

**Minutes**  
**Faculty Senate Meeting**  
**8:00 AM, August 31st, 2004**  
**Mountain Con Room, SUB**

*minutes submitted by secretary A. Stierle*

*Members present: Chair- Grant Mitman, Vice chair - John Brower, Susan Leland, Rod James, Mark Sholes, Danette Melvin, Secretary - Andrea Stierle,*  
*Absent: Chip Todd, John Metesh*  
*Also in attendance: Chancellor Gilmore, Ann St. Clair*

Meeting was called to order at 8 AM.

The first order of business was to establish an official meeting time for the Faculty Senate. Alternate Tuesday mornings at 7:30 AM were selected. The next meeting will be in two weeks, September 14<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 AM. With this schedule in mind, Faculty Senate meeting dates will include: September 14<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>; October 12<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>; November 9<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. Additional meetings may be called as needed.

***Old Business***

1. One item of business from last year is the matter of the excused absence policy on the Montana Tech campus. The policy was first discussed by the members of the Chancellor's Advisory Committee (September 2003) who referred it to the Faculty Senate. The Senate addressed the policy in the November 11, 2003 meeting, as reported in the Faculty Senate minutes posted for that day:

[November 11, 2003](#)

Discussion turned to the issue of class absences for campus-sanctioned events. Most faculty agree that accommodation should be made but the teacher should be left with the discretion of what that accommodation should be. A motion was made with wording to clarify the policy as stated in the catalog. Discussion revealed that the senators did not believe that the wording would resolve any of the stated problems with the policy. The motion did not receive a second and failed. A motion was made and seconded to request discussion of the policy in a general faculty meeting. A friendly amendment was added to seek feedback from students as to whether or not they see the current policy as a problem. Both the original motion and the amendment were seconded and passed. A. Stierle volunteered to get the feedback from the students. Mitman said that he would poll the deans to determine whether they felt the current policy presented problems.

The Senate brought the excused absence policy issue to the General Faculty meeting. A spirited discussion ensued but no decisions were reached as to a new policy. Certain faculty members and members of the administration feel that the current excused absence policy:

**[Absences from Classes](#)**

**[The instructor of a class shall determine excused absences from a given class.](#)**

It does not adequately protect students absent from classes for school-sanctioned events. For reference, I have included the excused absence policies from UM-Western, UM-Missoula, Colorado School of Mines, MSU-Bozeman, and MSU-Billings.

The Senate will revisit this issue and prepare a new excused absence policy statement for consideration and possible vote at the next faculty meeting. Andrea offered to create a draft statement to be emailed to the Faculty Senate for editing and possible adoption.

## Montana Tech – UM

### **Absences from Classes**

The instructor of a class shall determine excused absences from a given class.

## CSM

**Absenteeism** Class attendance is required of all undergraduates unless the student is representing the School in an authorized activity, in which case the student will be allowed to make up any work missed. Students who miss academic work (including but not limited to exams, homework, labs) while participating in school sponsored activities must either be given the opportunity to make up this work in a reasonable period of time or be excused from such work. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate arrangements for such work. Proof of illness may be required before makeup of missed work is permitted. Excessive absence may result in a failing grade in the course. Determination of excessive absence is a departmental prerogative. The Office of the Dean of Students, if properly informed, will send a notice of excused absence *of three days or more* to faculty members for (1) an absence because of illness or injury for which documentation will be required; (2) an absence because of a death in the immediate family, i.e., a spouse, child, parent, grandparent, or sibling. For excused absences students must be provided the opportunity to make up all missed work.

## UM-M

**Class Attendance/Absence Policy** Students who are registered for a course but do not attend the first two class meetings may be required by the instructor to drop the course. This rule allows for early identification of class vacancies to permit other students to add classes. **Students not allowed to remain must complete a drop form or drop the course on the internet (<http://cyberbear.UMT.edu>) to avoid receiving a failing grade. Students who know they will be absent should contact the instructor in advance.**

Students are expected to attend all class meetings and complete all assignments for courses in which they are enrolled. Instructors may excuse brief and occasional absences for reasons of illness, injury, family emergency, or participation in a University sponsored activity. (University sponsored activities include for example, field trips, ASUM service, music or drama performances, and intercollegiate athletics.) Instructors shall excuse absences for reasons of military service or mandatory public service.

Instructors may establish absence policies to conform to the educational goals and requirements of their courses. Such policies will ordinarily be set out in the course syllabus. Customarily, course syllabi will describe the procedures for giving timely notice of absences, explain how work missed because of an excused absence may be made up, and stipulate any penalty to be assessed for absences.

The UM Faculty Senate encourages the faculty to accommodate students incurring an excused absence by allowing them to make up missed work when this can be done in a manner consistent with the educational goals of their courses. Students expecting to incur excused absences should consult with their instructors early in the term to be sure that they understand the absence policies for each of their courses.

### **MSU-Bozeman**

**Absence from Classes** When students enroll in a course, they enter a contractual agreement with the instructor for the duration of the course, and both the student and the instructor are expected to honor the specified terms of that agreement. It is important, therefore, for the student to understand the attendance requirements in each course. The instructor should communicate these requirements during the first or second class meeting in writing in the course syllabus.

Absences from classes are handled exclusively within the purview of the individual instructor. If you have an accident, fall ill, or suffer some other emergency over which you have no control, you should gather what documentation you can (e.g., copies of repair or tow bills, prescriptions, accident reports, or statements from physicians) to show to your instructor. In some instances, you may wish to explore the options available by petitioning for *I* grades.

The provisions for making up missed class work may vary from one instructor to another. Most but not necessarily all instructors provide for some opportunity to make up missed work: for example, if one is absent from campus to participate in university-sponsored events. If you know that you are going to be involved in such activities during the semester, you should advise your instructor of these plans at the outset of the course and determine then what arrangements are available to make up missed class work.

### **MSU-Billings**

**Class Attendance and Student Absences** Members of the faculty determine the attendance policy for their classes. Absences for official University activities are permissible providing the instructor is notified in advance of such an absence. An official University activity is an activity where a student officially represents the University through an academic department, sponsored University program, or an officially registered student organization. In all absences, the student is responsible for all requirements of the course. Requests for absence for special events shall be submitted to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs on the Student Travel Authorization form. This form should be obtained from the Office of the Vice Chancellor, room 203, McMullen Hall at least one week in advance of the expected absence. This procedure will assure students the opportunity to make up examinations given when official University activities are scheduled.

## UM-W

### **Attendance**

Regular class attendance, especially early in the term, is critical to student success. Faculty determine requirements for satisfactory completion of courses they teach and usually specify attendance policies at the start of each term. Students are encouraged to communicate regularly with instructors concerning academic progress and attendance. Students who register for a course and fail to attend will receive an “F” as a final grade.

**Students must officially drop the course(s) or withdraw from Western on or before the published deadlines for these actions to avoid receiving failing grades in these situations** (see Academic Year Calendar). Students who register for a course but fail to attend the first two class sessions may be required by the instructor to drop the course or receive an “F”. This policy allows faculty to determine class vacancies early in a term, and add other students into classes that otherwise appear to be filled. Non-attending students who are asked to drop/withdraw are responsible for completing the paper-work necessary to officially drop the class before the published deadline. **Non-attending students who fail to file the necessary paperwork to drop a class will receive an “F” as a final grade.** Students are encouraged to communicate regularly with instructors concerning academic progress and attendance. Students who know they will be absent from a class should notify the instructor in advance, if possible.

2. The Senate also revisited the possibility of adopting a “+/-“ grading policy. Senate members discussed pros and cons but generally felt that the +/- system wouldn’t provide any real advantage to students or faculty. ***It was moved and seconded that the policy remain as is, and approved by a majority of Senate members present This discussion will be noted at the next General Faculty meeting but will not be offered as a discussion item unless the faculty wants to discuss the grading policy.***

### ***New Business***

1. Chancellor Gilmore has asked the faculty and staff of Montana Tech to adopt and support the Heart Walk, one of the American Heart Association’s annual fund raisers. He has asked the faculty Senate to organize the faculty support of this event. Few non-profit organizations receive this level of official support (United Way, Montana Shares), but the AHA went through the “proper channels”, and asked the Chancellor’s cabinet to consider supporting the Heart Walk.

***Grant will ask Wilma Immonen to distribute pledge sheets and envelopes to the other administrative assistants to have available for their faculty.***

2. Discussion concerning replacement of Senate member Betsy Harper. John Brower brought this item up for discussion at the General faculty meeting August 24th but deferred voting. Nomination and election of the new Senate member will be run on campus email. Grant Mitman will put out a call for nominations for a north campus representative and invite all faculty (North campus, South campus, Bureau) to vote by email.

***Votes will be collected and counted by Wilma Immonen, Chem/Bio administrative assistant.***

3. Discussion of Faculty Senate web page that will provide easier access to faculty senate minutes and other items of interest or concern to the faculty.

4. John Brower described the new electronic reserve system adopted by the Montana Tech library and how helpful this new system will be for faculty and students. It can be accessed by going to the library web page and clicking on *faculty resources*.

5. One area of major concern is the difficulty of contacting students by email. Many faculty find it almost impossible to reach students through their Montana Tech accounts. Students often opt for hotmail accounts and never access their Tech accounts. This is difficult for instructors who try to contact students by email.

*Grant offered to pursue the problem with Bill Schmidt and attempt to determine if the nature of the problem and a possible solution.*

The meeting was adjourned at 9:21 AM