

ACADEMIC SENATE MINUTES

DATE: April 14, 2005

PRESENT: Alan Davis
Sandie Rietz
Mary Susan Fishbaugh
Randall Gloege
Noreen Lee
Matt Redinger
Amanda Mears (student)
Tasneem Khaleel (ex-officio)

Lorrie Steerey
Audrey ConnerRosberg
Keith Edgerton
Bruce Brumley
Connie Landis
Emily Valenzuela (student)

ABSENT: Mark Hardt – *excused*
Carl Hanson (ex-officio)
George White (ex-officio)
Randy Rhine (ex-officio)
Terrie Iverson (ex-officio)

Paul Bauer – *excused*
Joe Michels (ex-officio)
John Cech (ex-officio)
Janie Park (ex-officio)
Curt Kochner (ex-officio)

PRESIDING: Keith Edgerton, Chair

Keith Edgerton called the meeting to order at 3:43 p.m. in the Missouri room of the SUB.

The minutes of April 7 were accepted as presented.

I. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Create Faculty Task Force on Budgeting – Lorrie Steerey

Lorrie Steerey stated that the Budget Committee in the Senate's bylaws is perfectly good. In that committee, they saw all the budgets and designated accounts. It was noted that the Chancellor created the University Budget Committee (UBC) and the Senate Committee became redundant. It was stated that everyone agrees the UBC doesn't work. The Senate should recommend to disband the UBC and revive the Senate Budget Committee.

It was remarked that the UBC is an honest attempt to get all areas of campus represented, but it is ultimately an exercise in futility. The Administration doesn't listen to the UBC's recommendations.

It was stated that the Senate should adopt a resolution to disband the UBC and re-institute the Senate Budget Committee. It was noted that perhaps the Senate should speak with the Chancellor before making such a resolution. It was further noted that even if the UBC is disbanded and the Senate Committee revived, it won't be in time for this year's budget issues.

It was observed that there is a bigger problem with budgeting on this campus. The cuts we have recently made are opportunistic and do not follow a vision for the University—the overall campus and what it needs. It was noted that there is a vision for where we are going, but we don't know what it is. We developed the list of strategic initiatives at the beginning of last fall, and those have been ignored. It was suggested that for the meeting with the Chancellor, the Senate should request the Chancellor bring his written vision and mission for the University.

B. Create List of Budget Questions/Topics for Chancellor Sexton Discussion

1. The UBC is ineffective and the Senate intends to revive the Academic Senate Budget Committee, which will do a better job.
2. The Chancellor's vision and mission for the University, written down.
3. The balance of lecturers, fixed term, LOAs, etc. Also the ratio of administrators to faculty and staff to faculty—have they changed over time?

C. Legislative Transfer Audit

Keith Edgerton reported that the Legislature has noted problems with transferability in the Montana University System, and the Board of Regents wants to be as responsive as possible to the Legislature. The BOR is currently working on policies for transferability of general education and GPAs, minimum grade transfers, and other issues. They will most likely make policy at the May BOR meeting. Some units use plus/minus grading, while others do not, and the BOR is considering a blanket policy on plus/minus grading.

Emily Valenzuela, student, stated that anyone who has gone to a school with plus/minus grading usually hates it. It's more paperwork and more stress for the students and faculty. It was noted that too much focus on grades is inappropriate. As long as students learn something, we have helped them. It was further noted that Bozeman and Missoula are not going to change because MSU-Billings doesn't want plus/minus grading.

⇒ Motion by Lorrie Steerey, seconded by Randall Gloege that **MSU-Billings does not go to the plus/minus grading system.**

⇒ Motion carried with 1 abstention.

Keith Edgerton also noted that the BOR has taken up the Indian Education For All initiative. This could lead to every student needing to take a Native American related course. How much of the content is Native American is still up for debate: one Native American course or three courses with elements of Native American culture, history, etc. Dr. Edgerton remarked to the BOR that this will require additional faculty to teach every student on campus, and they spoke of reallocation of funds. They are apparently not planning on funding this initiative. It was noted that if high schools get the Indian Education component taken care of, we don't have to do it.

D. Academic Senate Bylaws: Are we outside the lines?

Sandie Rietz stated that being the Chair of the Senate is a lot of work and it should not be for four years; two years is long enough. Narrowing our representation at the BOR meetings to one person for a long period of time is not good for us, because the more people you have at those meetings, the better off you are.

The Chair Elect will be elected this fall, and will attend that year's BOR meetings. Lorrie Steerey stated she would be interested in being the Chair Elect.

The meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

rjrm