

ACADEMIC SENATE MINUTES

DATE: May 1, 2003

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

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

PRESIDING: Keith Edgerton, Chair

Keith Edgerton called the meeting to order at 3:40 p.m. on May 1, 2003, in the Chancellor's Conference Room.

The April 24, 2003, meeting minutes were accepted.

I. ANNOUCEMENT

Bylaw changes approved by the Faculty: Chair's term to two years, Chair Elect elected in fall term of Chair's second year.

II. ITEM – REPORT

Item 52 Writing Proficiency Exit Standards Report – Sandie Rietz for the ad hoc Writing Proficiency Committee

Sandie Rietz stated that she recently sent out the Committee's final report to the faculty and received approximately six responses. Many of the questions asked were not part of the Committee's charge, such as funding issues.

The Committee decided on a portfolio system, where the student would assemble artifacts proving their writing ability. This will not duplicate already existing portfolios in some programs. The College of Business had volunteered to do some experimentation with whatever the Committee came up with.

Dr. Janie Park, Provost, stated that the Board of Regents mandated some sort of assessment of students' writing ability. This must be implemented by Fall 2004. She also noted that the portfolio system is the best but most expensive and labor-intensive method.

It was noted that since we have a year, we should try some experimenting before a plan is implemented. Whatever the University decides on needs to be discussed openly and fine tuned by all faculty.

It was cited that the portfolio system implies a supervisory position to monitor the artifacts to assure that they match the criteria. That will also cost money.

It was noted that at the University of Montana, students take an exam when they declare a major. If they fail the test, they cannot get into an upper division writing course which they must pass to graduate. It is unknown whether there is any recourse for the students if they fail the writing exam.

It was noted that MSU-Billings should have a support system so that if a student is not passing, they can get help so they can pass the writing proficiency assessment, whatever it may be.

It was cited that having a portfolio system rather than a sit-down writing test could enable students to cheat (have someone else write their portfolio papers). A sit-down exam assures that the student is actually doing the writing. It was cited that a test *or* a portfolio will cost time and money.

It was stated that we need to let students know as soon as possible that this is on the way.

It was noted that this responsibility should not fall on just the English Department. We also need to set the criteria for what we call good writing, and that will be a contested subject. The faculty who read the papers—exam or portfolio—will need to be trained and will have hundreds of papers to read, which is another huge investment.

It was cited that the high school exit exam for writing uses volunteers to read the papers, and those volunteers were trained by ACT. It was cited that the Senate could contact Jan Clinard of the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, who designed the high school test procedure.

It was noted that the College of Business could run the portfolio system for the Fall 2003 semester, and at the same time, students not in the COB could be tested using an exam. This could be done as part of a class early in the Fall 2003 semester.

It was noted that a portfolio system could make MSU-Billings more appealing because we offer support so the student has a better chance of passing the writing assessment. We will teach the students to write, not just give them a test.

⇒ Motion by Mark Hardt, seconded by Matt Redinger to **accept Item 52 for information.**

⇒ Motion carried.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. George B. Thank You – A draft is being developed.

B. Election of Officers: Chair, Three Vice Chairs, Secretary

By acclamation, the following officers were elected:

Chair: Keith Edgerton
(This will be a two-year term, as per the revised bylaws.)

Vice Chairs: Sandie Rietz
Randall Gloege
St. John Robinson

Secretary: Mark Hardt

C. MPA Update – Janie Park and Dan Zirker.

Dean Zirker stated that the MPA is currently awaiting second reading at the College of Arts and Sciences Curriculum Council. It is in the Dean's Office, available for faculty to read and comment. Dr. Park noted that the Item at the Board of Regents (which does not contain the curriculum) will go on the action agenda for the May 29-30 meeting if Northwest allows the joint degree. If we cannot negotiate with Northwest successfully, we will have to pull it from the Board agenda.

It was noted that we need to get this proposal approved by the Board because it's been such an on-again, off-again proposal. We must strike while we can. It was cited that the situation where the courses are taught here and the degree awarded from Bozeman will not occur. We will not agree to that.

It was noted that this program should be approved by the Academic Senate before reaching the Board of Regents. It was then noted that the Senate tying itself up in this political clash will only be a waste of our time.

Dr. Park noted that she did not expect the curriculum to take this long to come up through the committees. If she had known it would take this long, she would have brought something to the Senate regarding the new program.

D. General Education Committee Update – Mark Hardt.

Dr. Hardt handed out a document explaining what the committee has done, and why they are doing such. He noted that the Committee will meet during the summer with Drs. Park and Zirker to assure they are all on the same page.

It was noted that the revised Gen Ed Program could be put out as an addendum to the catalog and implemented in Fall 2004. It was stated that the shell or structure of the program could be taken to faculty this fall (Fall 2003) for their responses.

It was then cited that the Gen Ed Program is tied to Outcomes Assessment, and so they must go forward together.

The revised Gen Ed Program will be further discussed at the fall Retreat.

E. Budget Report

Not much is known about the actual numbers at this point, or what will result from the legislature's actions. We only know that we will have less money next year than we have this year.

Sandie Rietz stated that at the last University Budget Committee meeting, the committee was asked to assess the proposals for Campus Sustainability—the grants being provided by MSU. She distributed the handout on the point system that was to be used, and noted that the writers of the proposal did not see this system before or during the composition of their proposals.

Janie Park noted that Bozeman is telling us to look at a 12% tuition increase to offset the deficit.

F. The Year in Review

Dr. Park wanted to note that the Academic Senate has done an excellent job of “taking hold” of both Gen Ed and Writing Proficiency, and she encourages the Senate to continue their great work.

The Senate thanked Rita Rabe Meduna for her excellent work for the Senate this year by sending the following memo to the Chancellor:

Dear Chancellor Sexton:

As it did in 2002, the Academic Senate would like to take the opportunity to alert you to the outstanding effort put forth this year by Ms. Rita Rabe Meduna, who divides her time as the Academic Senate's, UCC's, and General Education Committee's secretary, responsibilities in your office, and the office of the Provost. Her work this year for the Academic Senate has continued to be truly exceptional.

Rita is unfailingly professional and consistently positive and cheerful despite the myriad complexities and demanding personalities she must deal with on a daily basis. She anticipates and often pre-empts problems the Senate might face and as such she has enabled the body to run in the most efficient manner in recent memory. We all are aware of the many staff members at MSU-Billings who go the extra mile and who take tremendous pride in what they do. Rita typifies those hard-working, dedicated folks. She has done a truly outstanding job in all respects and has the warmest appreciation of the entire Academic Senate. We hope you extend your personal gratitude to her as well. Whatever we are paying her isn't nearly enough. She's a true gem.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

rjrm