

**Minutes**  
**Faculty Senate Meeting**  
**7:30 AM, September 28th, 2004**  
**Pintler Room, SUB**

*minutes submitted by secretary A. Stierle*

*Members present: Chair-* Grant Mitman, Susan Leland, Rod James, Mark Sholes, John Metesh, Bruce Madigan, *Secretary -* Andrea Stierle,  
*Absent:* Chip Todd, John Brower  
*Also in attendance:* Chancellor Gilmore,

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 AM.

1. Secretary noted that the minutes of the last Faculty Senate meeting (Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>) had been approved by email and had been posted to the Faculty Senate public folder.
2. Senate member Bruce Madigan (Engineering) was welcomed. He was elected by a general faculty email vote to replace Betsy Harper.
3. **Excused Absence Policy**

We are continuing our attempt to create an excused absence policy to be presented to the faculty at the next general faculty meeting. The minutes of the August 31<sup>st</sup> meeting include the policy statements from other Montana colleges. Andrea circulated the following statement to get the discussion going. It includes the current policy (italicized first line) as well as new language suggested by Senate members.

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

Susan suggested adding the following statement:

**Excused absences include serious illness, death in the immediate family, and university sponsored activities (for example, field trips, ASMT service, and intercollegiate athletics) or other circumstances deemed appropriate by the instructor.)**

Danette suggested the following:

The Montana Tech Faculty Senate encourages the faculty to accommodate students who are absent from class due to:

1. An official Montana Tech event or activity
2. A personal matter deemed appropriate by the instructor.

In the event of an absence described above, faculty members are encourage to allow students to make up missed work when this can be done in a manner consistent with the educational goals of their courses. Students must contact their individual instructors as soon as they know they will be absent to be sure that they understand the absence policies for each of their courses.

As these ideas circulated the general consensus was that *The Montana Tech Faculty Senate encourages the faculty to It is Montana Tech policy.*

At this point, the consensus excused absence policy is something like this:

***The instructor of a class shall determine excused absences from a given class. It is Montana Tech policy that faculty should make reasonable accommodation for students to make-up work missed (or the equivalent) because of an excused absence. 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. Excused absences include official Montana Tech events or activities, or personal matters deemed appropriate by the instructor.***

This statement will be reviewed by email, and the final policy to be presented to the faculty will be determined at the next meeting.

#### 4. **Instructor Position**

Last year the Senate initiated a discussion concerning the role, scope and identity of the position of “instructor”. Susan Patton sent an email to Grant Mitman asking that this issue be brought to the General Faculty for discussion. She stated that the Senate had not brought the discussion to the faculty.

I would respectfully disagree with the Vice Chancellor. The Faculty Senate did discuss the instructor position as part of a discussion of changes proposed by the Dean’s to the Faculty Handbook.

*As posted in the April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004 minutes:*

***b. Tenure-track and stepwise rankings for instructors.***

*Andrea commented that the Handbook already has Instructor listed as a tenurable position. She had proposed several years ago (1990) using tenure-track instructor with steps within the ranks, as an option for lab instructors and others who do not have terminal degrees but who regularly teach lab courses or entry level courses. Many colleges use this system. Susan Leland agreed this would be a good option for faculty who teach lower level courses and who do not plan to earn a terminal degree (doctorate) in their field.*

## Faculty/Staff Handbook

### 206.3

*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 become a Professor. Teaching excellence and continued effort and accomplishment in the areas of professional development and service are expected for continued employment.*

### 206.1

*A tenurable appointment is an appointment to a teaching, research, or other faculty position that may lead to a tenured status as provided for in this section. Tenurable appointments shall be made at the rank of instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, or professor.*

We noted that at Montana Tech tenure is not automatic. Instructors would go through application procedures as defined.

- *A motion was made to clarify “instructor position” as described in the Handbook as a separate track, with include step increases. Seconded and passed unanimously.*

At our April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting (see minutes) we addressed several changes to the Faculty Staff Handbook proposed by the Dean’s Council. The following is taken from the April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. The current language is in black, the changes proposed by the Dean’s Council include strikeouts and blue text:

### 206.3 Procedures to Apply for Promotion in Rank (**tenure and non-tenure track**)

#### **Academic 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 become a Professor. Teaching excellence and continued effort and accomplishment in the areas of professional development and service are expected for continued employment.~~

***Instructor:** The rank of Instructor is generally reserved for those who predominantly instruct at the lower division and laboratory level or for those faculty who have not achieved normal entry level rank in their discipline. An Instructor at the time of initial employment is not expected to possess an expertise in research, teaching and service. Accomplishment in all areas of evaluation must exist for consideration for promotion.*

**EXPLANATION:** *This proposed change reflects the need for North Campus to have the ability to make appointments at the Instructor level. An example is the hiring at the level of instructor those individuals who are ABD. Other examples are the heavy demand for teaching in math and laboratory instruction loads where full time teaching is required to meet the demand.*

At the April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting, we agreed that hiring new tenure-track faculty (*selected as the result of an appropriate search*) at the Instructor level because of being ABD is **not** a good idea. The current practice of *hiring with assistant professor rank but with a contractual obligation to complete the terminal degree* is satisfactory. *But there must be a limit to the duration of the ABD status (3 years was recommended), and the limit be rigorously enforced.*

The Faculty Senate recommended that the rank of Instructor be reserved for faculty hired to teach lower division and laboratory courses. An Instructor can be promoted to different levels, i.e., Instructor II; but will not be eligible for promotion to Assistant Professor, Associate Professor or Professor.

- *The motion to accept the changes to instructor position proposed by the Deans failed.*
- *The motion was made and passed to keep the original language from the current handbook with the following changes:*

*The rank of instructor is generally reserved for those who teach lower division and laboratory courses. While levels may be available within the rank, i.e. from Instructor I to Instructor II, an instructor will not be promoted to the professor track, i.e. assistant professor, associate professor or professor. Teaching excellence and continued effort and accomplishment in the areas of professional development and service are expected for continued employment.*

All of the changes to the Handbook proposed by the Dean's Council (including those related to the instructor position) were brought to the April 28<sup>th</sup> General Faculty meeting. The minutes (submitted by Kathleen Peterson) included the following item:

## **IX. Faculty Senate**

Dr. John Brower brought up the Faculty Handbook revisions which his committee was suggesting. He stated the majority of the revisions were minor editorial in nature and the most significant he brought forth for review. A motion was made and seconded to separate the significant revision from the minor changes. A motion was made and seconded and the minor revisions were approved.

The controversial revision discussed the rank of Instructor. Discussion of the hiring of Instructors and stating a possible progression would be moving from Instructor I to Instructor II to Instructor III to Instructor IV. Also in the verbiage, it stated that an Instructor could become a tenured faculty member. After heated discussion, this revision to the Faculty Handbook was tabled for further discussion in the fall.

*note from Stierle: Unfortunately these minutes contain a few inaccuracies. These were NOT changes proposed by the Senate, but were Senate responses to changes proposed by the Deans. Also, it is CURRENT policy that instructors can be tenured, not a change proposed by the Senate! I would like to see General Faculty minutes subjected to some level of editorial oversight before they are posted – wherever they are posted.*

John Brower indicated in this meeting that the Senate had rejected the changes to the Handbook concerning instructor position proposed by the Deans. In the discussion that followed, faculty were not supportive of blending the position of “instructor” as described in the Handbook with new faculty hired as a result of an appropriate search who are still ABD at time of hire. This would lead to potential abuse of the hiring system, i.e., instructors becoming professors in a manner not consistent with the Handbook.

There was no vote during the General Faculty Meeting, however, as this was only a discussion.

We need to address the instructor position again, particularly the details concerning the “step increases” proposed for promotion within the instructor ranks. Andrea will circulate the step increases currently used by the COT, UM, and MSU. We might also discuss whether “instructor” and “lab director” are separate positions and whether a department head can change a lab director into an instructor.

Chancellor Gilmore commented that it is his policy to allow individual departments to control hiring. He contended that hiring problems (eg. individuals lacking terminal degrees hired as assistant professors) were the fault of individual departments. It was noted however that often members of a department are not included in these decisions. It was also suggested that ultimately there is a set of guidelines (Faculty Staff Handbook and BOR Policy) that should be followed. It is the administration’s responsibility to make sure these guidelines are followed. It is better to have people mad at you for following the rules than for not following the rules.

## 6. **Vision/Mission statement**

The Chancellor’s Advisory Committee and Foundation would like to create new Vision and Mission statements. These are market driven and therefore reflect the student/parental desire for a degree that leads to a good job after college. These are the choices:

### *Vision*

## **BUILDING THE FUTURE WHILE HONORING OUR HERITAGE**

**To be a recognized leader for **undergraduate learning** and research in Engineering, Science, Energy, Health and Information Sciences.**

or

**To be a recognized leader for **undergraduate and graduate learning** and research in Engineering, Science, Energy, Health and Information Sciences.**

## *Mission*

**To develop creative solutions that meet the changing needs of society by supplying knowledge and an educated workforce. The campus emphasizes a strong undergraduate curriculum augmented by growing efforts in research, graduate education and service.**

The Senate members moved and passed a resolution to accept “and graduate learning” in the Vision statement.

The Senate also objected to the poor sentence structure of the proposed Mission statement. “By supplying knowledge and an educated workforce?” needs work.

[current](#)

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

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*Montana Tech of The University of Montana* is a comprehensive university emphasizing science and engineering with a national and international reputation for excellence. Programs range from occupational through graduate levels in engineering and selected other fields. The campus is dedicated to assisting students attain success in their academic, professional, and individual life goals. A personalized set of support services is available to all students. Students study in a learning environment that stresses practical, hands-on experiences and internships. Montana Tech programs are designed to produce graduates who are well-rounded, competent, responsible, and ethical professionals.

Montana Tech of The University of Montana serves as a cultural and events center for the local community and Southwest Montana. It promotes science literacy, generally, specifically encourages careers in engineering and science, and offers an expanding array of external studies and outreach programs. The economic development of the immediate service area and the State of Montana is an important part of the outreach activities.

Research is incorporated into the curriculum as an essential learning technique. Research and other scholarly activities of the faculty, staff, and students contribute to innovation and problem solving; provide practical solutions for business and industry; and add to the general body of knowledge. The Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology, along with the academic departments and several other focused research centers, play critical roles in support of resource-based industries in Montana and around the world.

## **VISION STATEMENT**

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Maintaining a close association with the resource-based industries and alumni allows Montana Tech to blend high quality formal instruction with hands-on learning, team projects, research, relevant work experience and co-curricular activities. As a result, graduates are firmly grounded in general education and well prepared to pursue their chosen careers after graduation. While honoring our heritage, we will constantly evolve our programs to meet the needs of the future.

7. **Transferable GPA**

A student letter to the BOR complained about the inability of students to transfer GPA's. Montana BOR requested that a group look into the possibility of system wide GPA's.

**ITEM 124-112-R0904                      Motion to Request the Preparation and Presentation of a Policy that Allows Students the Option of a System Grade Point Average.**

**THAT:**                      The Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education requests a work group be assembled, composed of the team members of the Montana University System, charged prepare and present to the Board a policy that allows students an option of displaying a system wide grade point, either in addition to or instead of the current display of unit grade point, on their MUS transcripts.

- **Senate members moved and passed a resolution of non-support for transferable GPA's.**

meeting adjourned at 9:10 AM.