

Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting held February 15, 2002

Attending: Chair R. Appleman, R. Donovan, J. Handley, D. Hobbs, A. Stierle, and M. MacLaughlin
Visitors: Chancellor Gilmore (invited), J. McGuire

Meeting called to order at 12:05

Minutes from meeting 2/1/02 were approved. Chair will post in public folders.

The Chair opened discussion by indicating that the purpose of the meeting was to facilitate communication and discuss the Senate's role in faculty governance. The Chancellor responded that it is important to understand each others' perspectives on the issues.

Chair Appleman brought up the point that, based on his interaction with Senate representatives at other campuses, it appears that Senates at other MUS campuses have more responsibility and authority. Nationwide, this "bottom-up" style of governance is more prevalent at universities, while the "top-down" style is more common at junior colleges. The Chancellor fully endorses the "bottom-up" model of governance.

Cutting through to one specific issue, the Chancellor raised the point that changes to the Faculty/Staff Handbook that are approved by the faculty can't automatically go into the document. According to Regents policies, the Handbook is a contractual obligation, and the top person at each campus has veto power. The Chancellor knows of no other institution that operates differently. MSU's changes are scrutinized by their legal counsel. UM's are part of their collective bargaining agreement.

Recognizing the huge differences between departments at Montana Tech, promotion and tenure policies should be developed at the department level, which will also promote the environment of self-governance. Faculty applying for tenure or promotion need to provide data showing that the department criteria are satisfied.

There was a discussion of the relative merits and disadvantages of paper and electronic copies of the Faculty/Staff Handbook. The Senate recommends that paper copies be distributed to all faculty and staff. The question was raised asking how long has it been since the faculty have been given a new handbook. The date on the last one was believed to be 1994.

Next issue: authority of committees. The Chancellor stated that no committee or individual should have complete authority. Problems should be corrected, but he knows of none. Senate members brought forth several examples of committee dysfunction, for instance, deans pressuring and overriding committee decisions, and policies being implemented without committee input. The comment was made that from a faculty perspective, serving on committees that have responsibility but no authority is frustrating. The Chair indicated that if faculty were in charge of forming their own committees, the structure and membership would likely be very different from what exists now.

Summary:

- 1) Regarding promotion and tenure, there should be one general umbrella policy, with each department developing their own details. The final decision is made at what level? In the MSU system, decisions are made on each campus. The Chancellor indicated that although the UM system is not the same, CHE Crofts has not dictated that President Dennison change his policy and delegate this authority to the campuses.
- 2) Some committee work has been successful, for example, the recent implementation of the salary committee's recommendations regarding pay raises, but other committees are not operating as smoothly.

Meeting adjourned at 12:55

Respectfully submitted,

Mary M. MacLaughlin