Montana Tech Faculty Senate Meeting
Tuesday November 10, 2015
3:30pm, Pintler Room (SUB)

Call to Order: Sue Schrader

Senate members present:
Glen Southergill, Sue Schrader, Vicki Petritz, Gretchen Geller, Michael Webb, John Getty, Bill Drury, Conor Cote, Scott Risser, Larry Hunter, John Getty

Senate members absent: Sally Bardsley, Rita Spear, Scott Rosenthal, Bill Gleason, Glenn Shaw, Jackie Timmer, Rhonda Coguill, Tony Patrick, Miriam Young, Rick Rossi, Celia Schahczenski, Tim Kober, Stella Capoccia

Guest: Doug Coe

I. Call to Order – Susan Schrader

II. Review Minutes – Conor Cote
    a. Motion to approve - Glen Southergill. Seconded – Larry Hunter. All in favor.

III. AA and AS degrees at the system level – Doug Coe
    a. There is a proposal coming from MUS to offer discipline based Associate of Arts & Associate of Science degrees. Associate of Science degrees are not discipline based degrees. A.S. degrees at Highlands College are awarded by Montana Tech. Nursing is an exception – there is an ASRN degree offered at the North Campus. Applied Science degrees *are* historically tied to disciplines – all of these are housed at Highlands College.
    b. The MUS proposal is to create Associate of Science degrees in disciplines like Business, Biology, and Engineering. One of the concerns here is that A.S. degrees in Engineering are not recognized by the industry. Doug instead proposed that an Associate of Science be offered in Pre-Business, Pre-Biology, etc. Doug asked if the Faculty Senate would like to weigh in on this proposal. Does the Montana Tech Faculty approve of creating discipline specific AS and AA degrees? Alternatively, does the Faculty approve of creating discipline specific Pre-Program AS and AA degrees?
    c. Sue asked if there is a precedent for these types of degrees? If so can examples be provided? Doug said that if MUS is proposing it he would guess so, but that traditionally Associate of Science degrees have not been tied to disciplines.

d. Gretchen, what is the value to these degrees? Essentially this is a way for students to get students credentials at a lower level. Are degrees in Pre-Biology or Pre-Business going to actually be useful degrees?

e. Sue wondered how this would affect two year transfer students. Would it make transferring to a 4 year program easier for them? In Sue's department Montana Tech will take transfer credits from 2-year Associate of Applied Science programs.

f. Sue will try and identify some examples from other schools and solicit the Faculty's opinion at the next meeting.

IV. Excused absence policy at Montana Tech – Doug Coe

a. Montana Tech has an excused absence policy written in the Student Handbook. It is printed on page 16 of the 2015-16 Student Handbook:

b. *It is Montana Tech policy that faculty should make reasonable accommodation for students to make-up work missed (or the equivalent) because of an excused absence. Students expecting to incur excused absences should consult with their instructors early in the term to be sure that they understand the absence policies for each of their courses. Excused absences include official Montana Tech events or activities, or personal matters deemed appropriate by the instructor. Official Montana Tech Events or activities for the purposes of "excused absence" include:*

   i. *NAIA sanctioned sporting events*
   ii. *Academic Team competitions (i.e. concrete canoe, steel bridge, human powered vehicle, ethics bowl, environmental design etc.)*
   iii. *Travel for professional meetings related to major*
   iv. *Class field trips*
   v. *Others as approved by the Chancellor*

c. Doug provided an example of a class policy that could be construed as being in conflict with this policy. In the example, the instructor provides four optional class exams. If any of these exams are missed for any reason the final becomes mandatory. Is it reasonable to use the final for a missed exam or should a make-up exam be offered to students with excused absences so that they are not forced to take the final? Does the Faculty Senate have thoughts on this?

d. Sue noted that there is an appeals process if students feel reasonable accommodations have not been made. Does this actually put the student at a disadvantage? The drop exam policy that several faculty members' use (dropping the lowest exam grade if all exams are taken) is no different in effect.

e. John Getty commented that a single example is too specific for the Faculty Senate to weigh in on, unless there is a broader issue at stake that can be identified.

f. Scott Risser noted that this should be brought to the department head of the individual faculty member first.

g. The general consensus of the Faculty Senate was that it does not see this as an issue to weigh in on; instead this as a matter for the individual faculty member. If the

matter is not resolved there is a grievance committee in place for these types of complaints.

    h. John Getty moved for the Faculty Senate to vote to retain the current language in the Student Handbook and not weigh in the particular issue. Larry Hunter seconded. All in favor.

V.   Updates from previous meeting
    a. Signed letter in support of Civil and Mechanical Engineering dropped off to Doug Abbott on October 30th.
        i. If the degrees are on the agenda they will be taken up at the November Board of Regents meeting. If not they will be on the next one. MSU will object but not push this with the Board of Regents. Their objection will be an objection of record.
    b. Senate updates for strategic plan sent in
        i. Sue – Conor sent in strategic plan updates to Strategic Planning Committee.
    c. Signed approvals for general education courses sent in
        i. Sue submitted the signed approvals.

VI.   Letter of support for applicant tracking system
    a. Sue brought up Rita's suggestion at the last meeting to draft a letter of support for the Human Resources department to acquire an applicant tracking system. Would anyone want to work on a draft for this letter? Glen Southergill said that before the Senate draft's a letter it should research these systems, perhaps by issuing a request for information. What do these systems look like and what do they do? How much do they cost?
    b. Gretchen Gellar reminded the Senate of Celia's suggestion to set up an automatic email reply for applicants. Sue will follow up with Celia and Vanessa Van Dyk on this idea.

VII. Classroom size – potential database class project discussion – Sue
    a. Sue noted that the Senate and other committees, including the eLearning committee meetings have expressed interest in developing a database of available distance learning tools, rooms, and equipment.
    b. Celia offers a Spring course in database design that asked students to develop database for respective "clients" on campus. Sue offered this as a project idea.
    c. The Senate needs to provide Celia with a description of our requirements. Sue will send out a request for responses to the Faculty Senate and eLearning Committee so that she can provide Celia with the requirements by the end of the Semester.

VIII. Faculty Opinion & Satisfaction Survey (FOSS) for 2015-2016 academic year –
discussion on getting the process started
a. Sue spoke with Chad about the survey. Chad will administer survey again this year as it is all ready to go. The Senate needs to request an updated list of faculty from Maggie. Sue will meet with Chad soon to decide on a date.

IX. Other business
a. Gretchen noted the current lack of computer support at Highlands College. Is IT support sufficient? They typically offer excellent service but they appear to be understaffed.
b. John Getty noted that there is no authorized overtime for IT staff.
c. Glen asked if there is an internal ticketing/tracking system. The CTS help desk is how tickets are tracked but tickets are handled more efficiently if IT staff are contacted directly.
d. Scott Risser suggested that the Senate review the FOSS to see if there is anything missing before sending it out. The Senate might want to dedicate the better part of a meeting to this.
e. John Getty noted that when faculty member decides to move a course time at the last minute it has an impact on everyone else. Can we push for a scheduling system that makes this process more efficient? John would be willing to do some research into this. Scott Risser suggested that someone from Enrollment Services be involved.

X. Date of next meeting – December 2nd
a. Sue has received a few emails requesting a Wednesday meeting. Sue proposed the next meeting for Wednesday, December 2nd at 3:30pm. The Senate agreed on this date and time. Conor cannot make that meeting, Larry offered to take notes.

XI. Adjourn
a. Scott Risser moved to adjourn. Vicki Petritz seconded. All in favor.