

**Draft Minutes
Faculty Senate Meeting
5:00 PM, April 4th, 2006
Mountain Con Room, SUB**

Members present: Chair Grant Mitman, Vice-Chair-Susan Leland, John Brower, Rod James, Karen Porter, Mark Sholes, Miriam Young and *Secretary* Andrea Stierle

Members absent: Bruce Madigan, Paul Conrad
In attendance: Chancellor Gilmore

Faculty Senate Agenda for April 4th

- 1. Update from the Chancellor**
- 2. Evaluation of faculty**
- 3. Student Evaluation of teaching**
- 4. Email discussions and forums**
- 5. other**

1. Update from the Chancellor

Last interview for the Vice Chancellor of the Foundation will take place tomorrow. This is an important position. The right person in this job will facilitate appropriate fund raising activities and will be the key to effective fund raising.

The new Career Services position is also important.

The Budget Committee met and discussed possible “one time requests”. These include

- ♦ replacing the HPER floor
- ♦ a safety study of Park Street which might involve adding sidewalks west of the Marcus Daly statue, slowing traffic down, and lighting.

2 & 3. Evaluation of Faculty

The selection of the correct (or at least appropriate) evaluation form is only as effective as the method in which the data is used or interpreted. How will the administration use the information obtained from the teaching evaluation form.

We have been told repeatedly by Vice Chancellor Patton that it is absolutely incorrect to use the results of the evaluation form to generate a number by which faculty

can be ranked. She is looking for trends and improvements in areas that need improvement.

Is this the case. Faculty members believe that there are inequities. Certain faculty feel that they are held to a different standard. A high drop rate in their classes is a big problem, whereas a similar drop rate in another faculty members classes is not a problem.

Grant Mitman (Collegiate Evaluation Committee Chair) reported that the CEC is seeing consistently better portfolios, and that there is evidence that faculty have been evaluated more consistently by their departments, in accordance with the guidelines of the Faculty/Staff Handbook. There have been problems with faculty who have received the support of their departments and the CEC, but not the Dean. What happens in those circumstances?

Part of the problem is that the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor give their recommendations in March and the next portfolio is turned in in October. Is there time to make improvements in teaching effectiveness? We had discussed faculty instructional improvement workshops with the Instructional Improvement Committee. they were going to meet and discuss the possibility of a joint program helping faculty improve their teaching skills. Unfortunately, the IIC did not have a chance to meet and discuss this topic yet. Hopefully it will be a joint agenda item in the Fall.

4. Email discussion

Chancellor Gilmore is concerned about the abuse of email distribution lists. This problem was indeed discussed at our October 11th, 2005 Faculty Senate meeting. At that time Vice-Chancellor Patton was supportive of the use of email for open discussions among the faculty. At that time the Senate was concerned by the personal attacks by certain members of the faculty rather than the general dissemination of discussion items. Vice Chancellor Patton discussed the new Montana Tech web portal that can be used for open discussion forums (fora) without clogging the email system with lengthy general mailings.

The next email we received concerning the use of general distribution list email was the announcement that "there will be a restructuring and limiting of access" without any ROOM for discussion.

The Senate discussed the problem again with the Chancellor. It appears that the major problem is the inclusion of "all students" in these faculty-centered discussions. Students have begged the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor to shut down these general discussions instigated by certain faculty members.

The Senate member wanted to give the status quo another chance. To that end, a move was made and seconded to allow Faculty, Staff and Bureau members to continue to communicate with each other by email, although "all students" should not be included in general email distributions.

The motion passed unanimously.

Senate members suggested that we each have at our fingertips access to a delete button and the option of blocking emails from individuals from whom we do not want to hear. The annoyance of occasional email barrages was not considered sufficient reason to curtail the free flow of communication we currently enjoy on this small campus.

Several members of the Senate said that the really annoying email were the 20-30 messages from outside spammers that come in every day offering everything from a free PhD to several million dollars waiting for us in Nairobi, if we would just send \$10,000 to the address listed.

If members of the faculty, Bureau or staff wish to engage in discussions, the web portals should be used. We also agreed that sizeable attachments should be posted to an appropriate website, and an email announcement could direct folks to that posting. The Senate chooses that route when we post Faculty Senate minutes and when we posted the two Student Evaluation of Faculty Forms to our website and to our public folders for the viewing pleasure of the faculty.

Chancellor Gilmore told us at the end of our discussion and after the vote that our motion was meaningless because the mechanism was already in place to curtail general access to "other" distribution lists. He had given us "several warnings" about proper email use. The Chancellor pointed out that if we were on the Missoula campus we would not have access to distribution lists the way we do now. Of course, free flow of communication will not be curtailed by this reorganization of distribution lists. If individuals believe they require access to distribution lists beyond their own membership, they simply need to ask Vice-Chancellor Patton for permission.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 PM