

Minutes
Faculty Senate Meeting
7:00 AM, February 15th, 2006
Mountain Con Room, SUB

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

Members absent: Bruce Madigan

In attendance: Chancellor Gilmore

Agenda

1. **Approval of minutes from Feb. 1st, 2006 meeting**
2. **Jim Handley will discuss the outcome of the InterUnits Benefits Meeting**
3. **Possible upcoming meeting with President Dennison**
4. **Continued discussion of teaching evaluation forms and procedures**
5. **Other**

1. Minutes from February 1st Faculty Senate meeting were approved by email and Andrea will post them in the Faculty senate Public Folders

2. Interunits Benefits Meeting Report – Jim Handley

Jim presented a report from the **Interunits Benefits Meeting**. I am including the highlights of his report to the Senate. For information please contact Jim Handley.

- Since the dependents premium waver program was expanded 277 dependents were added to the benefits plan from the University of Montana side of the MUS, for a cost of \$63,878 from July 1st – December 31st, 2005. If this value is extrapolated for the entire year and doubled to include the Montana State University half of the system, then the total cost to the plan is \$250,000 per annum.
- Flex spending accounts – there is a proposal to offer a debit card for flex spending accounts. It will entail a \$10.00 start-up fee and \$1.00/month/user fee for the first year. This cost is above the current administrative fee charged for flex plan users. The fee may change if current accounting practices change. Currently members receive four statements per year. If this were reduced to twice a year then administrative costs might be reduced. Money in flex accounts is NOT refundable, so it is important that users know how much money is available to them.
- Pharmacy costs are increasing, but we expect no increase in cost to members for pharmacy at this time. This increase is driven by the availability of specialty and biotech drugs. Benefits plan users are encouraged to utilize mail order drugs whenever possible as they can cut costs dramatically. Over 76% of specialty drug prescriptions are filled in a doctor's office or pharmacy, which can be significantly more expensive than mail order.

- There will be a RFP for the 403B Option Plan.
- What is the current state of the Benefits Plan? Last year saw an increase of only 2% of use, well below inflation. This year, however, benefits use has increased 24%, way above the rate of inflation. Part of this increase might be driven by one or two individuals with expensive health care needs or it might be driven by the increased enrollment in HMO plans (up 40-50%). Employees are encouraged to enroll in HMO plans because they really do provide larger discounts overall.
- Recommendations for the future:
 - Employee only plan – no increase in cost
 - Employee & spouse will increase \$7.00/month
 - Employee & children will increase \$6.00/month
 - Employee & spouse & children will increase \$14.00/month.
- The state will be contributing an additional \$51.00/month/employee to the current contribution of \$506/month/employee. This will not apply to HMO subscribers or to retirees.
- Jim indicated that there were several websites that would provide details on the benefits plans including the Peak website, that also lists local doctors who support the plan, the Allegiance website describes the indemnity plan, Blue Cross Blue Shield provides information on the HMO, and Pharmacare provides information on prescription drug coverage.

The next meeting will be March 9th, 2006.

3. Meeting with President Dennison

We have been informed that President Dennison will most likely be on campus on February 28th and will probably have a meeting with the Faculty Senate and with the general faculty. Senate members are asked to think of appropriate agenda items and to send them to Grant or Andrea.

4. Continued discussion of teaching evaluation forms and procedures

The Senate has been reviewing comments about the current 41 question student evaluation of teaching form. Susan Leland offered an interesting item into our ongoing discussions of student evaluation of teaching forms in the Senate. The Math Department created a unique edition of the evaluation form that was approved by both Dean Coe and the Vice Chancellor. In essence, the Math Department deleted 20 of the 41 questions on the current form and distilled those questions down to 4 new questions. The resulting evaluation form has a total of 25 questions.

Andrea compared the two documents and found that questions 4, 6, 7, 8, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 23, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 36, 37, 38, 39 had been deleted or modified and were replaced by 4 new questions. She will send the two forms to the general faculty for consideration, after checking with Rick Rossi.



student evaluation
of teaching...



math
evaluation003.jpg

5. Future meetings of the Senate will be held on Tuesdays at 5 PM, with the next meeting scheduled for March 7th.

6. Name of Collective Bargaining Unit

One of the Senators wanted the new faculty Union to change their name from Montana Tech Faculty Union to something more reflective of their representations (i.e., few engineers and none of the nursing faculty are included in the Union). This request was passed on to the Union officers.

7. Elections

Faculty should be reminded at the General Faculty Meeting that the time to nominate new Senators is approaching.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:15 AM