MINUTES
Faculty Senate Meeting
Nov.14, 2002

1. Members in attendance: John Brower (chair), Mary MacLaughlin, Andrea Stierle, , Chip Todd, Dave Carter, Grant Mitman, Doug Cameron, John Metesh. Absent: Danette Melvin, Rick Appleman.

2. Minutes of the last meeting were approved as submitted.

3. Committee reports:
    Mary MacLaughlin will submit two Research Advisory Committee reports soon.

4. Old Business:
a.   Satisfaction survey: Dave Carter will finalize the list of campus offices and officers to be surveyed, and will circulate to the senate for final comment.
b. Meeting dates for the last two senate meetings of the semester were changed.   Dec. 5th becomes Tuesday, Nov. 26th, and Dec. 19th becomes Thurs. Dec. 12th.

5. New Business:
a.   The senate-sponsored faculty forum on the new evaluation forms and process was held as scheduled, 3:30 PM, Thursday, Nov. 7th.   The senate discussed comments and observations made by participants, and recommends that the new evaluation forms/process not be implemented this semester.   More work needs to be done to produce a system that the faculty feels is fair and useful.
b.   A summary of discussions at the forum, and the senate's recommendation
       follows:

Summary
Faculty Evaluation Forum
Nov. 7, 2002
Submitted by John Brower, Senate Chair

1. An agenda/discussion list was distributed to attendees, about 30 or so faculty plus VCAAR Susan Patton.
AGENDA:
PART I – THE EVALUATION PROCESS AND PROCUDURE
 Introduction by Senate chair:
Areas of concern about the evaluation process.
a. What is it that needs to be fixed? If needed, aren't there valid, proven surveys already
       in existence?
b. What is the goal of the new form and process?
                    -Improve teaching?
                    -Improve courses?
                    -Information for merit pay?
                    -Numerical ranking for job preservation/elimination?
                    -North campus, south campus, part-time?
c. The administrative processing involves non-faculty people, and too many hands.
    Great risk of personal damage from leaks and gossip, and errors.

e. In the old system, nobody saw the forms but the professor. New system, results
   go to department heads.
f. Faculty do not see the raw forms underlying the evaluation. Great potential for
unintentional errors or mix-ups, or in the worst case, mischief.
PART II – THE ACTUAL QUESTIONS
a. Do the questions measure what they are supposed to?
b. Are the questions valid ones for students to use in grading their professors and
courses?
c. What would the questions be, if they were written by students?

2. The forum began with an explanation by VCAAR Susan Patton regarding NWASC's
exit statement on their last visit that Montana Tech needs to implement a systematic
faculty evaluation policy as soon as possible. An earlier attempt by a faculty committee
failed to produce a common evaluation form and process. Lack of commonality among
department procedures makes it impossible to conduct uniform evaluations of faculty up
for tenure and promotion. In order to meet NWASC's concern, this past spring semester
a subcommittee of the department heads was appointed to draft an evaluation
form/questionnaire, and determine the administrative process for data compilation and
review. The subcommittee presented their final report by the end of summer. Thirteen
standardized questions were selected from a guidebook on evaluations by Aurreola
(Development of a Comprehensive Faculty Evaluation System). Additional space is
provided on the form for departmental questions, and there are spaces for written
comments on the back side.

3. In the discussion that followed, nobody raised objections to the idea of or need for
evaluation of courses or the professors who teach them. Grave concerns were raised over
specific questions, and the impact that they could have on the teacher. This is especially
critical in view of the role of teaching evaluations in faculty retention and promotion
decisions. Some of the 13 questions were not challenged, but several were, as noted
above.

4. Many people felt that implementation of the questions and process this semester is
premature, and want more time for review and comment before "buying into" a new
process. Several "must not do" items from the Aurreola guide book were presented as
examples of what actually has been done in preparing and presenting the evaluation form
and process. Concern was expressed about the evaluations passing through too many
non-academic hands, which might even include student employees tasked with
compilation and summarizing of scores and comments. Damaging leaks and gossip
could result. Moreover, without having the raw forms to review, professors may doubt or
question summaries, but have no means of challenging them.

5. The majority of faculty in attendance felt that the new evaluation process is not ready
yet, and want time for participation in review and amendment, if not complete
replacement. VCAAR Patton asked that the evaluation be implemented for a trial period
of two years, after which it could be reviewed. She felt it important to be able to
demonstrate to NWASC in their coming spring semester visit that Montana Tech is
addressing their earlier criticism. A show of hands was requested with "yes" being to
implement at once for a two-year trial, "no" not to implement. The vote was 7 in favor
and 13 against (several people abstained, and several had already left the meeting).

6. In view of deep-seated concerns on the part of the faculty concerning the content, procedure and timing of the new evaluations, the faculty senate **recommends that the new evaluation forms and process not be implemented** as intended for **this semester**, Fall, 2002. Rather, both the form and the process need review, modification, and approval by the faculty at large. The faculty senate would accept the responsibility of organizing a subcommittee for this purpose, with a recommendation forthcoming in time for implementation in Spring 2003 semester.