

Standard Six

Governance and Administration

INTRODUCTION



MSU Billings' system of governance involves and depends upon active participation of different constituencies, from faculty to staff to students. Those entities are encouraged to engage in various conversations and decision-making processes that will help the University achieve its vision.

Throughout its eight decades, MSU Billings has worked to encourage and provide varied opportunities for leadership at all levels, and committees are structured to provide broad representation and input from throughout the University.

As part of the Montana University System (MUS), MSU Billings complies with policies and procedures as mandated by the Montana Board of Regents. Although independent for most of its history, the University became affiliated with the Montana State University segment of the state system in 1994, with reorganization of the entire Montana University System. Other units of the Montana State University system of the MUS are located in Havre, Great Falls and Bozeman. It was also during the 1994 reorganization that MSU Billings assumed governance and administration of the former Billings Vo-Tech Center, which is now the MSU Billings College of Technology.

While there are certain business and operational benefits to the reorganization, the affiliation also decreased the independence and autonomy of MSU Billings. Most, if not all, of MSU Billings operations are subject to oversight and approval through Montana State University at Bozeman — computer operating systems, legislative initiatives, the online delivery system, personnel decisions, curricular revisions, etc. MSU Billings also submits shared governance decisions for Montana State University approval, which is a necessary preliminary step to submission for BOR/OCHE approval.

STANDARD 6.A.1

GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS

Montana State University Billings is part of the Montana State University (MSU) structure of the Montana University System (MUS). Under the Montana Constitution, the governance and control of the Montana University System are vested exclusively in the Board of Regents of Higher Education. The BOR possesses full authority and responsibility for supervision, coordination and management of state public higher education. The Montana Board of Regents (BOR) sets policy for the MUS, with administrative oversight the responsibility of the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE).

Evidence: 6.4 BOR *Policy and Procedures Manual*

MSU Billings operates in accordance with BOR policy. The BOR *Policy and Procedures Manual* furnishes rules of operation that are public and readily available. The manual contains detailed information in the following sections: (200) Governance and Organization; (300) Academic Affairs; (400) Research and Public Service; (500) Student Affairs; (600) Planning; (700) Personnel; (800) Compensation; (900) Financial Affairs; (1000) Physical Plant; (1200) Athletics; (1300) Information Technology; (1900) Miscellaneous. The BOR meets on a different campus bimonthly with advance public notice.

Evidence: 6.4 BOR *Policy and Procedures Manual* (<http://mus.edu/borpol/default.asp>); 6.12 MSU Billings MUS Level I and Level II AY 2004-2005 through AY 2008-2009

STANDARD 6.A.2

GOVERNANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

MSU Billings governance is shared by faculty, staff and students through several venues. The faculty Academic Senate (AS) reviews all curricular changes throughout the University. The AS has impact throughout Academic Affairs through its subcommittees:

- Academic Computing and Allied Technology Committee
- Academic Standards and Scholastic Standing Committee
- Budget Committee
- Research and Creative Endeavor (RACE) Committee
- Library Committee
- Graduate Committee
- Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
- Academic Foundations Committee
- Commencement Committee

The MSU Billings East Campus Faculty Association conducts formal negotiations addressing working conditions with the Administration every two years in synchronization with the Montana legislative sessions. Collaborative negotiations result in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). In the two years between formal negotiations, representatives of the association and administration meet as the Faculty Administration Collaborative Committee (FACC) to interpret contractual issues that arise. Recent negotiations resulted in formation of four ad hoc study groups focusing on online delivery, salary compaction, position descriptions and Academic Support Center instructors. Reports from each of these study groups will be used to inform discussion during formal contractual collaborative negotiations. The University also maintains close contact with staff and leaders at OCHE and MSU in these processes. Their expertise is used for labor relations and personnel relations at various levels.

West Campus faculty negotiate the VTEM contract. Between formal negotiation years, West Campus faculty meet with administration as the Union Management Committee, which since fall 2006 has included the Chancellor and beginning with fall 2007 the Academic Vice Chancellor.

Staff meet as the Staff Senate and the Associated Students of Montana State University Billings (ASMSUB) meet as the Student Senate to deliberate and take positions on campus issues. The contract between the Montana Public Employees

STANDARD 6.A.3

SHARED GOVERNANCE

Association and the MUS affords staff representation “when in the best interest of the institution or . . . with nonacademic staff interests.”

The CQI Steering Committee, Standards subcommittees, and Partners for Change task forces involve faculty, staff and student representation. CQI focuses on overall campus quality review and accreditation efforts. Standards subcommittees focus on one, part of one, or more than one of the NWCCU accreditation standards. The Partners for Change ad hoc task forces focus on issues resulting from analysis of data of the spring 2006 Noel-Levitz student satisfaction survey. The summer 2007 Provost Council Retreat continued deliberations through four ad hoc discussion groups addressing creative scheduling, programs, revenue streams and community college.

Outcomes of the Academic Senate and the three groups conducting collaborative negotiations must be approved by the Montana Board of Regents.

Evidence: 6.9 Academic Senate By-laws, Committee Structure and minutes, 4.4 CBA, 6.9 Staff and 3.9 Student Senate organizational structures and meeting minutes

STANDARD 6.A.4

SHARED GOVERNANCE AUTHORITY

The division of authority is clearly delineated through the BOR and OCHE.

Evidence: 6.4 BOR *Policy and Procedures Manual*

STANDARD 6.B.1

GOVERNING BOARD

The Montana University System is governed by the Board of Regents (BOR). The responsibility for administrative oversight lies with the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE). The BOR consists of seven members, including the Governor and Superintendent of Public Instruction, who serve in an ex-officio capacity. All geographic regions of Montana are represented on the Board. One regent is a student within the Montana University System.

The Montana Board of Regents is appointed by the governor according to BOR by-laws:

ARTICLE III. Membership

The board consists of seven members appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Senate. Not more than four may be from one congressional district and not more than four may be affiliated with the same political party. One of the members of the board shall be a student appointed by the governor who is registered full-time at a unit of higher education under jurisdiction of the board. The length of the term of the student member shall be not less than one year and not more than four years. The student membership shall not be subject to the congressional district nor the political party constraint mentioned above. Appointed members' terms are seven years. Vacancies shall be filled for the remainder of the unfilled term.

Evidence: 6.4 BOR *Policy and Procedures Manual* (§201.7) (<http://mus.edu/borpol/default.asp>)

The Montana BOR acts as a committee of the whole. The BOR meetings are open to the public, and as such are subject to public scrutiny. University faculty, staff and students have multiple opportunities each year to engage Regents in conversation and participate in those meetings. Such public forums make inappropriate proceedings difficult, if not impossible.

Evidence: 6.4 BOR *Policy and Procedures Manual* (<http://mus.edu/borpol/default.asp>)

STANDARD 6.B.2**GOVERNING BOARD
POLICIES AND
PROCEDURES**

The Department of Administration, State Personnel Division, publishes *Code of Ethics Standards of Conduct for State Employees*. This publication pertains to all Montana state employees. The Montana Board of Regents reviewed Policy 770 — Conflicts of Interest and approved revisions in May 2007. Under the new policy, all Montana University System employees will receive conflict-of-interest training and sign a form indicating their understanding and compliance with the policy. Initial training began in Summer 2008. Annually, MUS employees complete a report of service on off-campus boards and any compensation earned.

Evidence: 6.4 BOR *Policy and Procedures Manual* (<http://mus.edu/borpol/default.asp>)

STANDARD 6.B.3**CODE OF ETHICS**

The BOR selects the Commissioner of Higher Education through a search committee process. The Commissioner's performance is evaluated annually with compensation increments linked to performance. During his/her term, the Commissioner can be terminated with adequate cause.

Evidence: 6.4 BOR *Policy and Procedures Manual* (<http://mus.edu/borpol/default.asp>)

STANDARD 6.B.4**GOVERNING BOARD
LEADERSHIP**

All major academic program changes, including degrees, certificates and diplomas, are routed through OCHE. The Commissioner formulates a recommendation to the BOR for final approval. BOR approval is also required for substantive changes in institutional mission, policies and programs.

Academic degree programs are reviewed by each department every year as part of the CQI Annual Report process and by the BOR every seven years. The Commissioner coordinates such reviews and reports findings to the BOR. The *Policy and Procedures Manual* provides protection to students whose programs are terminated. Should a program be terminated for insufficient enrollment or for any other reason, provisions are made to ensure that students who are enrolled majors in that program can complete them. A "Program Moratorium" may be imposed so that the program remains in the catalog, but the institution suspends admission to the program; in some cases a program may be withdrawn so that it is not mentioned in the catalog, and advisors work with current students to enable them to complete the course of study they began.

STANDARD 6.B.5**GOVERNING BOARD
PROGRAM REVIEW**

Evidence: 6.4 BOR *Policy and Procedures Manual* (<http://mus.edu/borpol/default.asp>)

STANDARD 6.B.6

GOVERNING BOARD MEETINGS

The Montana BOR meets bimonthly throughout the year. The meetings have a scheduled rotation throughout the state so that over a two-year period, the BOR meets on each of the MUS campuses. This process insures accessibility to the BOR by administration, faculty, staff and students of the various campuses. It also facilitates BOR performance, effectiveness and efficiency.

Evidence: 6.4 BOR *Policy and Procedures Manual* (<http://mus.edu/borpol/default.asp>)

STANDARD 6.B.7

GOVERNING BOARD RESOURCE ALLOCATION

The BOR attempts to view each campus of the MUS according to its approved mission and value to the constituencies served. Although there appear to be many state campuses serving a small state population, each campus was established and grew for specified purposes. The BOR is currently attempting to limit redundancy of programs throughout the state system and is reviewing the cost/benefits of maintaining several small campuses. Issues being weighed include the size of the state, value of a campus to the local economy and access to higher education for place-bound individuals. The BOR tends to be narrow in its perception of the importance of research to all of higher education and is restrictive in its willingness to allocate resources for research to other than the two designated research universities in the system — MSU and U of M.

Evidence: 6.4 BOR *Policy and Procedures Manual* (<http://mus.edu/borpol/default.asp>)

STANDARD 6.B.8

GOVERNING BOARD BUDGET POLICIES

Each unit in the MUS is responsible for balancing its own budget. Budgets for the two sides of the system are approved first through MSU/U of M, by OCHE and finally by the BOR.

Evidence: 6.4 BOR *Policy and Procedures Manual* (<http://mus.edu/borpol/default.asp>)

STANDARD 6.B.9

GOVERNING BOARD AND ACCREDITATION

The BOR is informed of the accreditation process. The self-study document is submitted to the Commissioner, along with all accreditation reports. The Commissioner is also notified of all site visits by accreditation agencies. A report to the BOR on the self-study document and subsequent findings is prepared by the Commissioner.

Evidence: 6.4 BOR *Policy and Procedures Manual* (<http://mus.edu/borpol/default.asp>)

The Chancellor of MSU Billings is a full-time employee of the institution. Any outside responsibilities and/or consulting activity must be in accordance with the state Code of Ethics and Montana University System policies. Such outside activity is reported to the Office of the Commissioner annually.

Evidence: 6.6 Administrative Position Descriptions

STANDARD 6.C.1
*LEADERSHIP AND
MANAGEMENT*

The behavior of all University employees is governed by state policy in *Code of Ethics: Standards of Conduct for State Employees*. This policy is re-stated in Section 700 of the BOR *Policy and Procedures Manual*.

Evidence: 6.4 BOR *Policy and Procedures Manual* (§ 700) <http://mus.edu/borpol/default.asp>

STANDARD 6.C.2
*INSTITUTION CODE OF
ETHICS*

The MSU Billings Administrative Evaluation Oversight Committee, in cooperation with the Chancellor, schedules administrators' performance reviews on a three-year rotation. These reviews involve a committee of faculty, staff, administration and student representation. Along with pertinent internal and external constituency groups, the committee conducts interviews based on the individual administrator's position description, administrative responsibilities, and personal-professional goals. Results of the interviews are analyzed by the committee and consolidated into a summary report.

The report is shared with the administrator by his/her immediate supervisor in order to develop goals for the next three years. This process is equivalent to a "360-degree review" and is designed for professional development toward performance improvement. In addition to three-year 360-degree reviews, administrators are evaluated by their immediate supervisors annually.

The Chancellor undergoes a 360-degree review every three years under the direction and implementation of MSU Bozeman.

Evidence: 6.13 Administrative Curriculum Vitae/Résumés; 6.14 Administrative/ Staff Evaluation Processes

STANDARD 6.C.3
*ADMINISTRATIVE
OVERSIGHT*

Administrators, faculty and staff work closely with the MSU Billings Foundation fund-raising efforts. University representatives are ex-officio, non-voting members of the Foundation Board of Directors. The Chancellor advises the Foundation Board of Directors on University needs so that the Foundation Board can initiate and implement focused fund-raising. Efforts are made to insure that the oversight for all fund-raising is with the Foundation in order to protect potential donors from multiple and redundant requests.

Evidence: 7.18 MSU Billings Foundation Policies

STANDARD 6.C.4
*INSTITUTIONAL
FUND-RAISING*

STANDARD 6.C.5*INSTITUTIONAL
FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT*

The Chancellor and three Vice Chancellors hold regularly scheduled meetings with their constituencies. The Chancellor's Cabinet and Provost Council meet weekly or more often to address acute and chronic campus issues. The Chancellor's Executive Budget Group meets regularly in order to provide ongoing financial oversight and to maintain a balanced campus budget. These regular forums for deliberation allow for ongoing and data-informed decision making.

Evidence: 3.8 Student Affairs meeting minutes; 9.3 Administrative Affairs BPR

STANDARD 6.C.6*INSTITUTIONAL
FINANCIAL
COMMUNICATION*

Members of the administrative forums listed in **6.C.5** serve as communication conduits for their areas of responsibility. Issues discussed at the administrative level are carried to each administrator's area of responsibility for information only or for further deliberation and re-evaluation. Maintaining two-way communication, deliberation and decision-making are a continuing challenge even for a small campus, but meeting the challenge is worth the effort to involve the entire University community in current operations, short-term progress and long-term realization of the University vision.

Evidence: 1.1 Mission Document

STANDARD 6.C.7*INSTITUTIONAL
FINANCIAL DATA AND
INFORMATION*

The Office of Information Technology, under the direction of the Chief Information Officer, provides data to the campus to inform program review, budget deliberations, etc. The Continuous Quality Improvement Office, in collaboration with IT, conducts a regularly scheduled cycle of University surveys and works with individual units in conducting surveys specific to the unit. IT in collaboration with academic programs is implementing an electronic assessment data warehouse with capabilities of storing program assessment data aggregating by program, disaggregating individual student progress, and providing a data warehouse for storing faculty accomplishments.

Program data have been used in academic program annual reports since AY 2005-2006. Survey data have been used to review student satisfaction, student and faculty engagement, employee morale, employer satisfaction and alumnae/i satisfaction on a scheduled basis since spring 2006. The data inform program revision, faculty load assignments, workplace environment changes and efforts to involve alumni/ae in campus activities.

Evidence: 1.8 IT reports, changes over time in types and format of IT reports; 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7, survey results

STANDARD 6.C.8*HIRING AND
PROMOTION POLICIES*

Policies followed in the hiring process, appointments to positions, employee probationary periods, performance reviews and termination procedures are outlined through the following:

- HR policies and procedures

- Staff contract
- East Campus Faculty CBA
- West Campus Faculty VTEM contract
- BOR personnel policies regarding administrative positions.

Evidence: 6.7 Staff Contract; 4.4 CBA/VTEM faculty peer review process;
6.14 Administrative Review Process

STAFF AND COMPENSATION COMMITTEE

(Established September 23, 2004 as a standing committee)

Charge to the Committee:

The Staff and Compensation Committee is a standing committee of the Board of Regents that will meet on an as needed basis. The Committee shall provide guidance and assistance on management issues impacting the OCHE and the MUS campuses.

The Committee shall:

1. Review salary and compensation studies;
2. Review staff Items and format;
3. Review and recommend salary parameters;
4. Have general oversight of collective bargaining;
5. Review extra compensation reports;
6. Review the Staff Compensation Plan program;
7. Review and recommend policies and practices of the health insurance and employee benefit program;
8. Review and recommend policies and practices of the workers' compensation program;
9. Review and recommend policies and practices related to retirement;
10. Review and recommend policies and practices related to workforce diversity and diversity reporting;
11. Review grievances and litigation and recommend policies or practices related thereto;
12. Review and recommend employee evaluation processes;
13. Review and recommend OCHE staffing levels, staffing patterns and other staffing matters;
14. Review the use of information technology as a management tool within the System;
15. Organize and oversee Board and System relations with the State legislature, the State's congressional delegation, the Governor and other governmental officers and bodies;
16. Review and recommend procedures for long range planning and goal setting;
17. Assume responsibility for other tasks as assigned by the Board or the Chair.

Revised January 30, 2006

STANDARD 6.C.9

SALARY POLICIES

Salaries of the Chancellor and three Vice Chancellors are approved by the BOR. Other professional contracts are approved by the Commissioner's office (OCHE). Staff salaries comply with Montana legislative mandates. Staff salaries are raised or not according to the state employee pay plan approved by the biennial Montana Legislature. Faculty salaries are negotiated every two years in the process of contract collaborative negotiations. Administrative and some professional staff salaries are

negotiated on an individual basis as these groups do not have the advantage of union representation. MSU Billings monitors salaries of peer institutions across the nation but in particular in the Rocky Mountain front and makes every effort to maintain equivalency with peers. Ultimately, however, University salaries are proposed, negotiated and approved in a context larger than the University itself, a context that includes the Office of the Governor of Montana, the Montana Legislature, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE), the Montana Board of Regents (BOR) and MEA-MFT (the Montana educators' union)..

The BOR is studying issues of salary compaction evident with newly hired employees earning the equivalent or more than experienced employees with years of service to the MUS. This initiative is evidenced by the charge and responsibilities given to the BOR Staff and Compensation Committee.

Evidence: 4.4 CBA (\$14,000)/VTEM (<http://mus.edu/hr/cba/collbarg.asp>); 7.16 Peer Institutions Financial Data

STANDARD 6.D

FACULTY ROLE IN GOVERNANCE

Two groups provide faculty leadership and faculty involvement in governance. The Academic Senate is the highest curricular authority on campus. Subcommittees of the Academic Senate provide venues for involvement in various aspects of program development and review. The Committee on Committees assures faculty representation on each of the Academic Senate subcommittees. The Academic Senate role is providing guidance and advice to the administration. The Academic Senate Budget Committee, dormant for several years while the campus implemented a University Budget Committee, was reinstated spring 2008. Review of the Budget Committee by-laws allowed for equal representation across campus constituencies with consensus opinions the goal.

The faculty and staff professional associations/unions negotiate working conditions and compensation with the administration. Between formal negotiating sessions, held every two years, ongoing association representatives meet with upper administration for contractual interpretations through the East Campus Faculty Administration Collaborative Committee and the West Campus Unit/Management Committee. The 12 ad hoc committees currently in operation include faculty representation, Partners for Change Taskforces, Provost Council Retreat Discussion Groups, and FACC Study Groups.

A review of BOR meeting minutes demonstrates the process of MUS budgeting and shows that ultimate decisions are often not made at the university level, whether on overall budgets or specific to employee compensation. The process involves the Governor's Office, the Montana Legislature, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, the BOR and the individual units of the MUS. The following excerpt is from the May 2008 BOR meeting held in Helena.

"Present Law Pay Plan.

(Regent) stated we need to move the present law budget estimates into the Executive Planning Process.

- 1. Assumes the State will fund the increase in cost for the resident and WUE students.*
- 2. Assumes resident enrollment will remain steady.*

Assumptions: Salary increase 4%; Health insurance 7%; Promotions and merit increases are campus specific and are in addition to the 4% salary increase; Termination costs are campus specific.

The Montana University System (MUS) will begin meeting with the Gov Budget office soon to begin the process...

75% of costs are for personal services on the campuses. Expenditures are increasing 5.3%, with a total increase of \$21.5 M for the first year of the biennium...(Regent) stated there would be a consistent process for all the campuses..."

Evidence: 6.9 Academic Senate By-laws and Committee Structure, 4.7 and 6.10 University Committee Membership Lists

Students are part of the University governance structure represented by the Associated Students of Montana State University Billings (ASMSU Billings). In addition, student representatives serve on the Academic Senate and its subcommittees, the Provost Council, faculty search committees and faculty review committees.

Evidence: 4.7 and 6.10 University Committee Membership Lists (ASMSU Billings, student senate, student representation on campus committees)

This policy is met as follows:

- MSU Billings has a written affirmative action plan that is reviewed and updated annually.
- Human Resources review position announcements to ensure that they comply with the policies of nondiscrimination
- Human Resources monitors hiring and promotions to assess nondiscrimination and equal treatment of all applicants and employees.
- All position vacancy announcements, position advertising and the job application form include the following statement: "MSU Billings is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer."
- The nondiscrimination policies are published in several different venues (i.e. webpage, catalogs, student handbooks).
- OFCCP compliance review of the Affirmative Action plan cited the plan was in compliance.

Evidence: 9.1 Offices of Human Resources Policies and Procedures/Affirmative Action Plan

The points of this policy are met as follows:

- The University community has been involved for the past three years in the self-study. A representative Steering Committee has led the accreditation efforts. The campus has been regularly informed of progress through the newsletter *CQI-FYI*. Representatives of various constituencies have

STANDARD 6.E

STUDENT ROLE IN GOVERNANCE

Policy 6.1

Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination

Policy 6.2

Collective Bargaining

- participated in NWCCU accreditation preparation.
- Collective bargaining/collaborative negotiations serve both faculty and administration. The collaborative process for refining working conditions and contractual interpretations insure that all parties share a framework for working together that is under continual scrutiny.
- Previous recommendations by NWCCU evaluation committees and feedback through a mock visit conducted fall 2007 have been helpful for MSU Billings. Accreditation reports and mock visit feedback allow the institution to set benchmarks for continuing growth. Neither side — accreditors nor the institution — has attempted to use information gained through the accreditation processes for inappropriate ends.
- MSU Billings faculty and administration continually define the role of Academic Senate and its subcommittees and the role of the various campus unions. Issues in the real world are often in shades of gray, rather than clearly black or white. Both faculty and administration attempt to assign issues to the appropriate venue for solution.
- All contracts are part of the MSU Billings exhibits for any accreditation agency.

Evidence: 4.4 CBA/VTEM; 6.7 Staff Contract

STANDARD SIX

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

Strengths

- MSU Billings has a long, established history and commitment to shared governance. The University has increased the number of advisory boards and is assuring varied representation on each.
- MSU Billings faculty control the governance of academic programs and share the governance of their working conditions with administration.
- Both MSU Billings staff and students have senates to assure their participation in University affairs.
- Program data and surveys are used to make decisions on program revision, faculty load assignments, workplace environment changes and as well as to assess student satisfaction.
- The strength of the University's reputation in the community allows for growing partnerships and relationships for advisory boards.
- Each College has its own advisory board with by-laws, an agenda, a meeting schedule and membership appropriate for the individual needs and initiatives of the College. In addition, some programs have advisory boards. The COT, in addition to its 25-person National Advisory Board, has 18 individual program advisory committees. At least two programs in the CAS have their own advisory committees. The value of advisory boards with outside representation is increasingly recognized across the University community.
- MSU Billings shared governance extends beyond University boundaries to include the MSU side of the Montana University System, OCHE and the BOR. Being part of a larger system strengthens the University voice at the state level and provides the opportunity for shared initiatives and growth,



includings— Banner, Desire2Learn, Library Consortia, Business Process Redesign and Information Technology policies/safeguards/initiatives.

Challenges

- MUS System Bureaucracy. As independent Eastern Montana College, MSU Billings had direct access to the BOR, to OCHE and to the Montana Legislature. Reorganization of the MUS and alignment of MSU Billings with Montana State University has resulted in less autonomy and less direct access to state leaders.
- Role of Advisory Boards. Under BOR policy, MSU Billings must have a Local Executive Board that advises the Chancellor regarding operations of the campus. This board is appointed by the governor and is composed of three individuals from outside the University community. Each unit in the MUS has such a board. Each College has its own advisory board with by-laws, an agenda, a meeting schedule and membership appropriate for the individual needs and initiatives of the College. Making best use of the expertise found on each of these boards in the future will be a challenge.
- Budget Decision Making. An area for increased decision making involvement for all constituencies as indicated in the Employee Morale surveys is in the budget allocation process. The Academic Senate has a Budget Subcommittee. This body was called to order on an as-needed basis by previous administrations to advise the Provost/Academic Vice Chancellor regarding necessary academic affairs budget adjustments. Because this committee represented only faculty perspectives, the Chancellor initiated a University Budget Committee (UBC) with broad representation that operated for several years during the late 1990s and early 2000s. Through its support, the UBC was instrumental in implementation of the current Academic Support Center for students, but the UBC did not achieve its potential for influencing overall internal budget allocations for the institution. Waning participation resulted in disbanding the UBC in AY 2005-2006. The present structure allows for faculty and staff voice in the budget process through their respective dean/division director. The current process includes faculty discussion at the departmental level of budgetary

suggestions/determinations at the Cabinet level. Communication between these levels is through college leadership to the dean and deans'/ directors' discussion on the Provost Council. The Academic Senate Budget Committee was reinstated spring 2008 with revised by-laws and increased constituency representation. Reinstatement of this committee greatly increased participation in the budget determinations, and in so doing, increased faculty morale. The committee will continue with long term goals and short term immediate deliberations.

- University Communication. To share governance of the institution, each constituency must be fully informed as to pressing or unresolved issues. MSU Billings is not a large institution. Nevertheless, communication can serve as an obstacle to progress, rather than a help. There is a perception held by some that various University constituencies have, at times, been left out of conversations when decisions are made. The University has been using newsletters, different constituency groups (Academic Senate, ASMSUB, etc.), large and small group meetings and general announcements to help communicate, but more needs to be done to ensure important messages are relayed to all constituencies. As an institution, MSU Billings is committed to improvement in this area, and intends to continue and to intensify communication strategies.