

ACADEMIC SENATE MINUTES

DATE: October 18, 2007

PRESENT: Agnes Samples
Bruce Brumley
Johanna Mitchell
Gershon Bulgatz
James Ellis (student)

Sandie Rietz
Lorrie Steerey
Keith Edgerton
Mark Hardt

ABSENT: Audrey ConnerRosberg
Jeff Sanders – *excused*
Craig McKenzie – *excused*
Alicia Esteves (student) – *excused*
David Garloff (ex-officio)
Gary Young (ex-officio)
Karen Heikel (ex-officio)
George White (ex-officio)
Stacy Klippenstein (ex-officio)

Rakesh Sah – *excused*
Steve Coffman – *excused*
Tasneem Khaleel (ex-officio)
Mary Susan Fishbaugh (ex-officio)
John Cech (ex-officio)
Terrie Iverson (ex-officio)

GUESTS: Geoff Gamble
Sharon Hobbs

Rolf Groseth
Greg Allard

PRESIDING: Lorrie Steerey, Chair

Lorrie Steerey called the meeting to order at 3:42 p.m. in the McMullen 305 Conference Room.

I. DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT GEOFF GAMBLE

A. Summer Schedule Memo: What is his response?

Dr. Gamble asked who wanted to change the summer schedule and why. It was noted that the administration wants to change the schedule to increase FTE, but they have no data to support this idea. Dr. Gamble noted that both Billings and Bozeman are down FTE and most likely both will have to make cuts as a result. This is probably an effort to counteract the effects of those cuts.

It was noted that the 3-5-5 schedule that the administration has settled on leaves no time for students who come home from Missoula or Bozeman in the summer and want to take a class. It was cited that the rigidity of the Summer 2008 schedule is also a problem. Our students who are teachers may not be able to make it to the first and third sessions, and the inflexible schedule does not allow the College of Education to compensate for these teachers' schedules.

Dr. Gamble noted that any change in the Summer 2008 schedule is ultimately an FTE experiment, and no one knows if it will work or not. Whether we make changes or keep everything the same, we all play the FTE game. If we don't have FTE we have to cut. Every campus is struggling with the low high school graduation rates in Montana. Just because there are many reasons to oppose changes to the summer schedule does not mean you shouldn't change it.

It was stated that although the faculty are opposed to the new summer schedule, the Senate is very disturbed by the decision-making process that brought us the new schedule. The faculty are interested in generating FTE just like the administration, but they don't ask the faculty for input. Dr. Gamble asked for suggestions on how to increase summer FTE. Responses included cutting tuition, flexible scheduling, balancing out offerings among the three summer sessions, implementing a three week post-spring semester that would count in the spring semester flat spot, implementing the same three week semester before fall semester begins, and a rolling online class that students can drop in any time and work through a cycle. However, some of these suggestions are limited by Banner. Dr. Gamble noted that we have to start thinking about education in a different way because young people today think of it differently. They want education to fit into their lives, using online classes and other technology. They don't think they need to finish in four years.

The question was raised as to whether Dr. Gamble can ask Chancellor Sexton to back off on the changes to the Summer 2008 schedule. Dr. Gamble stated that he would not, but he would let the Chancellor try it and if it fails the Senate can ask why he didn't listen to them. Dr. Gamble will also ask the Chancellor to meet with the Senate Chair regularly, and asked Dr. Steerey to find out from the Chancellor why the administration thinks the new summer schedule is better. How much modification will be made to take into account special needs?

The question was raised that Dr. Gamble may not fully understand how hopeless and helpless the MSUB faculty feel. Dr. Gamble responded that he did understand and it is not as bad as you think.

B. Faculty Morale Survey: What steps would he take if these were his faculty?

Dr. Gamble asked for the top three or four things from the survey that the Senate found most telling. The Senate responded that only about 50% of the faculty responded, that faculty are happy with teaching but unhappy with administration, and that faculty do not

feel valued and have no input on decision making. It was noted that many tenure-track faculty worried that the survey was not actually anonymous, because if a faculty member had not completed the survey he or she received an email reminder with his or her name in it. This highlights the fear that all faculty feel. Dr. Gamble noted that these problems are similar to what he hears as well, and similar trends are seen across the country. It was noted that even though these may be common problems, they should not be taken lightly. The evaluators who were at MSUB this week for the mock accreditation visit picked up on this problem as well. The evaluators also noted that we are offering so many different programs with so few faculty. It was cited that counting majors (in an effort to cut ineffective programs) doesn't necessarily work either because our double majors are counted only once, usually whichever major comes first alphabetically.

Dr. Gamble responded that the Senate should do a faculty morale survey and then you can guarantee it is anonymous. Mr. Groseth agreed that his office would pay for the costs of the survey.

Dr. Gamble also noted that faculty should always have the power to say "no" to a new program. When you see a new program, don't leave it to chance. Ask for a business plan and an exit strategy if the program doesn't work out. You decide what information you want before a program can be approved.

C. Frequency of Meetings: Once a year is not enough

The Senate and Dr. Gamble agreed to meet once a semester. The next meeting will be in late February, 2008. Also, once a semester the Chair and Vice Chairs should also come to Bozeman to meet with Dr. Gamble.

Finally, Dr. Gamble noted that faculty should always express the faculty position. You can shake your finger at administration just like they can at you. Forcefully and respectfully express your opinions!

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

rjrm