Montana Tech Faculty Senate Meeting
Wednesday, August 31, 2016 - 3:30-5pm

Senators present:
Stella Capoccia, Conor Cote, Charie Faught, John Getty, Brian Koontz, Brian Kukay, Atish Mitra, Tony Patrick, Vicki Petritz, Scott Risser, Glen Southergill, Michael Webb, George Williams, Laura Young, Miriam Young

Guests:
Leslie Dickerson, Jennifer Simon

I. **Welcome & Approval of Minutes**
   - Motion (Miriam Young, 2nd George Williams): Approve Minutes from May 4th meeting without amendment
   - Vote: Motion carried

II. **Student Course Evaluation Proposal – Jennifer Simon**
   - Jennifer Simon presented a proposal to move all course evaluations online. She listed the benefits of moving completely online and the current inefficiencies of paper evaluations.
   - Jennifer addressed concerns about online evaluations that she has received from faculty, including:
     i) Attendance rate and evaluations – A common concern is that online evaluations will lower instructor ratings as students with low attendance have a greater opportunity to respond. Jennifer referenced a study that found there is no relationship between attendance rates and instructor ratings.
     ii) Qualitative feedback – Research supports that students are more likely to give qualitative feedback with online evaluations than with paper.
     iii) Response rates – Jennifer acknowledged that response rates are generally higher for paper evaluations, but based on her research there are several steps the college can take to increase response rates.
       (1) MyMtech Redirect - When an evaluation is activated for a course, students will be automatically "hijacked" when they sign into MyMtech directing them to complete the evaluation.
       (2) Instructor Portlet – CTS will add a portlet to MyTech allowing instructors to track the percentage of students in their class that have completed evaluations.
       (3) There are several ways for instructors to help increase response rates, such as making the evaluation part of an assignment.
   - Discussion
     i) Stella Capoccia voiced her concern that based on prior experience, when a college moves to online evaluations, evaluations subsequently tanked, but liked the steps Jennifer proposed to increase response rates.
     ii) Miriam Young said that the Nursing program has high response rates, as they do not post a complete grade until evaluations are completed.
     iii) Leslie Dickerson noted that there are some limitations noted by the Dean's Council about tying evaluations to grading, specifically that students' transcripts cannot be held hostage.
     iv) Glen Southergill asked Jennifer Simon to provide examples of inaccuracies of paper evaluations that she has faced.
     v) Jennifer Simons noted the following:
       (1) More paper evaluations turned in than students enrolled in the class
       (2) Misnumbered CRNs causing confusion about which class the evaluations go with

       (3) Students must use pencil for responses to be scanned in; when students use pen then the evaluations need to be recorded again in pencil

       (4) Complications consistently arise for team-taught courses

    vi) Stella Capoccia noted several examples of errors that she has encountered; for example, receiving evaluations from a student obviously not enrolled in the class; she makes sure paper evaluations are kept on file as a precaution.

    vii) Jennifer Simon reiterated that evaluations are truly anonymous, so if a student fills out an evaluation for the wrong class there is no way to identify the wrong evaluation. The proposed online evaluations will provide a reminder for students at the top of the form.

    viii) Charie Faught said that the HCI program has chosen to move to 100% online as the majority of their students are distance. While there is still work to be done to improve response rates, she sees the benefits of the proposal and support it.

    ix) John Getty suggested that there be a way to track which students have completed evaluations.

    x) Stella noted that paper evaluations response rates and inaccuracies could be improved. If the Senate decides to recommend staying with the status quo, it could suggest best practices for paper evaluations as part of recommendation.

- Scott Risser asked senators to take the proposal back to their programs for further discussion. Based on this feedback, the Senate will discuss their recommendation moving forward.

III. Academic Calendars (Summer 16/17 and Full 17/18) – Leslie Dickerson

- Leslie Dickerson asked the Faculty Senate to approve the draft Summer 16-17, and Full 17-18 Calendars. They are currently posted in draft form on the Montana Tech website.
- Last Day to Challenge – These dates have been removed from the calendars as the BOR has changed policies statewide for challenges. Students can now initiate a challenge at any time, regardless of their enrollment status. However, the Add/Drop deadlines supersede everything else. As the Registrar's Office works these details out, the Last Day to Challenge dates have been removed from the calendars.
- Summer 16/17 Calendar – Leslie discussed the Summer 16/17 calendar with the Senate at its March 29, 2016 meeting. It was identified that there were not enough class hours (45 hours/3 credit course) being taught in the Summer Sessions. Each summer session currently lasts 5 weeks and runs Monday-Thursday. The Senate recommended extending class periods to rectify this discrepancy. The proposed calendar is therefore essentially the same as last year, but class periods will be extended to 2 hours. The only significant change from past Summer Calendars is that the final for Summer Session II, will be held on a Friday to accommodate the Independence Day holiday falling on a Tuesday.
- 17/18 Calendar Discussion – George Williams suggested that Montana Tech should be on the same calendar as University of Montana. Miriam Young observed that it is a BOR rule that the MUS system be on the same calendar, and wondered why this isn't the case? Scott Risser suggested that the Senate consider bringing this to the Full Faculty for discussion. John Getty said he would like more time to review the Calendar before voting.
- Motion (Brian Kukay): Approve Summer 16/17 and Full 17/18 Academic Calendars
- Amended motion (Conor Cote, 2nd John Getty): Senate approve the Summer 16/17 Calendar; hold an online vote to approve the Full 17/18 Calendar
- Vote: motion carried 14-0

IV. Faculty Service Committee Nomination

- Provost Abbott asked the Faculty Senate to nominate a member to the Faculty Service Committee (see Faculty/Staff Handbook for full description). This committee reviews matters of

firing and suspension. Members must be tenured. Miriam Young was appointed last year. Brian Kukay and Miriam Young were nominated by the Senate.

- Vote: 8 to elect Brian, 6 to elect Miriam. Brian Kukay will represent the Senate on the Faculty Service Committee.

V. Meeting times & Attendance

- Proxy Votes
    i) Electrical Engineering currently has a vacant spot on the Senate, and none of the current faculty in that program is interested in serving. Dan Trudnowski asked the Senate Chair if Brian Kukay (General Engineering) could serve as a proxy vote for Electrical Engineering. To allow this, the Senate would need to amend its Bylaws.
    ii) George Williams said that if programs want a vote, they should be willing to send someone to serve on the Senate. Stella Capoccia agreed and made a distinction between occasional proxy votes within a program, and permanent proxy votes from someone outside of a program. Miriam Young said the latter would give programs permission to be disengaged. Laura Young expressed concern that it would discourage active participation in the Senate.
    iii) Glen Southergill noted that Article 3 of the Bylaws state that the Senate will account for programmatic changes. The current Bylaws do not account for the Mechanical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Statistics, or Writing programs. He suggested the Senate consider amending the Bylaws to include the new programs in a future meeting.
    iv) Scott Risser called a vote whether to amend the Bylaws to allow programs to appoint permanent proxy votes.
    v) Vote:
        (1) In Favor: 1
        (2) Against: 13
    vi) The Senate voted not to amend its Bylaws to allow permanent proxy votes.
- Full Faculty Meeting
    i) Scott Risser said that based on last year's Faculty Survey results, the faculty would prefer to hold a Full Faculty meeting in the Fall and Spring Semesters. The Chancellor will take faculty referendums seriously.
    ii) Tentative agenda was put forth:
        (1) New faces on campus - Abbott
        (2) Promotion and Tenure Announcements - Abbott
        (3) Faculty Survey 2016 Results – Officers
        (4) Academic Dishonesty
        (5) Handbook Revisions
    iii) Glen Southergill suggested that the question of aligning the Academic Calendar with University of Montana be added to the agenda.
- Scheduling times
    i) Scott Risser asked if meeting bi-monthly at 3:30pm on Wednesdays would work for the Senate. Discussion favored meeting at a regular time.
    ii) Motion (John Getty): Hold meetings bi-monthly at 3:30pm on Wednesdays.

VI. Adjourn

- Meeting adjourned.