

**ACADEMIC SENATE MINUTES**

**DATE:** October 10, 2024

**PRESENT:** Suzette Nynas  
Josh Hill  
Debra Schoenfeld  
Susan Gregory  
John Pannell  
Paul Pope  
Sarah Keller  
Vikash Kumar (student)  
Susan Gilbertz (ex-officio)  
Sue Balter-Reitz (ex-officio)  
Kim Hayworth (ex-officio)

Matt Queen  
Jennifer Scroggins  
Heather Thompson-Bahm  
Kari Dahle-Huff  
Austin Bennett  
Melissa Boehm  
Lamiya Husen (student)  
Kurt Toenjes (ex-officio)  
Vern Gagnon (ex-officio)  
Leslie Weldon (ex-officio)  
Eileen Wright (ex-officio)

**ABSENT:** Tami Haaland (ex-officio)\*  
Sam Boerboom (ex-officio)  
\* *excused*

Melanie Reaves (ex-officio)

**GUESTS:** Stefani Hicswa  
Cheri Johannes

Kathleen Thatcher

**PRESIDING:** Suzette Nynas, Chair

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Suzette Nynas called the meeting to order at 3:40 p.m. in the Chancellor's Conference Room.

I. ANNOUNCEMENTS

ResearchFest is today at 5:00 p.m. at Craft Local.

II. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

The minutes of September 26 were accepted as presented.

### III. CHANCELLOR, PROVOST, & VICE CHANCELLOR REPORTS

#### **Provost Report**

Dr. Eskandari could not be here today, but he sends his sincerest thanks and gratitude.

Sue Balter-Reitz, Special Assistant to the Provost, noted that the CTL will be offering Canvas training sessions October 21 and 22. The sessions are for faculty to learn the new online learning management system, and they can then train other faculty on campus. Jennifer Scroggins, Co-Director of the CTL, noted the sessions will be 90 minutes and are for faculty interested in getting a jump on the new program. Some courses will be migrated for some trial runs in the Spring semester, so doing the training in October will prepare for that.

#### **Vice Chancellor for Student Access & Success Kim Hayworth**

Dr. Hayworth noted there will be a session on the higher education market landscape, presented by Ruffalo Noel Levitz, on Tuesday, October 15 at 9:00 a.m. in the Glacier room. National enrollment trends, FAFSA filing rates, discount percentages, and other information spanning the past three years will be presented.

The scholarship committee meetings are being scheduled. COE is done, City College and COB are scheduled, and CHPS and CLASS are still searching for a time that works for everyone.

Vice Chancellor Hayworth cited the Fall enrollment press release went out today, but would like to take a deeper look at some of our numbers:

- Total head count is 4,129, up 37 (1%) over last Fall
  - Undergrad is up 116
  - Graduate is down 79
- Of the 4,129 total head count, 1,174 are Dual Enrollment students
- Overall FTE is down 1.8%
  - Undergrad down 6 FTE
  - Graduate down 42 FTE
- First-time freshmen are down 6 head count
- 68% of our first-time freshmen are from Yellowstone County, an increase of 6%
- Yellowstone County also contributed 39% of our transfer-in students
- Overall retention is 59.58%, which is up 2% over Fall 2023

The question was raised as to how faculty can help. Dr. Hayworth responded that one-on-one outreach is effective. She will return with additional recommendations. It was also suggested that we compare our numbers to the rest of the MUS for any state-wide trends.

#### **Vice Chancellor for Administration & Finance Leslie Weldon**

Ms. Weldon reported the FY25 budget report is out on the Budget webpage. Financial Services is working through two audits, but they are down a couple of people, so the

work has been slow. They will make a presentation to Jacket Leadership Team on the budget at the next meeting.

Business Services is collaborating with Bozeman on a new online system for students to pay in installments. We work one-on-one with students for installments and will continue to do so, but this will provide an additional resource.

IT reports that 67% of faculty and staff have completed the KnowBe4 training. They are also testing a new Service Desk software.

The surplus sale is on now.

There is a new ADA ramp being built on the north-east corner of the P.E. Building, which is a difficult building to access.

The Well Check is October 22-23 and flu shots will be available.

### **Chancellor Report**

Dr. Hicswa thanked the Senate for feedback at the last meeting on Interim Provost solutions. She announced earlier today that Richard Beer, former Interim Dean of the COB, will be the Interim Provost, starting November 4. The search for a permanent Provost is on its way. The committee, chaired by Cheri Johannes, Registrar and Director of the Office of Academic Success, will meet October 23 to review the position description. Once that is done, the position will be posted. The desired start date is July 1, 2025, but it's possible we could get someone sooner.

The Chancellor also noted that she met with the Senate Executive Committee and would like to meet with the Senators, over a meal, to learn what concerns the Senators. Some small group meetings will be set up.

## **IV. OTHER REPORTS**

### **AI Subcommittee Report, Austin Bennett**

Mr. Bennett noted the Committee has met four times this semester, to review laws at the federal and state level, as well as NWCCU policy. They benchmarked aspirant and peer schools, most of which do not have policies yet. They will put together a draft policy, but there are issues revolving around FERPA and privacy that are not easily addressed with a single policy. They will meet with IT, the Registrar's Office, the CTL, and the faculty unions, and the draft policy will eventually need to be vetted with legal, as well.

### **Bylaws Subcommittee Report**

Dr. Nynas reported that the group has discussed electronic voting instead of paper ballots; term limits to align with the positions of Senate; reconstituting the Budget Committee; and working with Mr. Bennett to create an Honors Committee similar to the Graduate Committee, to bring curriculum oversight under the Senate.

Dr. Nynas also reported that the Senate Executive Committee is working on the Emeriti Policy. It should be completed by the end of this semester. Therefore, emeriti nominations are paused at this time. Nominations will be heard once the updated policy has been approved by the Senate.

V. ITEM FOR APPROVAL

Title	Status	Received	Request Type
Catalog Errors Policy	Added	10/4/2024	Policy

⇒ Motion by Paul Pope, seconded by Matt Queen to **approve the policy**.

It was noted the phrasing “in most cases” is not suitable for policy. The policy will be revised.

⇒ Motion by Sarah Keller to **table** the policy until the next meeting.

VI. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

**A. Changes to Administrator Evaluations**

This year was to be Dean evaluations. However, the Senate Executive Committee has decided to move the Vice Chancellor evaluations up to this year (instead of 2025-26), and include the Chancellor. Susan Gilbertz will be the administrator to sit in on the evaluation of the Vice Chancellors and Chancellor.

Paul Pope noted that he and Jennifer Scroggins met to discuss updating the evaluation instrument. The Vice Chancellor instrument will be very similar to those used for the Provost and Chancellor.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

The Foundation is cleaning up some academic accounts. If one resides with your Department or program, please check with Jeff Clarke and Krista Montague. This is especially important if there has been no activity on the account for a while. Also, include the Dean in your correspondence; they are happy to help.

The meeting adjourned at 4:13 p.m.

rjrm