

# Faculty Senate Agenda

March 31, 2023

- I. Welcome and Minutes (<https://www.mtech.edu/facultystaff/facultysenate/minutes/index.html>)

## Approvals for March 10, 2023 Meeting Minutes

- II. None at this time (though discussion items may be actionable as the body sees fit)

### Informational Items

- III. Tara Policy, Effective Fall 2023 (see attached)
- IV. Chair/Vice Chair Reports
  - a. All Faculty Meeting Scheduling- potential dates in the afternoon- Friday April 14, Tuesday April 18, Wednesday April 19, Wednesday April 26, Thursday April 27, Friday April 28
  - b. Updating Senate Roster/Future Elections April 14 or 28
  - c. Meeting on May 5<sup>th</sup> for CRC items (location to be determined)

### Discussion Items

- V. Old Business (from previous meetings)
  - a. Adjunct Faculty Pay (from 9/28/22 meeting)- see below
  - b. Confidence and Professionalism Recovery Plan Recommendations- see attached
  - c. Update Information on Student Evaluations- see below and attached
- VI. New Business-
  - a. Library Concerns
  - b. Filling administrative roles- see below
  - c. Change to Faculty Staff Handbook under Chancellor's Duties- see below
  - d. Research Roles Committee, Agenda Item for Faculty Senate- see below

#### **V.a. Adjunct Pay (from 9/28/2022)**

I was able to communicate with Vanessa, and the rate of pay for union faculty on overload is \$1100 per credit hour. The adjunct rate for all others is \$1000 per credit hour, as this rate has been in effect since the late 1990s/early 2000s, I would like to add it as a discussion item to piggy back on our discussions of overload.

#### **Resolutions:**

The Faculty Senate requests that the Provost's office revise the adjunct pay policies and adopt the model used at the University of Montana for determining adjunct pay. In particular, set the adjunct salary floor based on the negotiated salary floor for equivalent positions, and allow a per-credit salary above the floor based on negotiations with the department and the adjunct (within budgetary restrictions).

The Faculty Senate requests that the Provost's office develop a merit system for adjuncts which allows a higher per-credit salary based on years of satisfactory service.

#### **Follow up (from 12/01/2022)**

Senator Buckley identified 2 proposals

1. Adopt the model used by the University of Montana: Start with a floor and allow a per-credit salary above the floor based on negotiations with the department and the adjunct (within budgetary restrictions).
2. Request that the Provost's office develop a merit system for adjuncts which allows a higher per-credit salary based on years of satisfactory service.

The discussion focused on the financial impacts of this plan. Additional discussion questioned how different departments were using adjuncts and that class sized should be included as a proposal. The discussion lead to the following requests:

- a. Asking Ron Muffick, the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, if he would be able to help identify the impact.
- b. Asking Department Heads two questions:
  1. How are you using adjuncts
  2. How difficult is it to get adjuncts

#### **V.c.**

Please add these files and this email text to the agenda to be emailed out so faculty senate members can review and refer to their departments. They relate to student evaluations of teaching. Included is board of regents policy. Our own FSH is online.

We still need to get student members and other faculty to serve on this study committee.

The American Association of University Professors is where our statement on academic freedom comes from, and they provide considerable and credible guidance on academic matters.

The other articles echo what AAUP's present.

The consensus is that student evaluation of teaching is deeply flawed across the board and should not be used as a sole determination of teaching effectiveness. It can be used to identify some problem areas but that's about it.

At MT Tech, we have a survey that is too long, repeats itself, and apparently has never undergone any validation process to demonstrate its utility in assessing teaching effectiveness.

MT Tech has also failed to properly administer the evaluations for many, many years, with many survey instruments getting lost or mis-ascribed to the wrong class/faculty member. Further, response rates are inadequate. And of course, we have evidence and instances of tampering reported.

BOR 705-3 and FSH 205.4.3 (newest edition) require that assessment includes student evaluations but also does not allow their exclusive use in assessment. These governing policies require that assessment include other methods and metrics. Likewise, many department unit standards include student evaluations, but also require other methods of assessment.

Bottom line:

1. We need a shorter and a validated set of survey questions for student evaluations.
2. We need to increase the response rate.
3. We need to prevent loss, mis-assigning, and tampering issues.
4. We need to address the "elephant in the room" that MT Tech has likely made decisions based upon long known-flawed data and processes.
5. We need to better define where student evaluations fit in overall teaching assessment - what weighting, what metrics, etc., and what other methods and their weighting and metrics will be.

The abstract below sums it up (I've spaced out the abstract sections):

*"Lessons Learned from Research on Student Evaluation of Teaching in Higher Education*

*Bob Uttl*

*Abstract*

*In higher education, anonymous student evaluation of teaching (SET) ratings are used to measure faculty's teaching effectiveness and to make high-stakes decisions about hiring, firing, promotion, merit pay, and teaching awards. SET have many desirable properties: SET are quick and cheap to collect, SET means and standard deviations give aura of precision and scientific validity, and SET provide tangible seemingly objective numbers for both high-stake decisions and public accountability purposes.*

***Unfortunately, SET as a measure of teaching effectiveness are fatally flawed. First, experts cannot agree what effective teaching is. They only agree that effective teaching ought to result in learning. Second, SET do not measure faculty's teaching effectiveness as students do not learn more from more highly rated professors. Third, SET depend on many teaching effectiveness irrelevant factors (TEIFs) not attributable to the professor (e.g., students' intelligence, students' prior knowledge, class size, subject). Fourth, SET are influenced by student preference factors (SPFs) whose consideration violates human rights legislation (e.g., ethnicity, accent). Fifth, SET are easily manipulated by chocolates, course easiness, and other incentives.***

***However, student ratings of professors can be used for very limited purposes such as formative feedback and raising alarm about ineffective teaching practices.***"

**VI.b.**

For the agenda, I would like the faculty senate to consider a resolution to stop hiring any more high-level administrative positions, including filling vacancies.

We have apparently always been under the University of Montana. This whole "special focus" and "separation" were apparently not allowed.

Thus, we needlessly and expensively duplicate many administrative management functions of UM. Covid showed us that we can do a lot more online. If we are to recover enrollment and offer the necessary courses, we need more faculty, not bureaucracy. We can probably hire two faculty members for each of these administrative positions.

- Why do we need a provost here? Can't the overall provost at UM handle these duties?
- Why do we need a Dean of Students here? Can't UM handle those management tasks?
- Are there any other positions that are duplicative? I can think of several more.

My personal opinion is that these management positions should be in Missoula, and staff should be present here to interact in person. If something rises above staff, it can be handled by UM management, either online or they can travel over for the day. Our staff in those areas would report to their respective managers in Missoula.

Ultimately, we all report to Seth Bodner through some chain or other.

We appear to be facing even worse budget crises. No students, no budget, no school. No courses, no degrees, no students, no school.

#### **VI.c.**

For faculty senate, add to faculty staff handbook under chancellor's duties:

"The chancellor shall report actual enrollment and budget data to the faculty for the current semester by the 21<sup>st</sup> day of classes."

We can adjust the language as needed. It seems that every other campus in the system, whose numbers are generally good or improving, sounds the trumpets as soon as they can.

#### **VI.d. Research Roles Committee**

##### **Committee Members:**

--Peter Lucon, chair

--Robert Pal, CLSPS rep

--Jessica Andriolo, research associate rep [teaches in both CLSPS/SME]

--Bowen Deng, combined research/teaching responsibilities [current reporting line through research]

--Jerry Downey, advisor/supervisor of research associate rep and SME rep

##### **Committee Charge:**

Define research faculty and staff positions for inclusion in the Faculty Staff handbook (FSH), to replace the current section of research in the prior version. Proactively define appointments to ensure equity, opportunities for professional advancement, delineation of opportunities and responsibilities at Montana Tech, and prepare for growth in research faculty and staff. Prepare a document for inclusion in the FSH, and present a case to the faculty senate for inclusion of the research structure.

**Outline of Roles to be Defined:**

- Research Staff

1. Research Engineer or Scientist\*
2. Postdoctoral Researcher\*
3. Research Associate\*

- Research Faculty

1. Research Assistant Professor\*
2. Research Associate Professor\*
3. Research Professor\*
4. Distinguished Researcher\*

- Center Director\*\*

\*Please note that these are non-tenure track positions that are all funded by research dollars or indirect funds and do not impact the state budget for Montana Tech.

\*\*A center director may be salaried on research or state dollars or both and may be tenured in a department.