

# Faculty Senate Minutes

November 17, 2021

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

**Zoom:** Charie Faught (Chair), Peter Lucon (Vice-Chair), JoAnna Reeves (Secretary), John Ray, Douglas Galarus, Jackie Timmer, Hilary Risser, Ronald White, Raja Nagisetty, Bret Robertson, Daniel Autenrieth, Chris Gammons, Rita Freebourn, Matthew Haynes, Courtney Young, Sue Schrader

**Zoom Guests:** Michele Hardy, Katie Hailer, Alysia Cox, Stella Capoccia, Bryce Hill

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

Approvals for November 3, 2021 Meeting Minutes. Motion to approve made and seconded. **PASSED.**

## Action Items

- II. CRC Items:
  - a. CSCI, SME, Change CSCI 210 and CSCI 255 order on worksheet (110421-2)
  - b. CSCI, SME, Change Pre-reqs for CSCI 255 (110421-3)
  - c. NSRG, CLSPS, change NRSRG 425 to online course (110421-4)

Motion to approved CRC items made and seconded without discussion. **PASSED.**

- III. Emeritus Faculty Recommendation for Matt Donnelly

**Discussion:** Dr. Bryce Hill of the Electrical Engineering Department spoke on behalf of the proposal to recommend Emeritus Faculty Status for Professor Matthew Donnelly who will be retiring this December (full recommendation is attached). The proposal is made based on Professor Donnelly's thirteen years of exemplary service at Montana Tech. Prior to joining the Montana Tech faculty, Professor Donnelly worked in the engineering field for some 20 years, distinguishing himself with his high standards and professional excellence. Other faculty senate members shared their positive experiences working with Professor Donnelly.

Motion to approve Emeritus Faculty Recommendation made and seconded. **PASSED.** The recommendation will be forwarded to administration.

- IV. Emeritus Faculty Recommendation for Henry Gonshak

**Discussion:** Dr. Scott Risser, Department Head for Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences, spoke on behalf of the proposal to recommend Emeritus Faculty Status for Professor Henry Gonshak (see full recommendation, attached). Professor Gonshak has served at Montana Tech for more than three decades. During that time, he's made numerous contributions to journals and other prestigious publications and taught thousands of students in what has come to be known as the "Gonshak Circle", discussing authors everywhere from Mesopotamia to Montana. Other senators also commented on their positive experiences with Professor Gonshak.

Motion to approve Emeritus Faculty Recommendation made and seconded. **PASSED.** The recommendation will be forwarded to administration.

## Informational Items

### V. MUSFAR Vaccine Recommendation Update

The resolution passed by faculty senate in support of the MUSFAR COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendation to the board of regents has been passed to the appropriate parties.

**Discussion:** The recommendation reflects a resolution made by the faculty senate, but does not reflect an official/public stance for Montana Tech as a whole.

## Discussion Items

### VI. Nominee for Alumni Board

The Montana Tech Alumni Board is seeking a faculty member to serve. They are seeking a member who is active on campus and knowledgeable of campus activities. A faculty senator or a department head would fit this profile nicely.

Discussion: Courtney Young is a Montana Tech Alumni and has served Tech for nearly 30 years. He would be an ideal candidate for the role.

Dr. Young is nominated, the nomination is seconded. **PASSED.**

### VII. Student Attendance Policy (see below)

The issue at hand is whether or not to implement a limit on excused absences for students, and how many absences (excused or otherwise) can a student take.

Discussion: Several senators joined the discussion of this issue. It is pointed out that the number of classes a student can miss and still successfully complete and pass the course varies greatly depending on the subject matter of the course. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, students are going through tough times, and isn't it our responsibility to be understanding and accommodating? What is the legality of putting limitations on excused absences?

Suggestions to move forward on this issue include reaching out to other institutions to determine how they handle absences, and whether they put any limits on excused absences or only have limits on unexcused absences. Another recommendation is to have faculty include information in their syllabi-not to limit the number of excused absences-but to explain the expectations for make-up work and make-up tests for both excused vs. unexcused absences, as well as an explanation of the threshold where students may not be able to successfully complete the course. Where does the existing incomplete policy and ADA requirements come into play?

This discussion item will appear again on future agendas, and will include follow-up with Shauna Goodell from disability services.

VIII. Research Salaries (see pdf document)

Dr. Alysia Cox spoke on this issue to further explain and clarify the information contained in the attached letter. There are two distinct issues at hand. First, since the elimination of the CUPA policy in 2021—which was eliminated in compliance with federal laws—research faculty on campus have faced significant reductions in their salaries, and Montana Tech’s interim policy is not doing enough to replace this lost compensation. The faculty members who signed the letter are seeking additional clarification from legal counsel as to what they can do to make up for this shortfall, using funds that would not come from Tech, but which would also remain in compliance with federal law. The second issue at hand is workload equity and equality, and whether research faculty are being treated fairly for overload work. Is it possible to form a committee to further investigate these issues and a potential path forward to incentivize high quality, thesis-based research at Tech?

**Discussion:** Anything related to workload for unionized faculty would need to be bargained at the next bargaining meeting in 2022. Also, other institutions have specific formulas for determining workload and overload rates. Such a formula does not exist at Tech, but is handled on an ad-hoc basis.

The online IHP graduate program is mentioned in the letter as an example of a program where faculty receive overload compensation with additional enrollment. It is clarified that, while some overload is available for this program during the academic year, there are still times when faculty find themselves working weekends and evenings well above their benchmark workload. Also there is not overload pay available during the summer months, and faculty sometimes finding themselves working in the summer virtually for free.

Charie Faught did ask Montana Tech counsel Michael Van Alstyne about the issue. He is happy for faculty to investigate the issue further so long as the proposed solutions are budge neutral and are legal. It is pointed out that the University of Montana has found workarounds that meet all federal guidelines, while also not reducing salaries for research faculty. Faculty engaged in research should expect compensation for the work they do.

This topic will be included on the next meeting agenda for further discussion in order to determine how to best move forward. Michael Van Alstyne will be invited to attend and speak about legal concerns

- IX. Communication at Tech (new app, weekly updates): **Not Discussed**
- X. Changes to Moodle/other online tools **Not Discussed**
- XI. Activities/Goals for the academic year:
  - a. Review of Faculty Staff Handbook: **Not Discussed**
  - b. Faculty Satisfaction Survey: **Not Discussed**
  - c. Combined Faculty Senate/Staff Senate Meeting: Postponed until early spring semester
  - d. Strategic Planning: **Not Discussed**
  - e. Other?: **Not Discussed**
- XII. Other Items: **None at this time.**

**Motion to adjourn made and seconded at 9:57am.**

III. **To:** Montana Technological University Faculty Senate

**From:** Bryce Hill PhD PE EE Dept. Chair Montana Technological University

**Subject: Professor Emeritus Status for Professor Matthew Donnelly; Montana Technological University**

**THAT:** Upon the occasion of the retirement of Professor Matthew Donnelly from the faculty of Montana Technological University, the faculty wish to express their appreciation for his 13 years of dedicated and valued service to the Department of Electrical Engineering, Montana Tech, the Butte Community, and the State of Montana by recommending the rank of Professor Emeritus be conferred upon him by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System.

**EXPLANATION:** Matthew K. Donnelly earned a BS degree in 1981 in Agricultural Engineering from the University of Arizona, an MS degree in 1988 and a PhD in 1991 both in Electrical Engineering from Montana State University, and an MBA in 2004 from the University of Washington. Prior to joining Montana Tech in 2009, Dr. Donnelly worked some 20 years in private industry and government research. This includes time at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory as a senior researcher, Sustainable Energy Technologies as a chief technology officer, and Alpha Technologies as a vice president. Dr. Donnelly joined Montana Tech in 2009 as an Assistant Professor of Electrical Engineering. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 2011, and to Full Professor in 2017.

Montana Tech's Electrical Engineering Department is widely known as one of the best high-voltage power-engineering programs in the USA due, in large part, to Dr. Donnelly. He developed much of the power curriculum and helped develop a robust externally-funded research program. Dr. Donnelly is a rigorous teacher and demands hard work from his students. In return, he goes to great lengths to help students succeed. The quality of his instruction and research is reflected in the success of the EE graduates.

Dr. Donnelly's research and scholarly activities at Tech are truly impressive. He is a national expert in power-system operations. Over his career at Tech, he has established close collaborative relationships with federal research institutions (USDOE National Labs), and with private industry such as the NorthWestern Energy and Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories. Since joining Tech, he has had many grants funded and advised several graduate students, been awarded 3 patents, and 17 refereed publications (many co-authored with students).

With this recommendation goes sincere gratitude for 13 years of invaluable teaching, service and research. To Dr. Donnelly: congratulations and best wishes for the future.

IV.

**October 13, 2021**

**ACTION ITEM:** Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus of Literature upon Dr. Henry Gonshak; Montana Tech of the University of Montana

**THAT:** Upon the occasion of the retirement of Professor Henry Gonshak from the faculty of Montana Tech of The University of Montana, the faculty wishes to express its appreciation for his years of dedication and valued service to the institution and the Department of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences, and the State of Montana by recommending the rank of Professor Emeritus be conferred upon him by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System.

EXPLANATION:

Henry Gonshak earned his BA in English with Distinction in 1980 from Vassar College, and his MA in English from the University of Denver in 1985. He received his PhD in English in 1988 from the University of Denver, where he concentrated on pre-20<sup>th</sup> century American literature. He earned distinction on his doctoral oral exams on 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup>-century American and British literature.

He came to Montana Tech in 1989 as Assistant Professor, after working two years as an instructor at Virginia Polytechnic and State University. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 1994 and then promoted to full professor in 1997. He is retiring in December 2021.

Since coming to Tech, Henry taught numerous courses in literature. Including British Literature, Introduction to Fiction, Montana Literature, World Literature, Shakespearean Drama, and Sports Literature. He has also contributed numerous writing courses, including College Writing I and II, Creative Writing, and Fiction Writing. His upper-level courses have been on the Holocaust (one of his major research topics) and Gay and Lesbian Studies.

He was awarded a Rose and Anna Busch Endowed Professorship for outstanding work in teaching, research, and service. Since being awarded it in 2000, it has been renewed every five years and he currently holds it at present.

Henry has written a number of pieces for various publications, but his major work is the book *Hollywood and the Holocaust*, by Rowman and Littlefield in 2015. This work studies Hollywood films about the Shoah from the World War II era to present, from classics like Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* to more recent works like Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* and Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds*. Henry examines the question of what criteria should be used when judging Hollywood films and makes the controversial assertion that comedy can be an effective means of portraying the Shoah. He explores why Hollywood seems so fascinated with the subject of the Holocaust, and calls on the American movie industry to make more nuanced films. This includes about other historical genocides, and about the Holocaust itself, since it encompassed what Primo Levi's called an ethical "grey zone," devoid of clear-cut heroes and villains.

Henry also has been a frequent contributor to the Montana Professor and the Montana Standard, serving in the role of a public intellectual and as an assistant editor of the former publication. He has serving extensively on campus committees as well, including chairing the Faculty Senate and sitting on the Collegiate Evaluation Committee and the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee.

With this recommendation, we thank Dr. Henry Gonshak for 33 years of outstanding service to Montana Tech and request to confer the title of "Professor Emeritus of Literature."



V. In light of certain circumstances, I think it would be in everyone's best interest to establish a limit on excused absences for students.

Would you be willing to ask the Deans at the upcoming Faculty Senate meeting to discuss with their faculty on how many absences, excused or not, would be allowed before it fundamentally alters to their courses.

Ideally, I would like to establish a universal guideline on the number of absences that should be excused by disability, medical, etc. before it unfairly impacts the academic standards of the course and the students' academic performance.

I won't disclose much, but for a bit of context, we have a student who has missed quite a lot of classes and assignments. Much more than a handful. So much so that it will negatively impact the student's grades for this semester and we are not sure how to salvage it.