Date: January 22, 2014
To: Daniel Adams
Copy: President Waded Cruzado, Martha Potvin, Leslie Taylor
From: MSU Faculty Senate
Regarding: Proposed MSU Ethics Hotline

Thank you for presenting Faculty Senate with an overview of the MSU Ethics Hotline, which is a newly proposed third-party system for anonymous reporting of alleged ethical violations. A lively and informative discussion followed your presentation in Faculty Senate in which faculty raised numerous concerns and questions regarding this new system, including:

- the process that is used after a report is received,
- privacy and security issues associated with the third party web-based vendor (EthicsPoint),
- data and information management questions,
- methods used to validate or reject allegations and complaints,
- notification and involvement of the accused individual,
- actions that will be taken at the end of the process after a report is authenticated or ruled invalid,
- safety of those who are making anonymous accusations,
- safety of the accused,
- safety of the data, and
- the potential for using an ombudsman in this process.

In summary, faculty raised significant and pressing concerns about the implementation of this system and the safeguards for protecting the privacy and reputation of the alleged victim, the accused and the university. Faculty especially are concerned about potential ethical and legal ramifications of implementing such a system without a thorough and detailed analysis of its consequences and implications within the unique setting of the Montana University System.

Because of the many questions associated with this new system, the Faculty Senate of Montana State University passed a motion requesting that the University Administration (or responsible party) delay implementation of the MSU Ethics Hotline and the ethicspoint.com online software system until all concerned parties have an opportunity to further discuss with you the proposed reporting system and the review process.
To speed up the eventual implementation of an anonymous reporting system (or ethics hotline), we have assembled a small taskforce of Faculty Senate members to collect comments from faculty. We invite you to meet with this taskforce to discuss the list of faculty concerns and constructive suggestions. Our intent for this meeting is to establish some common ground and to help you better understand the different viewpoints of faculty and to help faculty better understand the administrative process for addressing ethics-related allegations. I hope that through this process we can refine and improve an anonymous system for reporting ethical violations at MSU in a manner that will benefit and protect all stakeholders in our system.

The Faculty Senate chair (Robert Mokwa) will contact you to explore the possibility of scheduling a meeting with you and the Senate taskforce. Of course, we expect that you may want to invite others to this meeting. We sincerely appreciate your consideration of this motion passed on the Faculty Senate floor and we look forward to having a fruitful discussion with you on this matter.

Most sincerely,

The Faculty Senate of Montana State University

Robert Mokwa, chair

Michael Reidy, chair-elect