

## ACADEMIC SENATE MINUTES

**DATE:** January 26, 2006

**PRESENT:** Agnes Samples  
Paul Bauer  
Ben Marschke  
Randall Gloege  
Craig McKenzie  
Lewis Rife (student)  
Tasneem Khaleel (ex-officio)

Lorrie Steerey (*via phone*)  
Audrey ConnerRosberg  
Keith Edgerton  
Noreen Lee  
Matt Redinger  
Dan Hansen (student)  
George White (ex-officio)

**ABSENT:** Sandie Rietz  
Mark Hardt – *excused*  
David Garloff (ex-officio)  
Mary Susan Fishbaugh (ex-officio)  
John Cech (ex-officio)  
Curt Kochner (ex-officio)

Bruce Brumley – *excused*  
Mary McNally (ex-officio)  
Kirk Lacy (ex-officio)  
Terrie Iverson (ex-officio)

**GUEST:** Brent Roberts

**PRESIDING:** Keith Edgerton, Chair

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Keith Edgerton called the meeting to order at 3:38 p.m. in the Chancellor's Conference Room.

The minutes of December 8 were accepted as presented.

Keith Edgerton stated that George Madden, long time Senate member and strong faculty advocate, suffered a stroke over the winter break. Visitors can see him at St. Vincent's hospital.

### I. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

**Item 45** Emeritus nomination of Mr. Walter Utroske, Professor, Department of English and Philosophy, College of Arts and Sciences. For information.

⇒ Motion by Matt Redinger, seconded by Noreen Lee to **accept Item 45 for information.**

⇒ Motion carried.

**Item 46** Emeritus nomination of Dr. David Karnos, Professor, Department of English and Philosophy, College of Arts and Sciences. For information.

⇒ Motion by Matt Redinger, seconded by Audrey ConnerRosberg to **accept Item 46 for information.**

⇒ Motion carried.

## II. ITEM – SECOND READING

**Item 44** Motions regarding minimum grades for general education/Academic Foundations—from the minutes of 11/10/05

⇒ Motion by Lewis Rife, seconded by Matt Redinger to **approve Item 44 on second reading.**

It was noted that the COT faculty were going to meet and decide if they would have a higher minimum than the C- the Senate agreed on for Academic Foundations. Those faculty have not come to a consensus on the minimum yet.

It was observed that the repercussions of the plus/minus system are still happening for students. Provost George White noted there are more students on academic probation, and there have been several complaints from students that they didn't know the plus/minus system would be used. We have to be more explicit on syllabi to inform students of the situation. We also have to make sure the catalog matches what departments are doing. The catalog says one thing, but departments have made it known that they will accept another thing.

Keith Edgerton noted that it was the student representatives at the Board of Regents who pushed for the plus/minus system. The faculty and administrators were not too worried about the current use of plusses and minuses.

⇒ Motion carried with one abstention.

## III. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Update on Academic Foundations  
Will be postponed until next week.

B. Assessment Administrator: Proposal from the Graduate Committee (*Deferred from December*)

It was noted that an assessment administrator would be a “designated worrier” so the faculty would not have to worry about assessment. It’s too big of a job for faculty to try to do with reassigned time. However, there is no explanation of how much this position would be paid and where that funding would come from.

Provost White noted that we have not done what NWCCU asked us to do in our last evaluation: outcomes assessment. The question was raised as to whether this job really is difficult enough that faculty and administrators can’t handle it. Provost White stated that what NWCCU wants is what an MSU-Billings graduate should know—a list of skills or knowledge that any graduate should possess. We have to measure that somehow and then organize all the data. We also have to ask the students three to five years down the road if they feel they have the skills and knowledge they need in their job, as well as surveying employers about their satisfaction with our graduates’ skills and knowledge. It’s not necessarily complex, but it’s a huge task.

It was noted that perhaps instead of hiring a permanent person to be the assessment administrator, hire a consultant like the College of Education did for their NCATE review. Get a consultant to help us through this NWCCU review in 2008 and then give the task to the deans/administration.

It was noted that this assessment administrator may help the campus because he or she could devise standards for the entire university, eliminating possible confusion. It was cited that the standards for different accrediting bodies differ so much that there couldn’t be one set of standards for all programs.

Dr. Edgerton noted that the Graduate Committee is asking for the Senate’s support on this proposal. Since there are too many issues to garner support, we should respond to the Graduate Committee. If the Senate could see a more detailed need for this position, perhaps we could reconsider.

C. What are the general attributes that every MSU-Billings graduate should possess?

Provost White noted that this is something we can track and are sure our graduates will possess. Anything we expect to deliver should be measured at the beginning, midpoint, and end. Call these quality indicators or minimum standards, but we need them. It was noted that the Academic Foundations Committee (AFC) should establish these standards. It was cited that Academic Foundations assessment alone will give you midpoint data, but not the end. Provost White stated that you first have to establish what your students will learn before you start building a general education program. It was noted that the AFC did that.

It was cited that focusing entirely on Academic Foundations will not give us the skills and knowledge that any graduate, no matter the program, should have. Are those skills

and knowledge being enhanced by Academic Foundations? By upper division courses? If we don't have those skills and knowledge defined, we can't measure if our students are getting them.

It was noted that the beginning measurement could be the ACT, SAT, or COMPASS test students take to be placed in their initial classes. There is a lot of data available from those tests.

It was decided that the Senate would ask the AFC to attend the next meeting to discuss how Academic Foundations will be assessed and what data that will provide.

#### D. Academic Senate Spring Initiatives

Dr. Edgerton asked if there were any initiatives the Senators would like to take up this semester.

It was noted that we need to get back to the student evaluations of faculty. The evaluation is not valid or reliable, but it is used widely in faculty evaluations. It was cited that there was a student evaluation task force, but it has died.

It was cited that the recruitment and retention survey data has been built into a database and all we need to decide is what kind of reports to run. This task force should also be revived.

It was observed that there have been some exceptionally awkward problems with the faculty hiring process. Is there a manual that can help search committees through the process? Provost White stated that there is a hiring handbook that was created last year, but it is not working. He has asked Janet Simon, Director of Human Resources, to get a group together to fix the handbook.

It was stated that online has generated more issues as well. There are instances where a student signs up for a traditional (in-class) course, and then finds out it is online run off of a home server. The student didn't sign up for that. What students expect and what they are getting are not the same.

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

rjrm