

Montana Tech Faculty Senate Meeting

Tuesday, February 4, 2014

7:00-8:00 a.m.

Location: Pintlar Room (Student Union Building)

MEETING MINUTES

Senators present:

Hugo Bertete-Aguirre, Sally Bardsley, Laurie Battle, Tom Camm, Chris Danielson (V. Chair), Bill Drury, Jerry Downey (Chair), Gretchen Gellar, Bill Good, Katie Hailer, John Nugent, Scott Juskiwicz, Mary North Abbott, Chad Okrusch, James Rose, Bill Ryan, Celia Schahczenski (Sec.), Jack Skinner, Rita Spear, Miriam Young

Senators absent: Tim Kober, Vicki Petritz, Glenn Shaw

Vacant senate seats: Research Faculty, Center for Advanced Mineral and Metallurgical Processing (CAMP); and Electrical Engineering

Guests: Bev Hartline, Vice Chancellor of Research and Dean of the Graduate School, VCR
Hank Pratte, Association of Students at Montana Tech, ASMT, President

Call to Order (7:00 a.m.): Jerry Downey, Chair

Roll Call: Celia Schahczenski, Secretary

I. Senate Business (7:00)

- A. Review and approval of minutes from the 6-Dec-13 Senate meeting

Minutes were approved

- B. December 2013 Senate actions

1. Committee appointments

Matt Egloff will serve on the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee and also on the Grievance Committee. John Ray will serve on the Grievance Committee.

2. Approval of CRC Recommendations

The CRC Recommendations were approved by Senate vote following the 6-Dec-13 Senate meeting.

- C. Fall 2013 Faculty Opinion and Satisfaction Survey

1. Distribution of survey results

The same survey was sent to two groups:

Group 1: Faculty in CLSPS, Highlands College and SME

Group 2: MBMG, Library, athletics and all others

Downey tabulated the average for each question using:

5 – Strongly agree

4 – Agree

3 – Neutral or no opinion

2 – Disagree

1 – Strongly disagree.

Downey calculated the average response to each question for both groups and a combined average. The results are available on the senate website, <http://www.mtech.edu/about/facultysenate/minutes.htm>. Senators were reminded that they can drop by Downey office to see the complete survey including the unedited comments.

As the Senate decided at the previous meeting not to post all comments for public consumption, Schahczenski proposed providing a brief executive summary, and for each question, give the number of comments, followed by a breakdown of how many of the comments were positive, how many were negative, and how many were mixed. (Mixed comments includes those that contained both positive and negative aspects, were neutral, were recommendations or questions, or those that were simply hard to classify.) She proposed that this could be followed by extremely abbreviated comments developed in an effort to condense and avoid duplication yet capture the essence of the comments. Positive comments were listed first.

Schahczenski presented a possible executive summary, along with abbreviated comments for questions 4-17. Proposed executive summary:

“Overall, library and administrative staff received the highest results. The questions concerning Tech’s research environment, strategy for attaining institutional goals, Moodle and the Tech website, received the lowest scores. The average of most questions ranged somewhere between “Neutral or no opinion” and “Agree”.

- Question 26 concerning the library averaged 4.36,
- Question 27 concerning administrative support averaged 4.01
- Question 9 concerning Tech’s research environment averaged 2.77
- Tech’s website (question 29) and Moodle (question 28) averaged 2.87 and 2.88, respectively,
- Tech’s strategy for attaining institutional goals (question 5) averaged 2.99.

Averaged results of all other questions fell between 3.0 and 3.99. The overall average was 3.1. There were many more negative comments than positive.”

Senate discussion:

- Why was no question regarding the Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance included in the survey?
- Summarizing too much doesn't give faculty an opportunity to visualize what is going on.
- When we (faculty) are evaluated by our students, the comments provide the most useful feedback.
- An instructional faculty meeting could be held to discuss the survey results.

It was decided:

- To send the entire survey results, averages and comments, to the Chancellor and President, with the Chancellor receiving the packet at least one week before the President in order to “digest” the comments
- Statistics and abbreviated comments, as proposed by Schahczenski, are sent to all Senators and a vote taken as to whether to post these for all faculty members.
- An instructional faculty meeting is held soon in order to discuss the survey results.

2. Plans for future surveys (discussion deferred to a future Senate meeting)

II. Topics for Senate Consideration (7:20)

A. Proposed modifications to the Faculty/Staff Handbook

1. Reduce years of faculty service for sabbatical eligibility from seven to six

The MTFAs negotiated reducing the years of faculty service required to be eligible for sabbatical from seven to six years. The Faculty/Staff Handbook could be updated accordingly.

2. Text pertaining Graduate Council Function

The following text changes (in yellow) were proposed for the functions of the Graduate Council:

The Graduate Council (GC) functions in an oversight and review capacity, and it serves to ensure consistency and quality in and across graduate degree programs. It reviews and approves curriculum matters at the graduate level, before sending these matters to the Curriculum Review Committee (CRC). The GC

also considers and recommends action(s) to the Vice Chancellor for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies regarding academic and admissions policies and procedures affecting graduate programs and graduate students. Matters may be brought to the GC by the Faculty Senate, the CRC, an officer of the Graduate School, a member of the Graduate Council, a graduate student, a dean, or any faculty member in any of the graduate programs.

Hartline was present to answer questions on the proposed amendment.

Motion was made and seconded to put the above two items into a Monkey Survey ballot

B. Academic Standards/Performance Based Funding Steering Committee

Subcommittee to participate in the development of metrics

- A set of metrics is being developed to send to the Board of Regents in March. The metrics will be used to determine how to distribute approximately 5% of our budgets. In this process Tech is lumped together with “other” 4 year institutions.
- Ideally we’d like to get statistics on each campus and then decide what to do.
- More participation is needed by faculty members. Anyone interested in being involved should talk to Downey.

III. Summary to Academic Items for Vote (7:30)

No items are currently scheduled for vote

IV. Other Business (7:35)

A. MatSci Ph.D. Program

1. Brief status update: the Material Science PhD program has had a “soft” website launch. David Nolt designed the website. Senators are invited to “check it out”.
2. Request faculty to nominate candidates for the program’s Advisory Board.
 - Downey invites nominations of professionals to serve on the program’s Advisory Board. The person must be external, i.e., not an employee of MUS, UM or Tech.
 - Nominations can be given to Downey or Hartline. A short summary of the nominee should be included.

- B. ASMT President Hank Pratte to discuss student desire to play a more active role in providing input for faculty tenure applications. Pratte distributed an initiative which would give students a more active role in providing input for faculty promotion and tenure applications. He explained that the initiative is in its infancy and is modeled on what is done at UM. In summary:
- Departments select a student committee of 3-7 students
 - The student committee sees the portfolios of faculty members applying for promotion and tenure
 - The committee provides a written summary of their evaluation of the application

Discussion:

- How would the students who serve on the committee be chosen?
This could be up to the department. At UM the department chair appoints them.
- Note that some departments have very few majors
- How will faculty members that don't teach be rated?
This is meant for teaching only.
- How much weight would the recommendation of the student committee have?
At UM the committee is advisory only.
- Philosophically this is a good idea, in an advisory capacity, but it shouldn't be limited to only students in the department. Some faculty members teach large courses with very few majors.
- If the committee is selected by the department head, it might be very influence able.
- This might need to be bargained collectively before it could be put into place for the MTF side of the campus.

It was decided that the Senate would take a vote for a general endorsement of a proposal of this nature.

Downey reminded Pratte that an ASMT representative is encouraged to attend all Faculty Senate meetings.

- C. Honorary doctorate: a candidate has been nominated. Downey has the materials in his office for senators to look over.
- D. Senate terms for some departments/areas are expiring in May. Elections in those areas should take place in March. At our next meeting nominations will be taken for Senate officers.

E. Scott Juskiewicz has been appointed Interim Directory of the Library, so he offered to step aside as a senator. As a new library director is expected to be hired quickly, it was suggested, and accepted, that Juskiewicz remain as a senator.

V. Adjournment (7:55)

Meeting adjourned at 8:02am

Reminder: the next Senate meeting is scheduled to take place from 7:00 to 8:00 a.m. in the Pintler Room on Wednesday, March 5.