

Montana Tech Faculty Senate Meeting

Wednesday, October 2, 2013

7:00-8:00 a.m.

Location: Pintler Room (Student Union Building)

MEETING MINUTES

Senators present:

Hugo Bertete-Aguirre, Laurie Battle, Tom Camm, Chris Danielson (V. Chair), Jerry Downey (Chair), Gretchen Gellar, Bill Good, Katie Hailer, Tim Kober, John Nugent, Scott Juskiewicz, Tom Moon, Chad Okrusch, Vicki Petritz, Celia Schahczenski (Sec.), Glenn Shaw, Jack Skinner, Rita Spear, Miriam Young

Senators absent: Sally Bardsley, Mary North Abbott, James Rose, Bill Ryan

Vacant senate seats:

Environmental Engineering

Research Faculty, Center for Advanced Mineral and Metallurgical Processing (CAMP)

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

Roll Call: Celia Schahczenski, Secretary

Review and approval of minutes from the 26-Apr-13 Senate meeting

Minutes of the meeting were approved unanimously.

I. 7:05 a.m. Review of Senate meeting format and protocols for introducing topics for Senate consideration (Downey)

Downey proposed a procedure for deciding what items the Senate will address:

- Proposals for items for Senate consideration must be submitted in writing and emailed to the Senate
- If a simple majority of the current active Senate membership believe that the issue warrants Senate consideration, it is placed on the agenda of the next Senate meeting
- The person who made the suggestion attends the meeting, presents and defends their idea and/or submits a complete write-up of the idea

Review and confirmation of tentative Senate meeting schedule for AY2013-2014

Some Senators have 8am classes or other obligations on particular mornings so it was decided to rotate Senate meetings through the various days of the week.

Briefing on recent and planned activities of the Performance-Based Funding Steering Committee (Downey)

5% of the budget for each campus in the Montana University System will be reserved for Performance-Based Funding. A short-term model of performance metrics has been developed and will be used for the next two years. Statistics will be gathered, based on that model, and those campuses which perform well, based on the statistics, will get additional funds, with those that perform poorly getting less. The short-term performance metrics are:

- Enrollment numbers
- Retention of students between sophomore and junior years.

Simultaneously, a long term performance model is being developed with recommendations from the Performance-Based Funding Steering Committee, which includes a faculty representative from each of the units in the Montana University System. Downey is the Montana Tech representative on this committee. Weekly meetings are held via conference call. A consulting firm (Public Agenda) has been hired. This is an important committee and Downey is willing to continue to serve on it. He is also willing to allow another Senator to serve.

- Downey is advocates a performance model whose metrics cover a few years. He also advocates a model that uses percentages rather than set amounts. Downey suggests researching other states which have adopted similar policies to this one. Nevada is one example.
- Eventually faculty forums will be held on each campus and, prior to the forums, faculty members throughout the state will get a questionnaire.
- A request was made to get the current funding model, which members believe is based on enrollment. Downey is not certain that this is available.
- It was decided to keep item on the agenda of each Senate meeting so that faculty will be aware of what is going on.
- **Action item:** Downey will put a packet together of items relevant to the long term performance model. It will include the Nevada model, weekly minutes, and examples which have been put together to show how various models might play out.

Discussion and appointment of Senate MUSFAR representative(s)

Montana University Faculty Association, MUSFAR, holds meetings the evening before each Board of Regents meeting. It is valuable to have representation at these meetings to learn what is happening on other campuses, know if other faculty are going through situations similar to ours, and to get advice from faculty on other campuses. Downey would go to these meetings if he can make it, but often his schedule does not allow him to.

The BOR website gives the date and locations of the meetings for the year. Meetings are typically Wednesdays and Thursdays, with the MUSFAR dinner on Tuesday. It was decided that before each BOR meeting a volunteer will be sought to attend the MUSFAR meeting.

Discussion of election of faculty to fill openings to various committees

Some campus committees have openings:

Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee – 3 open positions

Grievance Committee – 2 open positions

Service Committee – 1 open position

In addition, Senate representation may be needed for a few committees.

Rather than hold an instructional faculty meeting to fill these positions, Downey will send an email to department heads requesting volunteers.

After some discussion it was suggested that Downey ask the chair of each campus committee to send the minutes of the committee meetings during the past year. If any committee didn't meet, abolishment of that committee could be considered.

II. 7:30 a.m. Discussion and Prioritization of Potential Discussion Topics for Senate Consideration

A. Implementation of a semi-annual or annual Faculty Satisfaction Survey

Downey suggests having two surveys: one in the fall semester and a follow up survey in the spring. The first survey would consist of 10-15 general questions, with a scale like 'strongly disagree', 'disagree' up to 'strongly agree'. This survey would not focus on individuals. Space would be available for comments. The spring survey would be a follow-up on issues that surfaced in the fall survey.

The Senate officers would be the only people to see the raw data from the surveys. The officers will tabulate and summarize the comments. This tabulation and summary will be presented to the Senate and the administration.

Action item: Downey will draft an initial list of questions and send it around for Senator comments/suggestions.

B. Academic Standards and Integrity

1. Status of Senate recommendations regarding Department Standards as they pertain to faculty promotion and tenure and the Professor of Practice classification
2. Faculty concern about electronic signature process (for grade changes, etc.)
3. Penalties and potential rehabilitation of students accused of academic dishonesty

Motion (2nd and approved): Senators unanimously agreed not to pursue items 2 and 3 unless further issues concerning them arise.

The Senate has not received feedback on their recommendations in Item 1.

Action Item: Downey agreed to ask the administration for feedback on Item 1.

C. Shall the Graduate Council become the Faculty Senate's review/advisory body regarding academic policies, curricular changes, certificate programs, and other topics related to graduate-level education at Montana Tech?

Currently, changes to graduate courses (600 level and above) need to be approved by the Curriculum Review Committee (CRC) and the Graduate Council. Dr. Bev Hartline, Vice Chancellor of Research and Dean of the Graduate School, would like to take the CRC out of the loop.

Discussion:

- What does the CRC think of this change? The next CRC meeting is Oct. 24th. Tim Kober is a member of the CRC and he volunteered to attend the meeting and get feedback on this proposal.
- Senators are asked to talk with their constituents about this change.
- This change will be discussed again when the Senate meets in November.

D. Other (Senate/Department input is requested)

Departmental Standards – there was a meeting of department heads (about half attended or sent representatives) and some are concerned about changes recommended to the standards for their departments. The administration would like to set minimum promotion and tenure criteria in the standards. The administration had asked the Senate to set some minimum standards, but the Senate declared that this can't be done. Departments are different and the Senate agreed that each department needs the freedom to set their own standards.

Discussion:

- The administration needs to understand that conditions and resources are needed if the bar for tenure and promotion is going to be raised.
- If the bar is raised, something else has to give.
- Pressure should be placed on the administration to realize that if they want faculty members to do more research, teaching loads will need to be reduced.
- Faculty members need to be treated as professionals.
- The Research Council is developing guidelines on research. The Deans Council has looked over the guidelines but has not made them official. Nevertheless, some department heads are acting as though these are official and that, they supersede departmental standards.

III. 7:50 a.m. Summary of Academic Items for Vote (electronic voting is conducted subsequent to the meeting)

There are currently no items scheduled for vote.

IV. 7:55 a.m. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:01 a.m.