

ACADEMIC SENATE MINUTES

DATE: October 23, 2003

PRESENT: Doug Brown
Paul Bauer
George Madden
Randall Gloege
Mark Hardt
Matt Redinger
Sandie Rietz
Audrey ConnerRosberg
Keith Edgerton
Alan Davis
Connie Landis

ABSENT: St. John Robinson—*excused*
John Cech (ex-officio)
Randy Rhine (ex-officio)
Dan Zirker (ex-officio)
Janie Park (ex-officio)
Tracy Jo Schweigert (ex-officio)
Joe Michels (ex-officio)
George White (ex-officio)
Terrie Iverson (ex-officio)
Curt Kochner (ex-officio)

GUESTS: Katherine Pfau
Eakle Barfield
Tony Hecimovic
Doxey Hatch
Dan Gross
Lorrie Steerey

PRESIDING: Keith Edgerton, Chair

Keith Edgerton called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. in the Chancellor's Conference Room.

The minutes of October 16 were approved as presented.

I. ITEMS – FOR INFORMATION

Item 4 AS Program of Study in Human Resources – General Applied Option and COB Articulated Option. Modification of a program (change “option” to “emphasis”).

⇒ Motion by Connie Landis, seconded by Matt Redinger to **accept Item 4**.

⇒ Motion carried.

Item 4.a CTBU 255 Medical Law and Ethics. Change rubric.

⇒ Motion by Matt Redinger, seconded by Sandie Rietz to **accept Item 4.a.**

⇒ Motion carried.

II. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Student Evaluations: Their Impact on Academic Quality

It was noted that this is at best a flawed process. It was also noted that any action taken by the Senate could complicate things for the Faculty Association. It was cited that all the Senate can do is recommend; any changes would be left up to the Faculty Association negotiators.

It was noted that the current student evaluation tool is a market survey or popularity contest, not an evaluation of the teaching. The numbers in the evaluation are used as quantitative measures of qualities, which does not make sense. They are merely an administrative convenience. Students should have some input into the evaluation process, but what it is and how it's used should be carefully controlled.

The best way to get feedback from students is through un-prompted responses, as prompted questions may only give answers that are expected. It was also cited that a student cannot adequately evaluate a student after only one semester. Looking more long-term would be beneficial, perhaps with a survey of alumni.

It was noted that there is research and literature available on student evaluations, which could be used to help improve the student evaluation tool. It was also noted that since numbers are currently used, there should be a norm, an “average” professor, but there is not.

It was cited that the student evaluation tool only examines one style of teaching, and in effect, enforces that style.

It was noted that the College of Technology faculty have been working on their student evaluation, and although the proposed new evaluation tool has not been seen by all faculty, it contains a section where the student evaluates him- or herself: How many times did they miss class? Did they finish their projects? It was noted that students know their instructors’ contracts are renewed based largely on their student evaluations, and so can submit an unfavorable evaluation in the hope the instructors may be dismissed.

It was noted that the matrix which the General Education Committee developed for course outcomes could be adapted for use in the evaluation process. The concept is the same, and using this idea would assure that each instructor is evaluated in a unique way for each course.

It was suggested that a sub-committee be formed to address the issues and perhaps create a new evaluation tool.

⇒ Motion by Sandie Rietz, seconded by Mark Hardt to **form a sub-committee** to revise the student evaluation tool, comprised of the following faculty:

Randall Gloege

Alan Davis

Sandie Rietz

Doxey Hatch

Doug Brown

and a College of Technology faculty who is a union representative (yet to be determined)

and which is **charged with the following:**

To develop an alternative to the current student evaluation after research.

The sub-committee shall **report back by the end of Fall 2003 semester** (Thursday, December 11).

⇒ Motion carried.

⇒ Motion by Matt Redinger, seconded by Audrey ConnerRosberg to recommend to the Faculty Association the current student evaluation process be suspended, because it is flawed, until a better evaluation process is determined by the sub-committee. The Academic Senate requests this resolution should be placed before the Faculty-Administration Collaborative Committee

⇒ Motion carried.

Sandie Rietz stated that she would chair the sub-committee.

It was cited that there will be a lapse between when the current process is suspended and when the sub-committee reports out, and there will be faculty impacted in that time. It was noted that the Academic Senate could send a memo to all the Department Rank and Tenure Committees encouraging them to keep an eye out for their faculty. A faculty member's department members are the best bet to protect that faculty member.

B. Peer Reviews

It was stated that faculty are not prepared to do acceptable peer reviews. The faculty could be trained to emphasize the descriptive rather than the judgemental. It was noted that the sub-committee could also tackle this training issue.

It was decided that a sub-committee of the sub-committee would be formed to discuss peer reviews. It will include: Randall Gloege, Sandie Rietz, and Lorrie Steerey.

C. Defining and Measuring Academic Quality

The Board of Regents stated that they would like a list of “quality indicators” from each campus, with the deadline being December. The deadline has now been bumped up to Monday, October 27. They do not want any measuring techniques, only indicators of the quality at MSU-Billings. A list was supplied that was created by a sub-committee of the University Budget Committee (UBC) and added to by other campus groups. The UBC requests that the Academic Senate edit the list which will then be sent to the Regents on Monday. It was noted that these quality indicators will probably eventually be used as a funding tool: just a “quick look” to make quick budget decisions.

The Senate edited the list, and it will be presented at Monday’s UBC meeting (a copy can be found with these minutes in the Academic Senate Office).

D. Flagship Program Resolution

It was noted that the Senate should oppose this on ideological grounds. Despite the proposal’s hopes, this will set the faculty at each other. It was noted that establishing and then possibly raising academic quality benchmarks is a good idea, but those benchmarks should be established and raised by the faculty. The administration should be concerned with getting the faculty the resources to do it. It was cited that recognition for a program cannot come from within an organization. It must come from an outside source such as an accrediting body. It was noted that the Senate wants to pursue advancing quality, but that quality should be institution-wide, rather than program-focused.

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

rjrm