

**ACADEMIC SENATE MINUTES****DATE:** December 4, 2025

**PRESENT:** Matt Queen  
Jen Lynn  
Heather Thompson-Bahm  
John Pannell  
Paul Pope  
Sue Balter-Reitz  
Vern Gagnon (ex-officio)

Emily Arendt  
Debra Schoenfeld  
Mel Walker  
Christine Whitlatch  
Melissa Boehm  
Susan Gilbertz (ex-officio)  
Sam Boerboom (ex-officio)

**ABSENT:** Suzette Nynas\*  
Vikash Kumar (student)  
Tami Haaland (ex-officio)\*  
Lee Vartanian (ex-officio)\*  
Kim Hayworth (ex-officio)\*  
\* *excused*

Rachael Waller\*  
Kurt Toenjes (ex-officio)  
Melanie Reaves (ex-officio)\*  
Leslie Weldon (ex-officio)\*  
Eileen Wright (ex-officio)

**GUESTS:** Christina Wulf  
Bre Griffin  
Carl Castles

Cheri Johannes  
Joann Stryker  
Jason Comer

**PRESIDING:** Melissa Boehm, Vice Chair

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Melissa Boehm called the meeting to order at 3:40 p.m. in the Chancellor's Conference Room.

**I. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The changes to the bylaws for eligibility and vacancy appointments were approved by the general faculty. Of 141 faculty members, 57 voted.

**II. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

The minutes of November 6 were accepted as presented.

### III. CONSENT AGENDA

Title	Status	Received
English Bachelor of Arts Degree	Edited	11/19/2025

⇒ Motion by Sue Balter-Reitz, seconded by Paul Pope to **approve the consent agenda.**

⇒ Motion carried.

### IV. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

Proposed The College Experience (TCE) Committee	Added	11/20/2025	Bylaws
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Dr. Boehm noted that Chair Suzette Nynas did speak with the Provost and Chancellor about the TCE course. They agreed they will work to support the course financially.

⇒ Motion by Paul Pope, seconded by Matt Queen to **approve the addition of The College Experience (TCE) Committee to the bylaws.**

⇒ Motion carried.

A request for faculty to serve on the new committee will be sent out immediately.

Early Childhood Studies Minor Moratorium	Added	11/20/2025	Moratorium
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⇒ Motion by Sue Balter-Reitz, seconded by Matt Queen to **approve the Early Childhood Studies Minor moratorium.**

⇒ Motion carried.

Group 1		
BIOB 420: Evolution	Added	11/5/2025
BIOB 487: Bioinformatics	Edited	11/5/2025
BIOO 412: Animal Physiology	Edited	11/5/2025
Biology Bachelor of Science Degree	Edited	11/5/2025

⇒ Motion by Paul Pope, seconded by Matt Queen to **approve Group 1.**

Carl Castles, Chair of Biological & Physical Sciences, noted they have redesigned the Biology BS after putting the Biology BA on moratorium. The updated BS will add tracks, including pre-veterinary medicine, so students may choose an emphasis for their future career plans. MSUB already has students interested in pre-veterinary so they are able to stay in Billings and attend RVU's new veterinary school. Jason Comer,

Biological & Physical Sciences, noted that the new Evolution course brings MSUB into alignment with most science programs in the country.

Dr. Castles noted that BIOH 311 and 312 (Human Anatomy & Physiology II and Lab) were inadvertently left out of the Pre-Health Science track. They were added to the program during the meeting.

⇒ Motion carried.

Group 2		
COMT 501: Communication Law and Ethics	Edited	11/5/2025
COMX 401: Communication Law and Ethics	Edited	11/5/2025
Group 3		
COMT 565: Communication Theory	Edited	11/5/2025
COMX 400: Communication Theory	Edited	11/5/2025
Group 4		
COMT 502: Research Methods	Edited	11/19/2025
COMX 460: Research Methods	Edited	11/19/2025
Group 5		
COMT 516: Leadership & Communication	Edited	11/19/2025
COMX 426: Leadership and Communication	Edited	11/19/2025
Group 6		
COMT 521: New Media Skills	Edited	11/19/2025
COMX 431: New Media Skills	Edited	11/19/2025
Group 7		
COMT 524: Risk Crisis & Comm	Edited	11/19/2025
COMX 424: Risk Crisis & Comm	Edited	11/19/2025
Group 8		
COMT 525: Media Criticism	Edited	11/19/2025
COMX 435: Media Criticism	Edited	11/19/2025
Group 9		
COMT 526: Case Studies in PR	Edited	11/19/2025
COMX 456: Case Studies in Public Rltns	Edited	11/19/2025
Group 10		
COMT 531: Political Communication	Edited	11/19/2025
COMX 434: Political Communication	Edited	11/19/2025
Group 11		
COMT 537: Organizations and Diversity	Edited	11/19/2025
COMX 427: Organizations and Diversity	Edited	11/19/2025
Group 12		
COMT 540: Pop Culture & Cultural Studies	Edited	11/19/2025
COMX 436: Pop Culture & Cultural Studies	Edited	11/19/2025

Group 13		
COMT 561: Multicultural Media Studies	Edited	11/19/2025
COMX 438: Multicultural Media Studies	Edited	11/19/2025
Group 14		
COMT 580: Health Communication	Edited	11/19/2025
COMX 480: Health Communication	Edited	11/19/2025
Group 15		
COMT 581: Campaign Planning	Edited	11/19/2025
COMX 481: Campaign Planning	Edited	11/19/2025
Group 16		
COMT 582: Gender, Media, and Society	Edited	11/19/2025
COMX 482: Gender, Media, and Society	Edited	11/19/2025

⇒ Motion by Sue Balter-Reitz, seconded by Paul Pope to **approve Groups 2 through 16.**

Sam Boerboom, Chair of Communication, noted that Communication has been co-convening their courses for years, so this list encompasses much of their curriculum. Some of the courses have completely unique outcomes for graduate students, while other courses nest the undergraduate outcomes within the graduate outcomes. Most of the syllabi also have a statement that expectations are higher for graduate students.

It was clarified that it is stated policy wherein students who have taken a course at the undergraduate level cannot return later and take that same course at the graduate level.

Dr. Boerboom thanked Kathleen Thatcher, Director of Assessment & Accreditation, for her help with the outcomes, syllabi, and alignment with the Common Course Numbering database. He also thanked Rita Rabe Meduna for assisting in changes made to the courses as they worked through this process.

⇒ Motion carried.

Group 17		
HSTR 298: Internship/Cooperative Educ	Deleted	11/19/2025
HSTR 417: Early Mod Sci: Scientific Revl	Deleted	11/19/2025
HSTR 420: Ancient & Medieval Archaeology	Deleted	11/19/2025
HSTR 491: Special Topics	Deleted	11/19/2025
History Teaching Licensure Option Bachelor of Arts Degree	Edited	11/19/2025
History Bachelor of Arts Degree	Edited	11/19/2025

⇒ Motion by Paul Pope, seconded by Matt Queen to **approve Group 17.**

Emily Arendt, Chair of History, noted that this is clean up of courses that are redundant or have not been offered in many years.

⇒ Motion carried.

#### V. NEW BUSINESS

A question was raised as to prerequisite courses stopping students from registering, when a course is not supposed to have any prerequisites. Perhaps as part of the APR process, programs could get a report out of Banner which shows all the prerequisites for each course.

The meeting adjourned at 4:09 p.m.

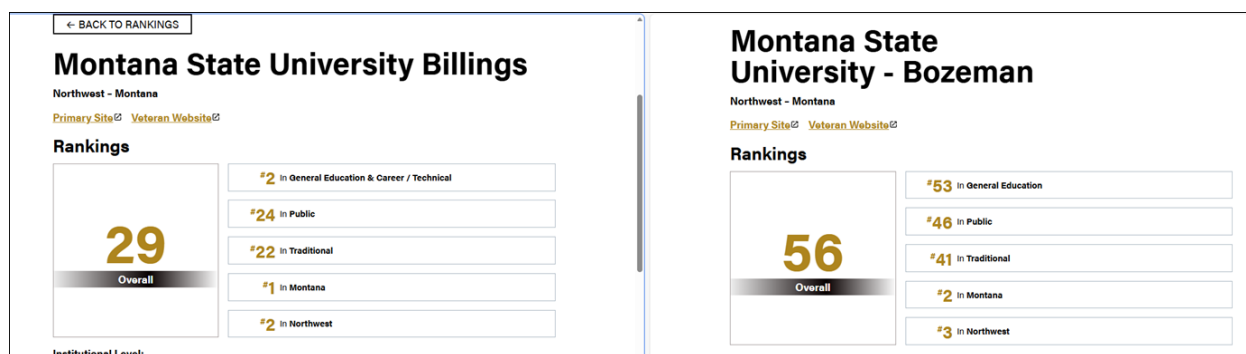
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**Below is the SAS update prepared for Academic Senate.**

The **MSUB Scholarship Application** opened on Dec. 1, 2025. Each College Dean has been asked to update Scholarship Committee leadership and membership. Financial Aid will offer Scholarship Committee workshops by college so let your Dean know if you are interested.

The **MSUB Student Health Services** Team received a positive report from their October 2025 American College Health Association accreditation report and visit. SHS has been reaccredited for three years. Congratulations to SHS Director, Jerry Girard and the team which includes faculty member, Dr. David Butler.

**MSUB improved their rankings in the Military Times:** Best for Vets institutions of higher education in 2025. Just for comparison, Shane Grantham also shared where MSU ranked. To see the full list visit [2025 Colleges – Military Times: Best for Vets](#). The Military and Veterans Success team includes Director, Shane Grantham and Certifying Official, Eric Brown. This ranking is the result of how MSUB serves veterans through support and policies so all faculty and staff contribute to this work. Special thanks to our partners in Institutional Research for their assistance in collecting data for submission.



**Spring new student Orientation** is scheduled for January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025. There will be a student engagement and support resource fair the afternoon of January 9<sup>th</sup>. Please reach out to Crystal Honeycutt if you would like to reserve a table for the event.

**Buzz Stop Holiday Food Drive** - Shout out to the College of Education for contributing the most items! MSUB gave 65 Thanksgiving food boxes to 65 students. Thank you everyone for your generosity.

**Cram Jam** is scheduled for Monday, December 8<sup>th</sup> from 8-9:30 pm in the Rimrock Café. Reach out to Associate Dean of Student Engagement and Housing, Codie Wahrman if you would like to volunteer to serve breakfast to hungry students studying for exams.

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Below are Provost Vartanian's announcements for the Senate meeting this week:

- Currently meeting with academic departments across campus. I have met with ~1/3 so far.
- Also meeting with recently Promoted/Tenured Faculty to personally congratulate them on their accomplishments and contributions. It is a pleasure to learn more about our faculty. We have an impressive team.
- This week, I am at the NWCCU Meeting in Seattle. Our first recommendation from NWCCU site visit was "In order to strengthen transparency and shared governance, the peer evaluation team recommends that Montana State University Billings enhance communication and training around financial planning and decision making. (Standards 1.B.3, 2.E.3)". I am beginning budget meetings with deans and division leaders, along with Finance Office representatives to plan for the upcoming F27 budget discussions. This will be a big theme of the coming months for Academic Affairs. Collaboration and transparency are central to this process and I look forward to these discussions.

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**Administration and Finance**

**Risk Management**

We encourage our employees, especially our drivers for the university, to complete the online Defensive Driving Course via Risk Management and Tort Division (RMTD). (You may also get a discount through your insurance if you complete it.) The State offers a free course at the [RMTD website](#) . It is a roughly two-hour YouTube video and quiz. There is a certificate that is electronically presented once completed. Please send those certificates to Baylee at [baylee.hrubes@msubillings.edu](mailto:baylee.hrubes@msubillings.edu).

**Business Services**

Completed the Inventory of Fees review.

**Facilities Services**

Working with a new local snow removal company for better coverage. This first storm presented several challenges in getting ice removed. The team is looking into options to help keep sidewalks and roads cleared. They are monitoring the heat mats placed in a few key areas in hopes they help.

Art Building – Working with State A&E on moving forward with an RFQ for design work.

**Financial Services**

Reviewing the LAD Compliance Audit Process

Welcoming a former MSUB employee to join our Payroll team – Misty Shelato. Misty is our new Payroll Technician.

Working to process the recent Collective Bargaining Agreements ratification increases to be reflected in the December 10<sup>th</sup> payroll.

Completing mid-year budget analysis and projections.

Reporting

- CUPA
- AAUP
- Risk Exposure Data
- NCAA
- BOR Athletics

Created FAMIS work group to audit the FAMIS system

### **Human Resources**

Continuing to bargain with unions

Working to implement a new onboarding process to new employees

### **Information Technology**

The search for our next Executive Director of Information Technology/CIO is underway. We have a robust pool of applicants.

We have reached 72.9% completion of the initial KnowBe4 training.



December 3, 2025

**TO:** All Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

**RE:** Graduating Senior, Student Leader, and Student Organizations Award Nominations

Student Access and Success, the Center for Engagement, and the Associated Students of MSU Billings invite each member of the MSUB campus community to consider nominating or recommending students for the following awards. In years past, nominations were launched in the spring semester. Per feedback, we are lengthening the submission timeline to offer more time to consider and submit student recommendations and nominations. Therefore, nominations will be accepted from now through **Monday, March 8 at 5pm.**

**Spring Student Awards** – [click link for criteria](#)

Student Access and Success and ASMSUB offer awards that are specific to graduating seniors. The **Outstanding Undergraduate Student Leadership Award (OUSLA)** recognizes a senior for contributions to the MSUB community inside and outside the classroom, and any MSUB employee can nominate a senior for this award. The **Golden Merit Award** is given to five seniors who have had a successful college career and gained respect in their field of study. Each dean is asked to nominate three students from their college, and a winner will be selected by the ASMSUB Executive Committee from those nominations. If you would like to recommend a student to be considered for the Golden Merit Award, please contact the appropriate college dean.

\*You will be asked to provide the nominee's major/minor, cumulative GPA, email address, and to confirm the senior has an approved graduation application, etc.

**Leadership Awards** – [click link for categories and criteria](#)

There are multiple opportunities to recognize individual student leaders and student organizations/clubs through the Leadership Awards offered by the Center for Engagement. **Student leadership and student organization recognition** seeks to highlight individual students and student organizations/clubs for their outstanding work to support campus engagement, development, and involvement on campus and in the community during the 25-26 academic year. We hope you will consider nominating a student, advisor, or organization/club.

Thank you for supporting this important award process. Specific award criteria are available at the links above. Nominations will be accepted through **Monday, March 8 at 5pm. Please review the specific award criteria and nomination forms at the links above and contact the appropriate college dean for Golden Merit recognition.**

If you have any questions, please contact [Elijah Sneigoski](#), [Bailee Stenger](#), or [Kim Hayworth](#).

Sincerely,

Elijah Sneigoski  
ASMSUB President-Elect

Bailee Stenger  
Student Engagement Coordinator

Kim Hayworth, Ph.D.  
Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success