

ACADEMIC SENATE MINUTES

DATE: June 25, 2003

PRESENT:	Audrey ConnerRosberg	Keith Edgerton
	Randall Gloege	Alan Davis
	Mark Hardt	Connie Landis
	Matt Redinger	
	Randy Rhine (ex-officio)	George White (ex-officio)
	Dan Zirker (ex-officio)	Janie Park (ex-officio)

ABSENT:	St. John Robinson	George Madden
	Doug Brown – <i>excused</i>	Sandie Rietz – <i>excused</i>
	Paul Bauer – <i>excused</i>	
	John Cech (ex-officio)	Joe Michels (ex-officio)
	Terrie Iverson (ex-officio)	Nichole Alley (ex-officio)
	Curt Kochner (ex-officio)	

GUESTS:	Craig Wilson	David Hood
	Ken Woosley	

PRESIDING: Keith Edgerton, Chair

Keith Edgerton called the meeting to order at 2:46 p.m. on June 25, 2003, in the Chancellor's Conference Room.

I. ITEMS – FIRST READING

Item 48 Master of Public Administration. New program.

It was stated that the development of this program began seven years ago when Bozeman approached MSU-Billings about a cooperative program. It was discussed for several years, and it was finally dropped. In the 01-02 and 02-03 academic years, discussion began again with Bozeman, but there were many issues about which institution does what. In the last nine months, interest has peaked for this program. Yellowstone County has the highest or second highest number of public employees in the state. Bozeman is entirely supportive of this program.

The program developed is a mirror of the Bozeman program, but with courses taught mostly in the evening or on weekends. It would require one new faculty member here at MSU-Billings that would also serve as the director of the program. This new faculty member would also teach some undergraduate courses, so as to expand the offerings of the Political Science discipline. Bozeman is very willing to give their services, which is a large advantage.

Bozeman had offered this degree in Helena, but that partnership has been dissolved, and along with that change, Missoula has said they will offer their MPA entirely online.

It was noted that the market survey in the proposal is four or five years old, and was a fairly informal polling of the public employees in Billings (it was not a straw poll). However, Political Science has already received numerous calls from students interested in this program. Ideally, the program would start with 12 to 15 students.

The faculty line was allocated from the pool of dollars which results when a new faculty member is hired at a lower salary as the faculty member they are replacing, or when a line cannot be filled. The actual dollars for this new line have been set aside since last year, so that they would be ready should this program finally come through.

The question was raised as to how the money was reallocated. Were things like large class size taken into account?

When filling lines the process is thus: the Deans form a priority hiring list for their college, and from those lists it is decided where the hires should be. Those Deans' lists are not developed by where the open lines are, but where a line is needed most. It was noted that MSU-Billings has the highest student/faculty ratio in the Montana University System. We should retain the students we have and ensure they have a quality education before we start any new programs. We need smaller classes across the board to sustain current programs instead of starting new ones.

It was noted that this new line for the MPA program will serve undergraduate students as well as generate new graduate majors.

It was cited that MSU-Billings has the highest amount of state funds in instruction. Bozeman makes more in grants, contracts, and non-resident students than they get from the state. We have tried to change the funding model, but that is not going to happen, so our only way to get ahead in funding is to increase FTE without increasing costs. That means new programs that bring in new students, which results in high student/faculty ratios at the same pay for the faculty.

It was noted that we have some disciplines that are below the national average of student/faculty ratios and are not as productive as other disciplines with a higher ratio. That needs to be changed. We have to be a dynamic, vital, changing institution to stay afloat, and that means we have to start new programs, sometimes at the expense of current ones. Since our funding will not be growing, we have to generate new FTE, and that is accomplished through new programs. The only possible way to reduce our student/faculty ratio is through part-time instructors.

It was cited that despite the addition of new programs and substantial reallocation of resources, the enrollment at MSU-Billings has not changed since AY82-83, even though the population of the Yellowstone Valley has substantially increased in that same period of time. It was offered that MSU-Billings needs a new institutional culture that begins to concentrate on providing quality classroom education, through a reduction in class size and a greater capability of offering more sections of existing courses, rather than developing and approving new programs with inadequate staffing. It was suggested that this would be a better approach to the future, as we have tried adding new programs without a great deal of success in boosting our enrollment in the past two decades.

It was cited that the problem of understaffing needs to be brought up when the Deans are forming their priority hiring lists, not now that the funds have been allocated and the program curriculum has been formed.

It was also noted that the Department of History, Native American Studies, Political Science, and Sociology has not met as a unit to discuss nor voted to approve or disapprove this program. It was cited, in response, that it does not make sense to have the four disciplines meet on a Political Science topic. Each discipline develops programs and all curricular changes without the aid of the other disciplines.

It was further noted that there were a number of disciplines within the university that were experiencing substantial student to faculty ratios and larger and larger class sizes, in some cases double the average of other related disciplines. This is occurring despite the fact that faculty members teaching at those ratios were expected to fulfill equal advising, research, creative, and service obligations as those disciplines with a substantially lower student/faculty ratio and was creating a huge workload inequity among faculty.

Based on data generated by the MSU-Billings Office of Institutional Research, it was noted that the discipline of History, in particular, has the highest student to faculty ratio within the university (at 27.58 to 1 averaged over the last 14 semesters) and yet staffing in that discipline has been cut substantially in the recent past. Other undergraduate programs were cited as similar examples. It was noted that staffing cuts of tenure-track lines has resulted in higher class sizes and greater teaching loads. It was cited that before we reallocate resources for new programs that may or may not attract new students, we must provide resources to sustain our existing programs—many of which are resource-starved as they are—and to begin a concerted effort at lowering the student/faculty ratio in programs that are running well above the institutional average. It was noted that it was imperative that we must begin to address the issue of academic quality, of which

lower classes sizes are a key component, in light of the fact that we will be raising our tuition substantially over the course of the next two years, resulting in a tuition and fee schedule that will be the second highest in the Montana University System.

It was reported that the two previous masters programs approved by the Senate several years ago and located in the College of Arts and Sciences (the Master of Science in Public Relations and the Master of Science in Psychology) both had experienced substantial declines in enrollment this past year.

It was noted that we are not going to cut our way out of our budget problems. We have to grow out with new programs that can produce new FTE.

It was cited that the MPA has a sunset meeting in three years. If the market has been tapped out at that time, the program will end. It was noted that all programs should have a similar sunset rule.

It was stated that this is a very high quality program. With two fully qualified instructors here and two or three in Bozeman, this program may be better than Missoula's.

⇒ Motion by Randall Gloege, seconded by Mark Hardt to approve **Item 48, the Master of Public Administration.**

⇒ Motion failed, 3 for, 3 against.

It was noted at this time that the Senate had lost a quorum and the vote taken was not valid.

It was decided that an email vote on a motion to approve Items 48 through 48.1 (the program and all new proposed courses) will be conducted to get the vote of all the Senate members on this important issue.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

rjrm