

Montana Tech Faculty Senate Meeting  
Tue September 29, 2015  
3pm, Pintler Room (SUB)

**Call to Order:** Sue Schrader

**Senate members present:**

Bill Drury, Vicki Petritz, Sue Schrader, Michael Webb, Scott Risser, Jim Rose, Bill Drury, John Getty, William Gleason, Gretchen Gellar, Larry Hunter, Conor Cote

**Senate members absent:**

Scott Rosenthal, Bill Ryan, Glenn Shaw, Tim Kober, Rhonda Coguell, Chad Okrusch, Rick Rossi, Miriam Young, Sally Bardsley, Stella Capoccia, Rita Spear

**Guests:**

Marilyn Cameron

Matt Egloff

- I. Approval of Minutes
  - a. Minutes approved as amended
- II. New Business
  - a. Room Limits
    - i. Maximum Occupancy - Safety Director Marilyn Cameron was asked by Sue to speak about concerns raised in the last meeting about classroom size limits and room scheduling, specifically how the occupancy limits for classrooms are determined according to safety laws. Marilyn shared a document created by a staff member in IT in 2007 that provides details on classroom seating and occupancy limitations. The document includes each room's seating count, type of seating (such fixed or movable), ADA compliancy, and the number of students it can accommodate. The Life Safety Code states that the occupancy limit is equal to the number of fixed seats for fixed seating rooms. For non-fixed seating, the maximum is determined by the room's square footage per person. For classroom's this must fall between 7-20 square feet per person. For assembly rooms the limit is 7-15 sq. ft. per person. Another limitation is the number of exits. A room with occupancy greater than fifty must have at least two exits. Newer rooms should be built to code, but there is a question as to whether the older rooms have kept up to code. According to the Life Safety Code, Montana Tech falls under the category of business occupancy for rooms with occupancy of less than 50; or industrial occupancy for rooms of occupancy greater than 50. Seats can never be placed in an egress or aisle.

Scott Rosenthal suggested that the maximum occupancy be posted on the walls each room as it is for each building. Marilyn agreed that this would be a good idea. Sue asked if the maximum occupancy could be altered by refurbishing with more seating. Marilyn replied yes if you could fit more seats in without blocking an egress.

- ii. Scheduling – The Registrar’s Office designates the maximum number of students per room when scheduling classrooms. Scott Rosenthal observed that department heads can change these numbers, but when that happens there is no double check between faculty and the Registrar’s Office. John said that in this case the Registrar’s Office should change the room assignment. Sue related that this year she had a class of 80 students but the room didn’t have enough seats. She asked if the occupancy document needs to be revised as many rooms have been rearranged since 2007. Marilyn will send Sue the document to review and agreed the numbers should be updated. Sue suggested the Senate could form a sub-committee to update these numbers or ask Enrollment Services to do so. Matt suggested this would be an excellent project for OSH students. Marilyn recommended asking enrollment services to do this as they are responsible for scheduling the rooms. Scott suggested that the Senate provide a recommendation to Enrollment Services to schedule rooms based on class size, perhaps using a fixed range such as 75-90% of room capacity. Scott Rosenthal suggested that classroom size be capped for smaller rooms.
- iii. Sue asked the Senate how it would like to move forward on this issue. Scott Rosenthal suggested that the Senate focus on the larger rooms as they seem to be the issue. Scott suggested that the Senate recommend fixed caps for rooms with maximum occupancy of less than 50; and a percent range for rooms above 50.
- iv. Action item - The Senate will develop a plan to update the room occupancy document. The Senate will also draft a recommendation for scheduling rooms based on class size to be provided to the department heads and Enrollment Services.

### III. Ongoing Business & Reports

#### a. Calendar

- i. Sue sent Provost Abbott the Senate’s feedback on academic calendar options from the last Senate meeting. Provost Abbott responded by asking Sue to attend the next Dean’s Council meeting which was about the academic calendar. Sue provided the Senate an update from this meeting.
- ii. Summer Session - The Dean’s Council is attempting to address the fact that the Summer Semester does not currently meet the required 45 instructional hours by meeting 4 days a week for 5 week sessions. The options to address

this issue are either meeting on Fridays or adding another week to each session. Examples from other colleges show many 6 week sessions. John asked if a third option were being considered – that of extending existing meeting times. Sue responded that it didn't seem to be, but that this item is still being discussed and will most likely not be put into effect until Summer 2018.

- iii. Split Finals Week - Sue asked the Council the Senate's question about student input on split finals week. According to the Council, ASMT came out strongly in favor of the split finals week due to the study day and "break" between test days. Gretchen asked if ASMT's endorsement reflects the general student body, and that it would be useful to have hard data about the students' opinion on this issue. Scott Rosenthal asked if the Senate could conduct a poll of the student body. Scott suggested that the Senate use Qualtrics do to this. John asked if this would be conducted by the Senate. A joint ASMT-Senate survey was recommended in order to increase the response rate. Sue will speak with a student from ASMT about this item.
  - iv. TECHXPO non-instructional day – The Council also debated whether to keep TECHXPO as a non-instructional day. One concern was that the effort to increase attendance did not work, as many students just stayed home rather than attending. If kept, the Council suggested moving the event to a Friday or Monday, as holding it on Thursday this year strongly affected Friday attendance. Larry and Sue observed that TECHXPO typically takes place around the same time and the EE/Gen & Petroleum Symposiums and wondered how this change will affect those events.
  - v. Commencement 2018 – The current proposed calendar for Spring 2018 has Commencement scheduled on the weekend between the split finals weeks. The reason for this is that the Civic Center is already booked for Mother's Day weekend and there are no other venues that will house that many students. One proposal was to increase December graduation numbers in order to reduce the size of Spring graduation. An alternative Spring 2018 calendar is also being proposed.
- b. Senate committee appointments
- i. Sue sent Provost Abbott the Senate's committee appointment recommendations from the last meeting.
  - ii. Miriam will serve on the Faculty Service Committee.
  - iii. Sue is still waiting for a response on who the administration selected for the Grievance Committee. Sue, Larry, Conor and Rick's names were put forward.
  - iv. John Getty will serve on the Instructional Improvement Committee.

- v. The Senate does not have to hold a general election for the Academic Freedom & Tenure Committee. The names put forth were: Scott – 1 year appointment; Bill Drury – 2 year appointment; Celia – 1 year appointment. John moved to send these names forward without holding an election. Larry seconded this motion.
  - vi. Sue asked about the role of the Student Disciplinary Appeals Committee. This committee reviews appeals of students accused of academic dishonesty and meets as needed. Stella indicated last meeting she would be interested. Sue will send her the information on this committee.
- c. Civil and Mechanical Engineering degrees
- i. Larry provided an update on the Civil and Mechanical Engineering degrees for those unable to attend last meeting. There is talk that this will be on the agenda for the November Board of Regents meeting. Last semester the Faculty Senate drafted a letter of support for these programs, but since then there has been some confusion about whether this letter is premature or not. At the last meeting the Senate agreed to review the letter of support for the new degree programs that was drafted last Spring in case it is needed. At Sue's departmental IAB meeting she spoke with Provost Abbott about the letter and he said he is ready for a letter from the Senate. Sue asked Doug to meet with the Senate on this issue. He said he will try but if he cannot make a meeting he will provide the Senate with a statement. Sue distributed copies of the draft letter and asked the Senate to review it and provide her any feedback or edits before the next meeting. The Senate will vote on a final draft at the next meeting.

#### IV. Other Business

- a. Waitlisted Students - John brought up the issue of waitlisted students needing access to Moodle courses. Sue had already raised this question to Registrar Leslie Dickerson. Leslie's response indicated that there are some technical difficulties involved. Instead, policies introduced in the new Retention Plan (Fall 2016) will hopefully remedy this problem. In this plan, students will only be able to add classes by the 5<sup>th</sup> day of class rather than the 10<sup>th</sup>. Sue will share Leslie's response with the Senate.
- b. Faculty Handbook – Scott asked if a definition of professor of practice was provided in the Faculty Handbook. Larry responded that it is defined in departmental standards as each department defines the position differently. Each department is required to have a definition of professor of practice in their departmental standards. Sue indicated that this has been an issue for hiring in her department as other departments have different requirements. Due to potential conflicts between these definitions, it was not recommended that a general definition be added to the Faculty Handbook. It was observed that the Senate has discussed the issue of professors of practice in the

- past, and Conor offered to review previous minutes for helpful information on this topic.
- c. Prescreening Applications – Matt suggested that HR provide applicant prescreening services in order to limit the amount of time hiring committees spend processing applications. Scott Rosenthal suggested the Senate invite the new HR Director Vanessa Van Dyk to speak about hiring professors of practice and prescreening applicants.
  - d. Scott Rosenthal asked how the Senate’s proposed changes to the Faculty Handbook are made. Scott responded that this depends on whether the department is represented by the Union or not. Sue brought up that tenure portfolios submitted by faculty that are part of the bargaining unit require feedback from the department head, but not if they are not.
- V. Adjourn
- a. Motion to adjourn: Scott, Second: Larry
- VI. Next meeting: Tuesday October 13<sup>th</sup>, 3:30pm

**Documents:**

Academic Calendar options 2017-2018

Draft Support Letter - Civil and Mechanical Engineering degrees