

## ACADEMIC SENATE MINUTES

**DATE:** October 16, 2003

**PRESENT:** St. John Robinson  
Audrey ConnerRosberg  
Keith Edgerton  
Alan Davis  
Matt Redinger  
George White (ex-officio)  
Janie Park (ex-officio)

Doug Brown  
George Madden  
Randall Gloege  
Mark Hardt  
  
Dan Zirker (ex-officio)

**ABSENT:** Sandie Rietz – *excused*  
Connie Landis – *excused*  
John Cech (ex-officio)  
Randy Rhine (ex-officio)  
Curt Kochner (ex-officio)

Paul Bauer – *excused*  
  
Joe Michels (ex-officio)  
Terrie Iverson (ex-officio)  
Tracy Jo Schweigert (ex-officio)

**GUEST:** Mike Diede

**PRESIDING:** Randall Gloege, Vice Chair

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Randall Gloege called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m. in the Chancellor's Conference Room.

The minutes of October 9 were approved as presented.

It was noted that Dr. Will Self was in an accident this morning while crossing North 27<sup>th</sup> Street. It is reported that most likely, the driver did not see him crossing the street. He is currently at St. Vincent's hospital.

### I. ITEMS – FOR INFORMATION

**Item 11** Committee Roster 2003-2004 Revised to add: student volunteers to committees and Graduate Committee alternates. For information.

⇒ Motion by Doug Brown, seconded by Matt Redinger to accept Item 11 for information.

⇒ Motion carried.

**Item 13** Nominees to the Sabbatical Committee.

⇒ Motion by Matt Redinger, seconded by Mark Hardt to approve the list of nominees and forward it to the Provost.

⇒ Motion carried.

II. DISCUSSION ITEMS

**A. Shared Governance: Flagship Programs**

Dr. Park stated that she will first discuss why the idea of Flagship Programs came about, and then work through the process with the Senate.

Dr. Park noted that there are three major weaknesses in our Academic Strategic Plan: (1) we don't clearly link the plan to outcomes and assessment, (2) the plan doesn't tie resources and personnel to the goals in the plan, and (3) the plan is not focused. In order to build any recognition for MSU-Billings, the plan and the University will have to be more focused. The question is, what resources will it take for us to be recognized regionally or even nationally for doing something well?

Dr. Park stated that she and the Deans had a brainstorming session in which they tried to think through what it takes to have a well-known program. First, they discussed what characteristics are apparent in most distinguished Universities and programs. Then, they discussed what programs MSU-Billings currently has that are closest to that level. Finally, they worked through what it would take to raise those programs up a notch. They also discussed what areas/programs have strong potential to be recognized programs, but still need something to get there.

Dr. Park cited that it is not possible for all programs at an institution to be recognized for something, but those less prominent programs provide the necessary support the recognized programs need.

The Senate then discussed what features are characteristic of nationally recognized programs (listed below).

- faculty widely recognized
- connection with community
- outstanding in course delivery
- graduates do well in real world
- program with consistently high numbers
- faculty doing cutting-edge work who are able to enthuse students
- enthusiastic students

- alumni support: funding and student motivation
- takes advantage of demographic or geographic niche
- committed resources
- participants in program who are mutually supportive (faculty and students)
- diversity of faculty and students
- competitive

Following this list, the Senate discussed which programs at MSU-Billings are closest to being regionally/nationally recognized, and which have the potential to be at that level but still need something to get there.

Closest

Special Education  
Education  
Art  
Rehab/Clinical Psych

Potential Niche

NAMS/Political  
Science/Sociology/West  
Allied Health  
Creative Writing  
Health/Business  
Entrepreneurship/small Business  
Environmental Studies

Dr. Park noted that when she and the Deans did this exercise, they came up with almost the exact same list. The only other possible “Closest” programs they noted were MSU-Billings Online and Teaching as a Second Career (this program is for those students who already have a degree and now want to get their teaching certification). We are getting recognition now for our online programs, so that could be an area of distinction. The online program is already based on our quality programs.

The Deans also noted that Potential Niche areas include Rural Health Administration and Process Plant Technology. Our Process Plant Technology program is one of only 8 or 9 programs in the nation. Another that cannot be added to the Potential list as it does not yet exist is the possible new program in Public Safety.

It was noted that another “linked” program could be Environmental Studies with American West/Native American Studies.

Dr. Park stated that the third piece of this process is figuring out what it takes for those programs that are closest to distinguished to be bumped up to the next level. It was cited that faculty with staff to support them is essential to raising the level of a program. It was also noted that we must chose which programs to focus on because we can't be everything to everyone. It was cited that the major concern is which departments/areas will be cut in order to fund these “close” programs. It was noted that with flagship programs, we are working against being everything to everyone, and also a flagship cannot be high quality without good supporting departments and a high quality general education core. It was also cited that all new faculty lines cannot go to the flagship programs, because that will erode the other departments and programs that form the basis for the flagship.

Dr. Park noted that in the past few years, we have focused a lot of energy, but not necessarily money, on the College of Technology. There were some advertising costs, but they were not large. Mainly, the support was through word of mouth. That work has resulted in a 25% increase in FTE from a flat line just two years ago. What would happen if we focused energy like that on two or three academic programs?

Even with word of mouth and general excitement from many groups, the best way to raise the image of the University is to have high quality programs.

It was noted that this idea and process should be taken to all the faculty, but most of the faculty do not attend general faculty meetings. It was noted that this could be discussed college by college instead of all faculty at the same time. Dr. Park stated that she would ask the Deans to get this information out beyond the department chairs.

The meeting adjourned at 5:01 p.m.

rjrm