

**Minutes**  
**Faculty Senate Meeting**  
**7:30 AM, September 14th, 2004**  
**Mountain Con Room, SUB**

*minutes submitted by secretary A. Stierle*

*Members present: Chair- Grant Mitman, Vice chair - John Brower, Susan Leland, Rod James, Mark Sholes, Danette Melvin, Chip Todd, Secretary - Andrea Stierle,*  
*Absent: John Metesh*  
*Also in attendance: Chancellor Gilmore*

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 AM.

The minutes of the August 31<sup>st</sup> meeting had been approved by email and were submitted to the Faculty Senate public folder. It was so noted.

1. The first order of business was to appoint new or continuing Faculty Senate representatives to specific committees where appropriate.

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| <b><u>Academic Freedom &amp; Tenure Committee</u></b>              | John Brower (continuing)    |
| <b><u>Academic Standards Committee</u></b>                         | Rod James (continuing)      |
| <b><u>Athletic Committee</u></b>                                   | Chip Todd (continuing)      |
| <b><u>Bookstore Advisory Board</u></b>                             | John Brower (continuing)    |
| <b><u>Chancellor's Advisory Committee</u></b>                      | Mark Sholes (new)           |
| <b><u>Computer &amp; Telecommunications Advisory Committee</u></b> | Susan Leland (continuing)   |
| <b><u>Curriculum Review Committee</u></b>                          | Grant Mitman (continuing)   |
| <b><u>Financial Aid Appeals Committee</u></b>                      | Rod James (continuing)      |
| <b><u>Instructional Improvement Committee</u></b>                  | Susan Leland (continuing)   |
| <b><u>Library Committee</u></b>                                    | Danette Melvin (continuing) |
| <b><u>Motor Pool Committee</u></b>                                 | John Metesh (continuing)    |
| <b><u>Research Advisory Committee</u></b>                          | Andrea Stierle (new)        |
| <b><u>Salary Advisory Committee</u></b>                            | John Brower (continuing)    |
| <b><u>Scholarship &amp; Financial Aid Committee</u></b>            | Danette Melvin (continuing) |

**Student Disciplinary Appeals Committee**

Danette Melvin (continuing)

**WEB Guidance Committee**

Grant Mitman (continuing)

2. Excused Absence Policy

As a follow-up to the discussion of excused absence policy in the August 31<sup>st</sup> meeting, Andrea sent around by email a first round draft of a possible excused absence policy to be included in the catalog.

Currently, the policy simply states:

The instructor of a class shall determine excused absences from a given class.

There was concern last year that this statement did not protect the students' right to attend Montana Tech sanctioned events without being penalized for missing classes, classroom assignments, exams, or labs.

Andrea emailed the following policy draft for comment:

The instructor of a class shall determine excused absences from a given class. **The Montana Tech Faculty Senate encourages the faculty to accommodate students incurring an excused absence by allowing them to make up missed work when this can be done in a manner consistent with the educational goals of their courses. Students expecting to incur excused absences should consult with their instructors early in the term to be sure that they understand the absence policies for each of their courses.**

Two comments were elicited through email. Susan suggested that the following statement should be appended to the above statement:

**Excused absences include serious illness, death in the immediate family, and university sponsored activities (for example, field trips, ASMT service, and intercollegiate athletics) or other circumstances deemed appropriate by the instructor.)**

Danette suggested the following:

The Montana Tech Faculty Senate encourages the faculty to accommodate students who are absent from class due to:

1. An official Montana Tech event or activity
2. A personal matter deemed appropriate by the instructor.

In the event of an absence described above, faculty members are encourage to allow students to make up missed work when this can be done in a manner consistent with the educational goals of their courses. Students must contact their individual instructors as soon as they know they will be absent to be sure that they understand the absence policies for each of their courses.

These comments were brought before the Faculty Senate for continued discussion. Based on comments at the meeting, I drafted 2 choices that are essentially the same in

all respects but one. In Choice 1 the faculty are encouraged to accommodate students. In Choice 2, the faculty will accommodate students. The two statements below will be emailed to the Senate for further discussion after today's meeting.

### **Choice 1.**

**The instructor of a class shall determine excused absences from a given class. *The Montana Tech Faculty Senate encourages the faculty to accommodate students incurring an excused absence by allowing them to make up missed work when this can be done in a manner consistent with the educational goals of their courses. Students expecting to incur excused absences should consult with their instructors early in the term to be sure that they understand the absence policies for each of their courses.***

Excused absences include:

1. Official Montana Tech events or activities
2. Personal matters deemed appropriate by the instructor.

### **Choice 2.**

**The instructor of a class shall determine excused absences from a given class. *Faculty will accommodate students incurring an excused absence by allowing them to make up missed work when this can be done in a manner consistent with the educational goals of their courses. Students expecting to incur excused absences should consult with their instructors early in the term to be sure that they understand the absence policies for each of their courses.***

**Excused absences include:**

1. Official Montana Tech events or activities
2. Personal matters deemed appropriate by the instructor.
3. The Montana Board of Regents will be meeting at Montana Tech Wednesday September 22<sup>nd</sup> - Friday September 24<sup>th</sup>. The faculty are reminded that all meetings are open meetings and faculty are encouraged to attend. Grant Mitman will be the official representative of the Montana Tech Faculty Senate.
4. Chancellor Gilmore reported on a proposed salary adjustment fund of \$25,000. The money comes from the general budget and the total amount (\$25,000) is limited to 0.5% of total faculty salaries (based on a mandate by Commissioner Stearns). The Salary Committee will be discussing how the money should be allotted as a means to address gender inequities, salary inequities, and merit. Danette suggested that this money should be used to adjust the salaries of long-time full professors who are farthest from CUPA targets. Chancellor Gilmore commented that during his time here the salary committees have always chosen across the board raises rather than CUPA adjustments.

5. Grant reported that there were two nominees for faculty senate representative to replace Betsy Harper: Miriam Young, Nursing Program and Bruce Madigan, General Engineering. Grant asked that each candidate prepare a short biographical statement to be included with the ballot. Faculty members were asked to vote for one of the two candidates by email and to forward their votes to Wilma Immonen by Tuesday, September 21<sup>st</sup>.

6. Grant asked the ASMT president to find out why students don't use their Montana Tech email accounts. Bill Schmidt informed the Senate after our last meeting that student email accounts are limited by size not by number of messages. He did not believe that in general the size of the email accounts should have been a problem for the students.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:20 AM

### ***Old Business***

1. One item of business from last year is the matter of the excused absence policy on the Montana Tech campus. The policy was first discussed by the members of the Chancellor's Advisory Committee (September 2003) who referred it to the Faculty Senate. The Senate addressed the policy in the November 11, 2003 meeting, as reported in the Faculty Senate minutes posted for that day:

[November 11, 2003](#)

Discussion turned to the issue of class absences for campus-sanctioned events. Most faculty agree that accommodation should be made but the teacher should be left with the discretion of what that accommodation should be. A motion was made with wording to clarify the policy as stated in the catalog. Discussion revealed that the senators did not believe that the wording would resolve any of the stated problems with the policy. The motion did not receive a second and failed. A motion was made and seconded to request discussion of the policy in a general faculty meeting. A friendly amendment was added to seek feedback from students as to whether or not they see the current policy as a problem. Both the original motion and the amendment were seconded and passed. A. Stierle volunteered to get the feedback from the students. Mitman said that he would poll the deans to determine whether they felt the current policy

presented problems.

The Senate brought the excused absence policy issue to the General Faculty meeting. A spirited discussion ensued but no decisions were reached as to a new policy. Certain faculty members and members of the administration feel that the current excused absence policy:

#### **Absences from Classes**

The instructor of a class shall determine excused absences from a given class.

It does not adequately protect students absent from classes for school-sanctioned events. For reference, I have included the excused absence policies from UM-Western, UM-Missoula, Colorado School of Mines, MSU-Bozeman, and MSU-Billings.

The Senate will revisit this issue and prepare a new excused absence policy statement for consideration and possible vote at the next faculty meeting. Andrea offered to create a draft statement to be emailed to the Faculty Senate for editing and possible adoption.

#### **Montana Tech – UM**

##### **Absences from Classes**

The instructor of a class shall determine excused absences from a given class.

#### **CSM**

**Absenteeism** Class attendance is required of all undergraduates unless the student is representing the School in an authorized activity, in which case the student will be allowed to make up any work missed. Students who miss academic work (including but not limited to exams, homework, labs) while participating in school sponsored activities must either be given the opportunity to make up this work in a reasonable period of time or be excused from such work. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate arrangements for such work. Proof of illness may be required before makeup of missed work is permitted. Excessive absence may result in a failing grade in the course. Determination of excessive absence is a departmental prerogative. The Office of the Dean of Students, if properly informed, will send a notice of excused absence *of three days or more* to faculty members for (1) an absence because of illness or injury for which documentation will be required; (2) an absence because of a death in the immediate family, i.e., a spouse, child, parent, grandparent, or sibling. For excused absences students must be provided the opportunity to make up all missed work.

#### **UM-M**

**Class Attendance/Absence Policy** Students who are registered for a course but do not attend the first two class meetings may be required by the instructor to drop the course. This rule allows for early identification of class vacancies to permit other students to add classes. **Students not allowed to remain must complete a drop form or drop the course on the internet (<http://cyberbear.umt.edu>) to avoid receiving a failing grade. Students who know they will be absent should contact the instructor in advance.**

Students are expected to attend all class meetings and complete all assignments for courses in which they are enrolled. Instructors may excuse brief and

occasional absences for reasons of illness, injury, family emergency, or participation in a University sponsored activity. (University sponsored activities include for example, field trips, ASUM service, music or drama performances, and intercollegiate athletics.) Instructors shall excuse absences for reasons of military service or mandatory public service.

Instructors may establish absence policies to conform to the educational goals and requirements of their courses. Such policies will ordinarily be set out in the course syllabus. Customarily, course syllabi will describe the procedures for giving timely notice of absences, explain how work missed because of an excused absence may be made up, and stipulate any penalty to be assessed for absences.

The UM Faculty Senate encourages the faculty to accommodate students incurring an excused absence by allowing them to make up missed work when this can be done in a manner consistent with the educational goals of their courses. Students expecting to incur excused absences should consult with their instructors early in the term to be sure that they understand the absence policies for each of their courses.

### **MSU-Bozeman**

**Absence from Classes** When students enroll in a course, they enter a contractual agreement with the instructor for the duration of the course, and both the student and the instructor are expected to honor the specified terms of that agreement. It is important, therefore, for the student to understand the attendance requirements in each course. The instructor should communicate these requirements during the first or second class meeting in writing in the course syllabus.

Absences from classes are handled exclusively within the purview of the individual instructor. If you have an accident, fall ill, or suffer some other emergency over which you have no control, you should gather what documentation you can (e.g., copies of repair or tow bills, prescriptions, accident reports, or statements from physicians) to show to your instructor. In some instances, you may wish to explore the options available by petitioning for *I* grades.

The provisions for making up missed class work may vary from one instructor to another. Most but not necessarily all instructors provide for some opportunity to make up missed work: for example, if one is absent from campus to participate in university-sponsored events. If you know that you are going to be involved in such activities during the semester, you should advise your instructor of these plans at the outset of the course and determine then what arrangements are available to make up missed class work.

### **MSU-Billings**

**Class Attendance and Student Absences** Members of the faculty determine the attendance policy for their classes. Absences for official University activities are permissible providing the instructor is notified in advance of such an absence. An

official University activity is an activity where a student officially represents the University through an academic department, sponsored University program, or an officially registered student organization. In all absences, the student is responsible for all requirements of the course. Requests for absence for special events shall be submitted to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs on the Student Travel Authorization form. This form should be obtained from the Office of the Vice Chancellor, room 203, McMullen Hall at least one week in advance of the expected absence. This procedure will assure students the opportunity to make up examinations given when official University activities are scheduled.

## UM-W

### **Attendance**

Regular class attendance, especially early in the term, is critical to student success. Faculty determine requirements for satisfactory completion of courses they teach and usually specify attendance policies at the start of each term. Students are encouraged to communicate regularly with instructors concerning academic progress and attendance. Students who register for a course and fail to attend will receive an “F” as a final grade. **Students must officially drop the course(s) or withdraw from Western on or before the published deadlines for these actions to avoid receiving failing grades in these situations** (see Academic Year Calendar). Students who register for a course but fail to attend the first two class sessions may be required by the instructor to drop the course or receive an “F”. This policy allows faculty to determine class vacancies early in a term, and add other students into classes that otherwise appear to be filled. Non-attending students who are asked to drop/withdraw are responsible for completing the paper-work necessary to officially drop the class before the published deadline. **Non-attending students who fail to file the necessary paperwork to drop a class will receive an “F” as a final grade.** Students are encouraged to communicate regularly with instructors concerning academic progress and attendance. Students who know they will be absent from a class should notify the instructor in advance, if possible.

2. The Senate also revisited the possibility of adopting a “+/-“ grading policy. Senate members discussed pros and cons but generally felt that the +/- system wouldn’t provide any real advantage to students or faculty. *It was moved and seconded that the policy remain as is, and approved by a majority of Senate members present This discussion will be noted at the next General Faculty meeting but will not be offered as a discussion item unless the faculty wants to discuss the grading policy.*

### ***New Business***

1. Chancellor Gilmore has asked the faculty and staff of Montana Tech to adopt and support the Heart Walk, one of the American Heart Association’s annual fund raisers. He has asked the faculty Senate to organize the faculty support of this event. Few non-profit organizations receive this level of official support (United Way, Montana Shares), but the AHA went through the “proper channels”, and asked the Chancellor’s cabinet to consider supporting the Heart Walk.

***Grant will ask Wilma Immonen to distribute pledge sheets and envelopes to the other administrative assistants to have available for their faculty.***

2. Discussion concerning replacement of Senate member Betsy Harper. John Brower brought this item up for discussion at the General faculty meeting August 24th but deferred

voting. Nomination and election of the new Senate member will be run on campus email. Grant Mitman will put out a call for nominations for a north campus representative and invite all faculty (North campus, South campus, Bureau) to vote by email.

***Votes will be collected and counted by Wilma Immonen, Chem/Bio administrative assistant.***

3. Discussion of Faculty Senate web page that will provide easier access to faculty senate minutes and other items of interest or concern to the faculty.

4. John Brower described the new electronic reserve system adopted by the Montana Tech library and how helpful this new system will be for faculty and students. It can be accessed by going to the library web page and clicking on *faculty resources*.

5. One area of major concern is the difficulty of contacting students by email. Many faculty find it almost impossible to reach students through their Montana Tech accounts. Students often opt for hotmail accounts and never access their Tech accounts. This is difficult for instructors who try to contact students by email.

***Grant offered to pursue the problem with Bill Schmidt and attempt to determine if the nature of the problem and a possible solution.***

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The meeting was adjourned at 9:21 AM