

Montana Tech Faculty Senate
Meeting Minutes
February 27, 2026 • HPER 138 • 1:00 p.m.

Attendees

Senators in attendance included Scott Risser, Janet Cornish, Scott Juskievicz, Sudhakar Vadiraja, Foued Badrouchi, Charie Faught, Atish Mitra, Doug Galarus, Chris Gammons, Matt Egloff, Andrew Traut, Glen Southergill, Sebastian Perduss, Gary Wyss, Bryce Hill, Chris Roos, Brian StClair and Brahma Pramahik. Guests attending the meeting included David Hutchins, DPA/Micro-Certificates; Michele Hardy, Dean of CLSPS; and Heather Skocilich, Registrar.

- I. **Welcome and Minutes** – The meeting commenced at 1:00 p.m. and a quorum was established. Senator Roos moved, and Senator Badrouchi seconded a motion to amend the agenda to add the Curriculum Review Committee report and proposal as presented by Senator Roos via email on February 27th at 8:30 a.m. The motion carried. Senator Risser noted that this item will be considered under Item II on the agenda. Senator Traut moved, and Senator Pramahik seconded a motion to adopt the minutes of February 11th, 2026. The motion carried.
- II. **Curriculum Review Committee (CRC)** – Senator Egloff moved, and Senator Southergill seconded a motion to approve the recommendation of the CRC, per Senator Roos’s February 27th email, which reads, in part, as follows:

“We had a CRC meeting this morning and both (certificate programs) passed review ... here is a brief overview:

DPA Certificate in Mineral Project Management & Evaluation - The last of the DPA funded certificates, this one is focused on mine management and evaluation and includes the creation of two new courses and a new project for the practicum experience. The third course requirement will be fulfilled by one of the Mining Engineering Certificate courses or another course if the student has already used that one.

M.Eng Modality Update - As discussed in CRC, the intent of the M.Eng degree was to allow flexibility of offerings for the departments who participate. That did not make it into the catalog wording and there is more interest now, so this proposal updates the catalog wording to accommodate that.” The motion carried.

Following the passage of the motion, Senator Risser asked the Senators to discuss why there had been such a quick turnaround from the CRC, noting that this should not happen again. Senator Hill noted that the Senators all received an email four hours preceding the meeting. Senator Roos explained he had been delayed by a personal matter and that the CRC will work to establish a more regular schedule. Senator Risser asked for a directive from the Senate to the CRC, calling for the naming of a vice-chair for the Committee. Senator Egloff moved, and Senator Roos seconded a motion to direct the CRC to appoint a vice-chair. Senator Hill thought that demanding such an action would be difficult, given that it was hard to find people to serve on the CRC. The motion carried with one “no” vote and two abstentions. Senator Cornish suggested that the Senate might provide a candidate for

the vice-chair position as part of the directive, but there were no volunteers. Senator Badrouchi noted that it would be helpful to define the role of the vice-chair for CRC.

- III. **2027-28 Academic Calendar** – Heather Skocilich, Registrar, presented dates for the 2027-28 academic year, in line with the Montana University System standard: Fall Semester 2027 would begin on August 23rd, 2027 and Spring Semester 2028 would begin on January 10th, 2028. Senator Faught moved, and Senator Southergill seconded a motion to approve these dates for Montana Tech. The motion carried. Senator Egloff asked whether St. Patrick’s Day would align with spring break, 2028. Ms. Skocilich noted that her office would work with the housing office to assure that dorms would be closed for spring break on March 17th, 2028.
- IV. **Election of Faculty Member to the Employee Relations Committee (ERC)** – Senator Risser explained that there was an opening on the ERC for a faculty member. Senators Egloff and Juskiewicz, who both serve on the ERC explained that the Committee generally meets every two weeks, on a Monday at 3:30 p.m. They also noted that the two major tasks before the ERC were the professional statement and the survey results. Senator Risser asked for nominations, but there were none forthcoming.
- V. **Board of Regents’ (BOR) Policy Revisions on Termination of Faculty** – Senator Risser explained that this policy is driven by the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE). Input from Montana Tech will be coordinated by Provost Tim Elgren. A draft policy will be presented at the Regents’ March 2026 meeting and the BOR will consider it formally at its June 2026 meeting. While Montana Tech, itself, is not pushing for this, Tech has entered into a “good faith” shared governance agreement with the Labor Management Committee of the Faculty Association concerning professionalism. Senator Hill noted that this revised policy effort appears to be a “housekeeping” measure but was curious as to what precipitated the policy revision. Senator Risser explained that there were several reasons, including litigation-related concerns.

Senator Egloff expressed concern regarding a “professional conduct” definition, noting that such a definition has not been made clear. The BOR should define what it means by “behavior characteristic or befitting....” a faculty member. Senator Risser indicated that he did not think that OCHE plans to define this any further, though campuses might. Senator Egloff then asked if this revised policy would replace the one that is currently in the Montana Tech Faculty Staff Handbook. Senator Risser noted that he will ask that question of Provost Elgren, when he meets with him to report on the Faculty Senate response to this item. Senator Southergill asked whether, given that the BOR is considering this in May, the Senate would like to postpone this discussion. Senator Cornish noted that there would be a March meeting of the BOR as well and wondered if the Senate’s comments could be forwarded by Provost Elgren to OCHE before the March BOR meeting. Senator Risser will ask the Provost.

Senator Hill suggested that the policy differentiate between behavior during class and after hours. For example, a faculty member post on a social media site, on a personal computer would be an “after hours” activity. Senator Faught expressed her agreement with Senator Egloff’s concern regarding defining “behavior”. She also added her concerns, which she also expressed via email as follows:

“My concern has a number of different elements, as follows:

- 1. Are all policies equal, such as harassment and parking violations? If so, this is certainly an issue.*
- 2. At what level do these “policies” exist? Since this is a system policy, are the policies likewise system policies?*
- 3. Where do these policies reside?*
- 4. What training will be given on said policies?*
- 5. How are policies being enacted? Are they using the shared governance model and what are the effective dates?*

In other words, how can we as faculty comply with a policy that we did not know existed, has changed, was not communicated, or is deemed to not have import to our position.”

Senator Egloff note that termination for cause should be work-related and the current language in the proposed policy revision is too general.

VI. Senator delegate/substitution amendment to the Faculty Senate Bylaws – Senators Hill and Egloff both proposed amendments to the Bylaws that would allow for alternates to vote at a Faculty Senate meeting if a Senator was unable to attend. Senator Risser explained that amendments to the Bylaws were made by the entire faculty, rather than just the Senate. Senator Egloff withdrew his proposal, and Senator Risser will poll the entire faculty on Senator Hill’s proposal, which reads as follows:

“An alternate representative with voting privileges may be appointed to represent a department upon submission of a written request from the elected senator or the department head of that department if the elected senator is unable to attend a meeting. The written authorization shall be valid only for the specific meeting identified in the request. The alternate representative shall be subject to all applicable rules governing elected senators. The alternate may serve in place of the elected senator but shall not increase or otherwise augment the department’s voting representation.”

Senators will encourage all faculty to vote.

VII. Proposal to Revise Non-Union Merit Award Language (Faculty-Staff Handbook, pg. 38) – Changes to the Handbook must first be reviewed by the Senate and then forwarded to the full faculty. Senator Hill explained that there has been confusion on the merit award application process for non-union faculty, a process which is currently governed under a verbal agreement with the Provost. Senator Faught suggested an amendment to the process as presented by Senator Hill, which is highlighted below:

- Applications are to be sent to provost@mtech.edu, as well as the appropriate department head or dean if applicable.
- The Provost’s office will respond within one week of the receipt of the merit award, copying all parties on the email sent.
- The merit award winners will be selected by the department heads of the departments that have non-union faculty. The LCME Dean shall act as chair of and convene meetings of the Merit Awards Committee.

Motions related to this item: Senator Faught moved, and Senator Southergill seconded a motion to amend the proposed Merit Award language. The motion carried. Senator Faught moved, and Senator Faught seconded a motion to approve the change to the Faculty-Staff Handbook regarding non-union Merit Awards. Senator Risser will forward the proposal to the full faculty meeting and for subsequent approval by the Chancellor.

VIII. **For the Good of the Order** – Senator Traut moved, and Senator Badrouchi seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:55 p.m. The motion carried.