**Volume XIIII, Number 6**

**Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting**

**March 18, 2021**

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order by President Steve Raper. Roll was called by Secretary Kathryn (KC) Dolan. Those whose names are grayed out below were absent.

Akim Adekpedjou, Michelle Schwartze for Julia Alexander, Venkat Allada, Stuart Baur, Jeff Cawlfield, Amitava Choudhury, Steve Corns, William Fahrenholtz, Mahalet Fikru, Darin Finke, Mark Fitch, Samuel Frimpong, Michael Gosnell, Sarah Hercula, Mike Hilgers, Kelly Homan, Ali Hurson, Matt Insall, Ulrich Jentschura, Kurt Kosbar, K. Krishnamurthy, Ashok Midha, Fui-Hoon (Fiona) Nah, Parthasakha Neogi, Jonathan Obrist-Farner, Lonnie Pirtle, Jorge Porcel, Steve Raper, Prakash Reddy, Melissa Ringhausen, Chaman Sabharwal, William Schonberg, Michael Schulz, Sahra Sedigh Sarvestani, Kathleen Sheppard, Jeff Smith, Nancy Stone, Shoaib Usman, Jee Ching Wang, David Westenberg, Daniel Willis, Maciej Zawodniok

**II. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the February 25 meeting was distributed prior to this meeting.

The motion to approve the minutes was tabled.

**III. Campus Reports**

 **A. Staff Council**

Amanda Kossuth, Staff Council President, spoke about a staff appreciation event at the end of May.

A call for staff excellence nominations will go out in early April.

There will be a food auction to raise money for the staff scholarships. If you would like to donate please email Amanda Kossuth, kossutha@mst.edu .

 **B. Student Council**

No report.

**C.** Council of Graduate Students

No report.

**IV. President’s Report**

Faculty Senate President Steve Raper presented and shared that IFC will have its next meeting on March 19th.

Geosciences and Geological and Petroleum Engineering (GGPE) is forming a new school the potential name of School of Earth and Minerals. The school will be not be considered equivalent to a college and will be part of the College of Engineering.

Steve Corns spoke and reminded everyone that elections will be coming up in April and that emails have gone to the chairs committee. It can be sent to the faculty senators as well. If you get a chance, please work with your chairs to get nominations for those positions.

An email will be coming out regarding commencement. There will be 4 ceremonies, and faculty attendance will be limited to ten faculty per ceremony. The email will have a link to a Qualtrics survey that you can fill out to select the ceremony or ceremonies you would like to attend. The ability to attend will be on a first come first serve basis. Ph.D.’s will be awarded but will not be hooded so a Ph.D. advisor can come but will need to sign up using the faculty attendance form. Graduates will not be grouped by departments. Please understand the complexity and challenges of this event.

If faculty have not used their computers on the campus network for six months or more, they will no longer work. If you are off campus for an extended period of time, you can arrange to come back for a day to log in to the network to avoid this issue.

Teaching effectiveness was discussed during the last FS meeting. There has been some communication between Steve Roberts and Dan Oerther on how the CET committee will move forward. The CET committee is working to develop a better instrument to evaluate teaching effectiveness by the numbers and look at other ways to fairly evaluate teaching effectiveness for promotion and tenure, five-year review, and other issues.

Another issue that came up regarded tests, assignments, and projects being due during a campus-approved break. Many agree that this is not a fair practice. As a point of clarification, S&T has spring break one week before the rest of UM System campuses.

There is a potential issue regarding an academic appeals committee that Kurt Kosbar will speak about during the Academic Freedom and Standards committee presentation. A meeting with a member of student council took place and there may be a disconnect with some faculty and students in terms of honoring legitimate reasons to miss class or tests.

At the last faculty senate meeting, senators were asked to get a sense from their department regarding a proposed change to the faculty bylaws to include graduate council as a standing committee. Please email Steve Raper sraper@mst.edu with your departments’ thoughts.

**V. Administrative Reports**

1. **Chancellor’s Report**

The Chancellor is traveling and did not present.

1. **Provost’s Report**

Interim Provost Roberts presented and discussed that fall 2021 is intended to have a return to primarily in-person learning. The schedule for fall 2021 is complete and students are enrolling. Going forward, the use of online instructional modalities should be kept at a minimum to avoid disruptions to students in their courses and scheduling. In-person course sections accounted for about 93% of course sections in pre-COVID semesters. Online and blended sections accounted for the small remainder. Currently, 77.3% of fall 2021 courses are scheduled as in-person, while 12.8% are scheduled as online, and 9.9% are scheduled as blended. In fall 2019 and spring 2020 (pre-COVID), about 100 sections per semester were online or blended. For fall 2021, there are 335 sections currently scheduled as online or blended. Faculty teaching assignments that are 100% online in any given semester must be justified and require the Dean’s approval. This rescinds previous approval, and online courses (?) will need to be approved for fall 2021. The Provost and the Deans are working to develop guidelines and standards for the assignment of online teaching sections. The scheduling of online courses is approved at the department level and above. Scheduling of online sections can be approved if it demonstrably increases access to courses due to student scheduling conflicts of time and/or space, aligns with curricular and programmatic priorities, capitalizes on faculty experience/certification/success in online teaching, and/or Improves student academic success.

**VII. Reports of Standing Committees**

 **A.         Curricula**

Steve Raper presented on behalf of the Campus Curricula Committee (CCC). The committee met on March 2. The committee reviewed 56 course change forms, 3 program change forms and 2 experimental course requests.

The CCC moved for Faculty Senate to approve the program change forms and course change forms.

*Motion passes.*

1. **Academic Freedom and Standards**

Kurt Kosbar presented on behalf of the Academic Freedom and Standards Committee (AFS). The S&T Student Council Vice President of Engagement and Outreach requested AFS investigate revising the deadline for selecting the pass/fail (S/U) grading option. AFS does not support the Student Council request.

The AFS received a referral from the Faculty Senate President:

In response to what some students are perceiving as overly rigid course policies relative to academic accommodations for personal issues, some students have requested that UCARE staff and mental health counselors be given the authority to override faculty policies regarding test retakes and excused absences on a case-by-case basis.

The AFS committee drafted a resolution opposing UCARE staff and mental health counselors having the authority to overrule instructor attendance decisions. Student Council is no longer interested in that option and now wants every academic department to create a committee to settle disputes regarding attendance. S&T Student Academic Regulations allow instructors to make attendance decisions but also gives students the right to appeal decisions to department chairs and deans per S&T Student Academic Regulations section V.A. as stated below.

Administration of attendance policy lies with the individual instructor for each course.  The individual instructor determines the number and nature of absences allowable in each course.  Instructors should be sensitive to extraordinary requests from students about absences ... Instructors make the ultimate decision; however, students have the power to appeal to the department chair or dean.

While accommodating a student’s request for a modified schedule, instructors need to avoid capricious grading, as defined in the S&T Student Academic Regulations.

Section VIII.I.2.b/c of those regulations prohibit an instructor from assigning a
… semester grade to a particular student by a more exacting or demanding criteria than were applied to other students…

and also from a
…substantial departure from the instructor’s previously announced criteria.

Students who believe an instructor has failed to follow regulations in this area can appeal the final grade in the course using the grade appeal procedure defined in section VIII.I.3 of the Student Academic Regulations.

The appeal process may involve the instructor, department chair, and/or an ad-hoc committee formed by the chair, dean, and provost.

If a student’s disability status impacts their request for a modified schedule, the University of Missouri Collected Rules and Regulations (UMCRR) give the campus Equity Officer the right to adjust assignments and exam schedules and assignments.

UMCRR section 600.010.A.2, states:
Equal opportunity is and shall be provided for all students ... without unlawful discrimination on the basis of their ... disability ...

Students who believe instructors are failing to accommodate their disability may avail themselves of the Equity Resolution Process.

As part of this process, the Equity Officer has the authority under UMCRR 600.030.F.5.b to [adjust] the courses, assignments, exam schedules of the Complainant [student] and/or the Respondent [instructor].

Students may require some guidance as to the most appropriate individual/group/process to use for a specific situation they are facing. Possible options include
-Department chair / dean / department attendance committees
-Capricious grading appeal process
-Equity resolution process.

1. **Budgetary Affairs**

Mark Fitch presented on behalf of the Budgetary Affairs Committee (BAC). There are no outstanding referrals.

For the big picture, the budget remains on target so far. There is a possibility of ending the year (?) with a surplus. There is some funding from CARES that is still available and might be used for IT infrastructure.

For FY 2022 planning, there will be an increase in freshman enrollment but, due to some large classes cycling through and graduating, the overall student count is projected to be down about 125 students total. There are slightly more out of state students projected as well. Also, there might be a tuition increase of at least 1.3%, which is the same as the cost of living, and could go as high as 5%, which is the maximum of what we can do without special approval. The tuition increase would apply to the cost of inflation to hire 3-5 faculty members. The next year’s budget appears to be balanced and S&T is not looking at cuts. UM System is pushing for us to have a raise pool for faculty and staff.

1. **Information Technology and Computing Committee**

John Singler presented on behalf of the Information Technology Computing Committee (ITCC). Information Technology (IT) has a new IT blog that is live and is linked to the IT homepage. There is also a new monthly newsletter available. The blog and newsletter should help with communication issues.

IT budget cuts have been mentioned multiple times at FS meetings, and Cuba Plain will be attending the next ITCC meeting. If you have questions, please talk to your ITCC representative so they can be addressed.

The permanent CIO should be announced soon.

1. Tenure Policy

Gerry Cohen presented on behalf of the Tenure Policy Committee (TPC). On Feb. 24, 2021, the following referral was made to the Tenure Policy Committee (via Steve Raper) by Interim Provost Steve Roberts:

There remains concern among faculty and administrators that our process of committee evaluations of tenure and promotion cases may be flawed in that individual faculty reviewers may serve on each of the department, college, and university promotion and tenure committees. As such, the independence of review by department, college, and university committees cannot truly exist. Would the officers be willing to refer this concern to the Tenure Policy Committee for their consideration?

The matter was considered via an email discussion among the TPC and a vote was taken. The item up for vote was “Do you favor restricting participation of individual faculty to just a single p/t committee (department, college, or campus)?”

The results of the voting were:

YES: 4

NO: 13

ABSTAIN: 1

Two main objections were raised to restricting individual faculty participation to just one p/t committee:

1. Not every department has three faculty at the full professor level to participate in the suggested new system (departmental/college/campus p/t committees).
2. If there is controversy/complication in any given case, the departmental representative engaged in the case up to that point is the one best qualified to explain the situation to the committee at the next level.

Also, there would be considerable duplication in effort, as more than a single departmental representative would have to read many of the dossiers – an already time-consuming task.

Importantly, too, several members questioned the referral’s premise that the current composition of the P/T committees makes for an inherently unfair process. I (Gerry Cohen) was among them; in my first message to the committee about our new task I concluded:

 And might I defend the work of my colleagues on the Campus P/T Committee

 over the years.  No system is perfect, but I have far greater confidence in the

 striving for justice on the part of my colleagues on the college and campus p/t

 committees than is expressed in the referral we received.  Most members of

 these committees are highly respected senior faculty, and my strong impression

 is that all are aware of the great importance of our deliberations and

 recommendations. I, for one, have been proud to serve with them.

A senior member of the committee then added:

…I agree one hundred percent with your closing statement about the general quality, professionalism and honesty of faculty members who have served on P&T committees at every level. ... I also think that the pragmatic logistics of designating multiple members from each department to serve at the various levels would prove to be untenable and, in the case of some smaller departments, impossible to fulfill. In my view, this issue is an attempt to solve a problem that is not in evidence and probably does not exist. So, if ‘there remain concerns among faculty and administrators’ about the practice of sole faculty members serving on the committees at every level, then I would like to know, precisely and specifically, with concrete examples, from these individuals exactly what problems have stemmed from this practice over real-world P&T cycles in the past and the present. In other words, to consider this kind of major change to our P&T practices, we should see real evidence of a serious problem and not just some abstract expression of concern. …

**VI. New Business**

 No new business.

**VII. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 2:48 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

KC Dolan, Secretary