

ACADEMIC SENATE MINUTES

DATE: April 10, 2003

PRESENT: Doug Brown
Audrey ConnerRosberg
George Madden
Randall Gloege
Mark Hardt
Matt Redinger
Randy Rhine (ex-officio)
Dan Zirker (ex-officio)

Sandie Rietz
Paul Bauer
Keith Edgerton
Alan Davis
Connie Landis

George White (ex-officio)
Janie Park (ex-officio)

ABSENT: St. John Robinson – *excused*
John Cech (ex-officio)
Terrie Iverson (ex-officio)
Curt Kochner (ex-officio)

Joe Michels (ex-officio)
Nichole Alley (ex-officio)

GUESTS: Mary Susan Fishbaugh
Ken Miller

Carl Hanson

PRESIDING: Keith Edgerton, Chair

Keith Edgerton called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m. on April 10, 2003, in the Chancellors Conference Room.

The April 3, 2003, meeting minutes were accepted, with notation of an addition.

Keith Edgerton requested an update from the Provost on the new Masters of Public Administration program. He encouraged the most expeditious movement of the new program through the various committees so that it would be before the Senate *prior* to the forthcoming Board of Regents meeting in May.

I. New Senators – Appointment

The following were appointed to positions on the Academic Senate:

Doug Brown – College of Business Representative
Paul Bauer – College of Technology Representative
Audrey ConnerRosberg – At Large Representative
Keith Edgerton – At Large Representative

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Online Courses: Some Problems and Solutions – George Madden and Sandie Rietz (handout from April 3 meeting).

It was stated that getting our programs online is important, and it is important to do that quickly, but it seems some concerns and issues have been left behind in the rush. We need an established forum for faculty to discuss online courses with Department Chairs and Deans.

It was noted that whenever a course is to be converted to online, it could go through the same steps as an onsite course: department and college curriculum committees, the UCC, and the Senate. It was then stated that approach would put expectations on online courses which are not present for onsite courses, such as a supervisor of online programs to check quality.

It was then noted that the opening statement asserts that there are problems in the College of Education and Human Services (CEHS). Have any of these problems been brought up in department and college meetings?

It was noted that the reason these issues were brought to the Senate was due to a pamphlet circulating in the CEHS. This pamphlet stated there was a new 3-year online program in CEHS. This new program was never brought to the UCC and Senate.

It was then stated that this pamphlet does not offer a new program. The pamphlet outlines an evening and online program of study for elementary education students. This is not a new program, just a re-arrangement of courses to better meet the needs of students. There are no new requirements of the students. It was also noted that this program is only for students who have an Associate's degree or at least two years of college, because it does not include General Education. It was cited that this program of study was discussed in a meeting of the Department of Educational Theory and Practice last spring.

It was noted that other departments that are listed on this pamphlet need to know what is going on. They need to be informed if their courses are being advertised by another department or college.

On the separate issue of a course being offered online without the knowledge or consent of a MSU-B faculty member, it was stated that this was an oversight of the department chairs. They have apologized for this error. The course in question, RD 401, was part of the Post Baccalaureate program for Teaching as a Second Career. The rest of the program had been put online, and students were in this program. It was then discovered that these students would need to take RD 401, and it was not offered online. The department met with the instructors of RD 401 and decided the course is not appropriate for online. One of the instructors of RD 401 offered to go to the students, but this proved to be cost-prohibitive. A majority of the students in the program are in Casper, Wyoming, and so the liaison for Casper College was contacted. Casper College found a professor with a terminal degree in reading to teach the course to the Casper students on-site. *This course was never offered online.* The syllabus for RD 401 here at MSU-B was faxed to Casper to ensure consistency between the two courses.

The remaining students in the program who are not in Casper are taking a correspondence course from Brigham Young University. Both courses from BYU and Casper College will be considered transfer courses.

The question of ownership of syllabi was then discussed.

It was noted that the department owns the curriculum of any given program, and the syllabus is part of that. It was cited, however, that many departments have a “departmental syllabus” or list of expected outcomes for a course which describe the content of the course. The individual faculty members then develop their syllabus from that document, which is their own creative effort and therefore belongs to them.

It was noted that the document distributed for the meeting makes accusations of illegal activity. Is there a policy or rule that has been violated? If not, we cannot say they violated a policy.

It was noted that many syllabi on campus are now on the web and accessible by anyone, and that is how the instructor from Casper College got the MSU-B syllabus for RD 401. It was then noted that the Casper syllabus is not *exactly* the same as the MSU-B one. There have been more changes than just the name and phone number.

It was cited that in most departments, if a part-time faculty member is to be hired, the faculty of that department participate in the selection process. The faculty members at least see the vita of the part-time instructor to be hired, and that did not happen in the RD 401 situation. It was noted that an executive decision by the Chair of the Department was made to rectify the situation as soon as possible, for the best interests of the students.

It was stated that there is a bigger issue here: when a faculty member teaches a course online, everything involved with that course becomes the property of the University. Many faculty members who have been with MSU-Billings for some time feel that this is not right and they personally own their syllabi. Also, since the University owns all the online material, then that thinking may carry over to onsite courses.

It was then cited that when a course is developed and converted to online, faculty members are paid for this, and so the course does not belong to them. The University paid for it.

It was noted that currently a “portal” is being developed so that only faculty and students can access syllabi on the web.

The meeting adjourned at 4:59 p.m.

rjrm