide variety of titles assigned to employees in their contracts
- an inclusive definition of "faculty"
- policies involving research faculty
- further clarification of promotion and tenure guidelines
- policies for part-time and adjunct faculty

The last item in the list will be greatly facilitated by the addition of a part-time/adjunct faculty member to the Senate, if approved by the faculty during the next general faculty meeting, scheduled for November 1.

Meeting adjourned 4 pm.