

**PROFESSIONAL COUNCIL MEETING
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
WEDNESDAY September 28, 2009
Reid Hall Room 415
11:00 am – Noon**

Members Present: Woody Cranston, Erika Swanson, Betsey Pitts, Stacey Scott, Carolyn Plumb, Chris Bauer, Adam Edelman, Nancy Filbin, Sheryl Dettmann, Julie Tatarka

Others present: Victoria Devore, Jeff Butler

Review of BoR Meeting – Chair Pitts, Chair-elect Scott

- The BoR has three goals:
 - To increase the educational attainment of all Montanans;
 - To assist in the expansion and improvement of the economy; and,
 - To improve the institutional efficiency and effectiveness.
- Within those three goals, the MUS should be looking at 70% academic support (plus other things considered academic support - Chair-elect Scott is not clear what the BoR considers the academic support component to be) and 50% instructional. MSU's actual numbers are 48% for instructional and 61.2% for academic support.
- The expenditure rate per FTE student is \$12,773, which is one of the highest in the university system. This is due, in a large part, to WAMI and fee waivers for graduate students.
- The four-year institutions handle many of the administrative responsibilities (such as purchasing and Banner Maintenance) for their sister institutions as a way to accommodate the efficiency component of the BoR goals
- Most of MSU's expenditures are in personnel. Since most of our personnel are here for the students, how do you diminish that component and still be efficient?
- The BoR is also trying to find a balance with two-year and four-year educational institutions.
- A speaker from the Center for Higher Education Management presented data from public institutions from all states. Montana students pay a higher percentage per student versus what the state pays. When you see students pay the majority of the tuition, the students begin to demand more (as they should) and the climate of the institution takes on qualities of a private institution.
 - PC member Plumb noted that part of the reason students pay more at MSU is because our total cost is lower. We educate a student for much less than, for example, Washington State. What the students actually pay, however, is comparable with our peers.
- The data showed that MSU's costs have only risen in the last three years; previously, the numbers were flat.
- Data showed that retention would be a window of opportunity for the state to improve its educational stance.
- The speaker advocated having financial aid as a state function rather than an institution-by-institution function. He also spoke about incentives (scholarships) for high school students who continue on to and complete college.
- He noted that many students from smaller high schools are not prepared for college, and he advocated a consistent standard be implemented in the high schools 21st Century Scholars Program).
- In Wyoming it costs \$78,000 to educate a student for four years; it costs MSU half that amount, showing that we are doing more with less and running as efficiently as we can.
- Chair Pitts and Chair-elect Scott introduced themselves to some of the Regents.

Discussion of Survey Requests from UPBAC and BoR

- PC polled constituents on their thoughts regarding two cost-saving measures that were being examined by a work group on the University Planning, Budget and Analysis Committee (UPBAC). Professional Council representatives will collect all of the responses, summarize them, and submit the summary as well as the unedited raw data to UPBAC.
- Many options are being examined with respect to furloughs. There is no language addressing this concept in employee contracts. The furloughs might be viewed as a reduction in pay realized in each monthly check, resulting in a 2% pay decrease across the board. The lower paid employees (less than \$45,000) might get an extra 8 days of vacation without a reduction and the additional time off would be written off as a bonus. Responses from employees about the furloughs have been varied; some value the time off despite the reduction in pay and some do not want the furlough.
- As an aside, it was suggested that without some kind of training, it is difficult for employees to identify what steps they could take, personally, on the job to be more efficient.

The meeting adjourned at noon, as there was no other business.

Signature
Betsey Pitts, Chair

Signature
Gale Gough, Secretary