

Faculty Senate Minutes

9/5/2023

4-5 p.m.

SUB 113 AB

Senators in attendance: S. Risser, D. Autenrieth, S. Juskiewicz, J. Kirtley, S. Rosenthal, R. LaDouceur, G. Wallace, A. Mitra, C. Young, C. Gammons, D. Galarus, L. Buckley, M. Egloff, C. Faught, A. Traut, L. Grainger, D. Reichhardt, T. Kober

- I. Chair opened the meeting and there was a motion to accept the previous minutes. That motion was seconded and passed without discussion.
- II. Chair introduced Provost and Deans. The new Provost and new faculty were welcomed.

Action Items

- III. Proposal to Rename the School of Mines & Engineering was discussed. A comment was made regarding timing of the discussion relative to BoR paperwork being submitted. Senate should have reviewed it first. A question was raised about the lack of a first name, and the Provost indicated that the donors preferred the name as proposed. A motion to accept the name was made, seconded, and passed with no further discussion.
- IV. Proposal to Revise Merit Award Committee Composition and Process was discussed. Questions for the group were raised, namely 1) should non-union merit awards be awarded using the same criteria and language as union merit awards? 2) should merit pay increases for non-union members match that of union members? 3) who should appoint the non-union merit committee? A comment was made that the non-union language has unknown provenance. A motion was made to have the faculty senate appoint three non-union merit committee members and the provost appoint the fourth, but this motion was not seconded. A comment was made that merit awards do not benefit adjuncts and other folks. A comment was made that language does not exclude librarians from a merit award, but librarians have historically been excluded. A question was asked and addressed regarding how often faculty can apply to merit awards. A motion was made to recommend adopting union language as the non-union merit award language in the faculty staff handbook, with the following exceptions: a) Under general considerations, number 4, add “who are instructional faculty” between “recipients” and “must”; and b) under merit award committee number 1, change it to “The committee shall consist of four (4) non-union faculty who are not members of the bargaining unit, appointed by the faculty senate.” Note that the change to a) was due to library faculty being previously told that they were ineligible for merit awards. A question was raised as to whether union senate members should have a say in non-union merit committee membership. With no further discussion, the motion was called and passed.

Informational Items

- V. Request from Homecoming committee for faculty involvement was discussed. The homecoming committee has asked faculty to attend homecoming events and asked that faculty and staff not take advantage of free giveaways meant for students.

Discussion Items

- VI. I.T. requests feedback on Class List Sorting was discussed. Faculty commented that this is a welcome change, and only impacts class lists. Several faculty expressed support for this change.
- VII. All Faculty Survey was not discussed.
- VIII. Future of the Confidence and Professionalism Recovery Task Force was discussed. This task force produced a report, which received a response from the President Bodnar. That response included an indication that the Chancellor would be enthusiastic about meeting with the task force. A question was raised – should the committee continue on as-is? A comment was made about workload, estimated around 25 hours per semester. A call was made to contact the Chair if anyone wanted to serve on the Task Force.
- IX. For the Good of the Order – no new items were raised
- X. A motion was made to adjourn and seconded at 4:57PM.

Recommended change to the faculty staff handbook.

205.7 Merit Awards for Non-Union Faculty Members

Each year Montana Tech may award up to six Merit Awards to meritorious faculty who are full-time, non-union, tenure track, or professors of practice faculty. Visiting faculty are not eligible for Merit Awards. Faculty may be nominated by their Department Head, Dean, or be self-nominated. The application deadline is November 1 of each academic year.

A Merit Award is for the amount of \$2000 and added to the faculty member's base pay in the following academic year contract. Faculty earning Merit Awards are recognized at the spring semester awards ceremony. In addition, Merit Awards are not considered when determining whether a salary inversion exists. Specifics of the process to apply for a Merit Award are as follows:

- 1) The award is based on performance within the previous three academic years at Montana Tech.
- 2) An application consists of no more than seven pages total;
 - Supporting documentation is to be presented in a summary format of information required in Section 205.4.3: Evaluation Portfolio of the Montana Tech Faculty and Staff Handbook. This narrative must discuss justification for the Merit Award based on exceptional/excellence achievement in one or more of the following:
 - o Teaching
 - o Scholarly activity
 - o Service
 - All recipients must be very good to excellent teachers.
 - Narrative is limited to five pages maximum and no supplemental material is allowed unless requested by the Department Head.
 - A two-page (no more than) resume shall be included.
- 3) Applications are due to the Provost/VCAA by November 1st.

Proposed Revisions

General Considerations:

1. To receive a Merit Award, the faculty member must apply for it. It is the faculty member's responsibility to describe and explain the reasons they should receive a Merit Award.
2. A Merit Award shall be granted for exceptional achievement in one or more of the three key areas of a faculty member's work: teaching, service, and scholarship.
3. The activities or accomplishments under consideration for a Merit Award shall have taken place in the immediate three years prior to the application.
4. All Merit Award recipients **who are instructional faculty** must rate at least satisfactory in teaching, and it is up to the applicant to demonstrate this rating.
5. In a given year, a faculty member may apply for and receive only one Merit Award.
6. Only full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty members are eligible to apply for a Merit Award.
7. Merit Award applications shall be evaluated by an interdisciplinary committee drawn from faculty members that have received Merit Awards in previous years.
8. It may be necessary to appoint additional members to replace committee members that retire, are on sabbatical, or who otherwise cannot serve.
9. A faculty member shall not be eligible to apply for a Merit Award for two years following receipt of a Merit Award. E.g. a faculty member applies for a merit award in the 2010-11 Academic Year, receives the award beginning in the 2011-12 AY, and is again eligible to apply in the 2013-14 AY.
10. A Merit Award shall become part of the faculty member's base salary on the first day of the academic year following the award.
11. Base salary Merit Award increments shall not be considered when making inversion adjustments.
12. Faculty that have received a formal disciplinary letter within the past three years in the file kept by the Chancellor's Office are ineligible for a Merit Award.
13. Each Merit Award shall consist of a \$2,500 base increase.

Merit Award Committee

1. **The committee shall consist of four (4) faculty who are not members of the bargaining unit, appointed by the faculty senate.**
2. Eligible members will normally have received a Merit Award in the previous two years.
3. A faculty member serving on the Merit Award Committee shall not be eligible to apply for a Merit Award.
4. A faculty member who receives a Merit Award shall be eligible to serve on the Merit Award Committee for the next two years.
5. Spouses or immediate family members of any applicant may not serve on the committee.
6. The Merit Award Committee is under no obligation to award all Merit Awards that may be available in a given year.

- Applications will be evaluated by an interdisciplinary committee drawn from faculty members that have received Merit Awards in previous two years.

6) A faculty member who receives a Merit Award is not eligible to apply for another award during the two years following receipt of the award.

7) Faculty who have a disciplinary letter in their personnel file within the last three years (Human Resources File) may not apply.

7. Each year, the Merit Award Committee shall document how it made decisions regarding awards and publish an "Annual Report" explaining the committee's rationale. This report will be filed with the P/VCAA office.

Merit Award Application

1. An application shall consist of a pdf-format file including:
 - a. The pdf-format application, with a label including the applicant's name, shall be submitted electronically to the P/VCAA on or before the due date.
 - b. Ten (10) or fewer pages that address the selection criteria
 - c. Two (2) page brief Curriculum Vitae using the standard Northwest Accreditation format.
 - d. Supplementary documentation that supports the application may be included in appendices.
 - e. Merit applicants are encouraged, but not required, to include a letter of recommendation from their Department Head as part of the Supplementary Documentation. Department Heads that apply for merit are encouraged, but not required, to include a letter of recommendation from their Dean as part of the Supplementary Documentation.
 - f. Applicants are encouraged to explicitly address the relevance of their merit to their Departmental Performance Standards or, in the case where no departmental standards have been developed and approved, the criteria in General Performance Standards.
2. This application must explicitly address the criteria that the Merit Award Committee will use to evaluate applications as described in the Merit Award Application Packet available from the P/VCAA office.
3. The activities or accomplishments under consideration for a Merit Award shall have taken place in the immediate three years prior to the application.

Merit Award Evaluation

1. The committee shall evaluate and classify applications into two groups: recommended and not recommended.
2. Upon request, the committee shall provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants regarding their application. This feedback is intended to provide guidance as to how future applications might be improved.

Timeline and decision process for Merit Award Committee

1. October 1: Committee constituted; committee meets, elects chair.
2. November 1: Merit award applications due.
3. February 1: Draft list of recommended merit awards from committee to P/VCAA.
 - a. Committee meets with P/VCAA and two Deans as necessary to amend the list of awardees.
 - b. The four faculty committee members and three administrators – as a committee of all – shall endeavor to agree upon any changes to the list of awardees.
 - c. If the committee of all cannot agree, then all changes to the original list shall be decided upon based on a vote with simple majority rules.
 - d. All decisions by the committee of all are final.
4. March 1: Committee communicates final list of recommended awards to the Chancellor.
5. March 15: Chancellor announces merit awards.