

ACADEMIC SENATE MINUTES

DATE: April 25, 2002

PRESENT: George Benedict
Sandie Rietz
Keith Edgerton
Doxey Hatch
Connie Landis
Dan Zirker (ex-officio)

Doug Brown
George Madden
Randall Gloege
Mark Hardt
Matt Redinger
Janie Park (ex-officio)

ABSENT: Dave Gurchiek – *excused*

Bob Carr (ex-officio)
Randy Rhine (ex-officio)
Terrie Iverson (ex-officio)
Lee Peters (ex-officio)

Paul Bauer – *excused*

Scott Harris (ex-officio)
George White (ex-officio)
Bryce Anderson (ex-officio)

GUESTS: Ronald Sexton, Chancellor
Mary Picket, *Billings Gazette*
Teddy Roe
Rex Roe
Michael Dennis
Mary Susan Fishbaugh

David Crisp, *Billings Outpost*
Marcie Roe
Scott Prinzing
Mary McNally
Ken Woosley

PRESIDING: Sandie Rietz, Chair

Sandie Rietz called the meeting to order at 3:33 p.m. on April 25, 2002 in the Chancellor's Conference Room.

The April 18, 2002 meeting minutes were approved as amended.

I. NEW BUSINESS

A. Appointment of new Senate Members.

Alan Davis will be our new member, but he must finish out his term on the Graduate Committee before he joins us. He will be at the next meeting.

B. Election of Officers.

⇒ Motion by George Madden, seconded by Connie Landis, to nominate **Keith Edgerton for Chair of the Senate.**

⇒ Motion carried and Dr. Edgerton accepted.

⇒ Motion by Keith Edgerton, seconded by Connie Landis, to nominate **Sandie Rietz, Randall Gloege, and George Madden for Vice Chairs of the Senate.**

⇒ Motion carried and Dr. Rietz, Dr. Gloege, and Dr. Madden accepted.

⇒ Motion by Sandie Rietz, seconded by George Madden to nominate **George Benedict for Secretary of the Senate.**

⇒ Motion carried and Dr. Benedict accepted.

C. Crippen Cabin: Discussion with Dr. Ron Sexton, Chancellor.

Dr. Sexton began by stating that he will make a decision about the cabin before the May Board of Regents meeting (May 23-24). He has told the Board that he will have a decision to present to them.

When all this began back in 1998, Dr. Sexton stated that he saw an opportunity for education and training with the cabin, and the Forest Service also indicated interest in such a project. He later learned that the Forest Service was not interested in doing such a project in the wilderness area. Dr. Sexton and the Forest Service both never expected that MSU-Billings would be granted exception to the rule.

He was also looking into disabled people using the site, and what could be done to encourage such activity. The issue of getting the disabled to the cabin has not been settled.

Dr. Sexton envisioned that only small groups of people would visit the cabin, and in the initial visit, none of the group saw any immediate negatives.

Money would have to be spent on up-keep of the cabin, but no state money will be used for such a purpose. Support money will come from donations. Bruce Crippen had originally agreed that if he were granted use of the cabin, he would perform all the needed maintenance. In the current draft of the agreement, he is not granted access.

It was then noted that the Faculty feels that MSU-Billings should never have gotten involved with the cabin in the first place. Dr. Sexton stated that he was unaware at the time that the faculty were opposed this project.

Dr. Sexton also stated that the Environmental Studies, Health & Physical Education, and Sciences faculty were all invited to visit the cabin to assess its possibilities. Some did volunteer, but as noted by several members of the Senate, the faculty who visited the cabin did not discuss their findings with other faculty. Therefore, the majority of the faculty knew nothing of the cabin project. It was then stated that the faculty of the Sciences and Environmental Studies are opposed to acquiring the cabin, as they have no use for it.

Dr. Sexton then noted that the Forest Service is interested in working with MSU-Billings, but not at the Crippen site. They would prefer to work with the University at the A-Frame site. The Forest Service does not want the Crippen Cabin there anymore.

It was then noted that this issue may cause splits between the faculty and the administration, and among the faculty as well.

It was also noted that a Quit Claim Deed is an option.

Dr. Sexton stated that he has no obligations to Bruce Crippen other than to explain his decision once he makes it. He has the same obligation to the Senate. He will notify the Senate via email or however they may be reached during the summer to update them about this project.

Dr. Sexton stated some plusses to this cabin, such as the location and possible learning experiences. It was then noted that campers at this site must carry out their own waste. Dr. Sexton noted that perhaps that is what students should learn about the wilderness.

Sandie Rietz then stated that if Dr. Sexton drops this project, there will be an upwelling of support from the faculty for him and for the University. Dr. Sexton then stated that if there are no educational possibilities for the cabin, there are no "pros" for it. It was also noted that no historic value has been found for the cabin, should it be destroyed.

The Senate adjourned at 4:45 p.m. for a closed meeting with Dr. Sexton to discuss budget changes.

Mary Pickett of the *Billings Gazette* left under protest.

David Crisp of the *Billings Outpost* asked to go on record saying he does not think adjourning for a closed meeting in this manner was legal.

The final Senate meeting of the 2001-2002 year will be May 2, 2002.

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