

ACADEMIC SENATE MINUTES

DATE: September 29, 2005

PRESENT:	Agnes Samples	Sandie Rietz
	Audrey ConnerRosberg	Keith Edgerton
	Randall Gloege	Bruce Brumley
	Noreen Lee	Craig McKenzie
	Matt Redinger	Lewis Rife (student)
	Tasneem Khaleel (ex-officio)	George White (ex-officio)
	Curt Kochner (ex-officio)	

ABSENT:	Mark Hardt – <i>excused</i>	Lorrie Steerey – <i>excused</i>
	Paul Bauer – <i>excused</i>	
	Russ Lord (ex-officio)	Joe Michels (ex-officio)
	Mary Susan Fishbaugh (ex-officio)	John Cech (ex-officio)
	Kirk Lacy (ex-officio)	Terrie Iverson (ex-officio)

GUEST: Curtis Sherrodd (student)

PRESIDING: Keith Edgerton, Chair

Keith Edgerton called the meeting to order at 3:40 p.m. in room B36 at the College of Technology.

The minutes of September 15 were accepted as presented.

I. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Open At-Large Position

Keith Edgerton stated that he sent out an email beating the bushes for a new At-Large Senator. Ben Marschke, University Lecturer, indicated his interest, got a petition signed, and has already returned it to the Senate Office. A fully tenured faculty member has also indicated interest, but has not returned a signed petition. The deadline for turning in petitions was September 7. The Senate discussed the risks inherent for a Lecturer sitting on the Senate, but the bylaws do not bar a Lecturer from serving. It was noted that this is

adding an additional burden to an already busy position. It was cited that Dr. Marschke has been warned of the risks involved and is still interested in the position.

The question was raised as to whether the CBA will allow a University Lecturer to serve on University-wide committees. As no one had a copy of the CBA, the language could not be verified.

The Senate agreed that Dr. Marschke is seated as a Senator, barring issues with the CBA.

B. BSLS Quality Issues

It was observed that while the BSLS started out as a well-intentioned degree, it has become a less rigorous way to get a degree. It was noted that BS degrees have both a language and math requirement—are these rules being applied to BSLS students?

Tasneem Khaleel, Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, stated that the students must get a “C” or better in all courses in their thematic concentration, and that departments are allowed to interpret the language and math requirements as they see fit. The BSLS was originally a degree completion program for general studies students who have hundreds of credits. Dean Khaleel further noted that she approves all the BSLS plans of study. If they don’t make sense, she sends them back.

It was noted that Dan Gross has observed that the Communication and Theatre Department has 400 majors, but at least 300 of those are BSLS students with a thematic concentration in Communication. Dean Khaleel noted that we are advertising the Communication thematic concentration, which is why there are so many.

It was cited that the general feeling in many departments in the College of Arts and Sciences is that the BSLS is a “back door” that students can take if they just want to finish their degree and no longer care about completing the requirements of a BA or BS. It was noted that Lorrie Steerey has heard of cases where students with a BSLS Business thematic concentration are claiming that they have a bachelor’s degree in business when they do not.

Noreen Lee cited a case where one of her health promotion students failed three of the core health promotion courses, so he is going to switch to a BSLS. He will have a self-designed BSLS with a health promotion thematic concentration, and tell people he has a degree in health promotion.

It was observed that we should not force a student to complete a program that is not a good fit for them. Any time we limit options for students we are in danger.

Provost George White noted that NorthWest will also want to know what kinds of knowledge and skills those BSLS students are supposed to have. It was cited that there are so many different people and so many different thematic concentrations that it will be impossible to have a set of outcomes for this degree. Dean Khaleel noted that the

outcomes of the thematic concentrations are more clearly articulated than most of our other programs.

Curt Kochner, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, noted that it has really helped to raise the upper division course requirement to 24 credits (a change that was made in 2004-2005). He suggested a possible additional requirement that a certain number of courses in the thematic concentration be upper division. It was observed that this requirement would help ensure the quality of the degree. Dean Khaleel noted that almost all of the thematic concentrations will already meet this requirement.

It was suggested that we discuss this again next week, and perhaps invite Dan Gross and Loyd Knudsen to give the Senate a quick overview of the program and how the faculty are affected. The Senate agreed.

C. RACE Application Changes

(from email 9/19/05)

Good morning, Keith. The RACE Committee met last Friday to review the application for this year. We are recommending the following:

- 1) Under the Guidelines sheet (#2, second bullet) add “or grant proposals for additional funding” after “performances” (delete the “or” before that).
- 2) On the Application we are adding the following: “Would you like the Grants Office to contact you regarding potential funding beyond RACE?”
- 3) Application: “Does your application require Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from the Office of Research Compliance? ___ YES ___ NO
If yes, project funds will be released upon approval” (and we’d put the web address here for ORC)
- 4) Application: Write a brief description of each account on the Budget so new grant writers understand what Contracted Services are (for example).

We would like to ask Brenda Brakke to develop an EXCEL Spreadsheet that applicants could use for their project applications (it would include the various benefit percentages, etc.).

Keith Edgerton stated that he and Sue Barfield, Chair of the RACE Committee, will meet with the Chancellor next week to talk about RACE funding.

⇒ Motion by Sandie Rietz, seconded by Matt Redinger to **approve the listed changes to the RACE application.**

⇒ Motion carried.

D. BOR Policy Changes

Dr. Edgerton noted that the Board of Regents did not further discuss any of the policy changes, so they are set as is. It was cited that we need to inform the faculty about plus/minus grading. It was noted that a syllabus is essentially a contract, so faculty should not start using the plus/minus this semester, because the students would not have been informed at the beginning of the class that the plus/minus grading system would be used. To do otherwise is risking litigation. It was cited that the Senate cannot tell the faculty they cannot use plus/minus grading. Dr. Edgerton stated that he would draft an email that explains the situation and will send it to the Senators for review. It was observed that there is an inherent unfairness in combining the two grading systems, but the Regents were responding to pressures from the Legislature to make transfer within the Montana University System simpler.

Dr. Edgerton also stated that at the BOR meeting last week, the Board approved massive pay increases for the CEOs of the Universities. They will be increased to an average of the salaries of presidents in surrounding states. Audrey ConnerRosberg noted that they said they would be going outside of the State Pay Plan to fund these increases, and faculty stated that they could then do that too. It was further noted that it seems cruel to give these huge increases for administrators, when there are staff people barely above the poverty line. Those people should be the first priority.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

rjrm