

ACADEMIC SENATE MINUTES

DATE: March 31, 2005

PRESENT: Alan Davis
Sandie Rietz
Audrey ConnerRosberg
Keith Edgerton
Bruce Brumley
Matt Redinger
Emily Valenzuela (student)
Tasneem Khaleel (ex-officio)

Lorrie Steerey
Paul Bauer
Mary Susan Fishbaugh
Randall Gloege
Noreen Lee
Amanda Mears (student)
Janie Park (ex-officio)

ABSENT: Connie Landis – *excused*
Carl Hanson (ex-officio)
George White (ex-officio)
John Cech (ex-officio)
Curt Kochner (ex-officio)

Mark Hardt – *excused*
Joe Michels (ex-officio)
Randy Rhine (ex-officio)
Terrie Iverson (ex-officio)

GUESTS: Liz Tooley
Trudy Collins

PRESIDING: Keith Edgerton, Chair

Keith Edgerton called the meeting to order at 3:45 p.m. in room B57 of the College of Technology.

The minutes of March 3 were accepted as presented.

I. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Recruitment & Retention Task Force Report

Lorrie Steerey distributed a draft of a survey the Task Force would like faculty, administrators, students, and staff to fill out concerning their priorities for recruitment and retention. Using the results, the Task Force can decide what to do first. It was suggested that someone with experience in surveys should look over this survey to make

sure the questions give back valuable data that is not ambiguous. Dr. Steerey stated the survey should go out to all parties next month so the responses can be back by the end of this semester.

It was noted that we still need to define ourselves as a campus, and how big we want to be. It was remarked that this survey should help do that.

B. Further Budget Discussion

It was noted that there are many rumors flying around campus of faculty being cut. Janie Park, Provost, stated that the Chancellor's administrative budget group is still meeting weekly to plan for all possible contingencies, but nothing has been decided yet. We have a cut right now of 2.6% because we know what our maximum funding could possibly be, and that 2.6% is above the maximum of funding. The faculty that are part of that 2.6% have been notified that they are being cut. Other than that, no one else has been cut. We will have to scramble with part-time faculty to get through until more dollars are freed up to be reallocated to those areas of greatest need. It was noted that this practice results in a cycle of cutting: cut a faculty line, turn away students from a program, lose students, cut a faculty line, turn away students, and so on.

Dr. Park also noted that if MSU-Billings doesn't grow at about 5% per year, we lose money due to inflationary costs like salaries, utilities, and maintenance. The administration cannot make any final budget decisions until the legislature has finished, which will be sometime this summer.

It was observed that faculty morale is extremely low due to all these budget problems. Dr. Park noted that the administration is making efforts to get the faculty involved in budgeting. The morale of the faculty may well fluctuate with our budget. Amanda Mears noted that the morale issue also affects the students. The students, through the student government, need to know what is going on with the budget issues.

It was suggested that perhaps each department/unit on campus can develop a business plan to become pseudo-self supporting. That way, we could take more ownership of where we are going and what we want to do. It was noted that good business plans work together, not promoting competition among the departments.

It was stated that the Senate has all the numbers, but we need to meet with the Chancellor to discuss the reasons behind the numbers. The Senate should create a list of questions to discuss with the Chancellor to keep the discussion on task.

It was remarked that the University Budget Committee (UBC) is not a functional budgeting body. It is too big and it gets off topic easily. It was suggested that the Senate come up with some ideas for a stronger faculty role in budget discussions. It was noted that most faculty don't have a good understanding of the infrastructure of the University. They will need more of that information.

The meeting adjourned at 5:06 p.m.

rjrm