MSU PROFESSIONAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
September 20, 2004  
Montana State University-Bozeman  
Strand Union 271  
3:00 - 4:00 PM

Members Present: Diane Allen, Jeff Butler, Jim Mitchell, Glenn Puffer, Kim Rehm, Doralyn Rossmann

Members Absent: Jim Manning, Sandy Rahn-Gibson

Others Present: Geoff Gamble

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 PM by Professional Council Member, Glenn Puffer. A quorum was present.

Update on Third Party Administrators for Employee Insurance Plan
- Allegiance presented a lower bid than BX/BS, and the Inter-Units Committee voted 12-11 to award Allegiance the contract. They must have all doctor/hospital solicitations by October 1, 2004. They are at approximately 94-95% penetration.
- Commissioner stated they will not get contract if all conditions are not met.
- PC member expressed Concern over whether they would leave out a radiologist or anesthesiologist group as they did in Missoula, and President Gamble stated he did not notice such gaps.
- BX/BS has filed a class action against radiologist group in Missoula for monopolistic practices.
- BX/BS awarded another year contract to act as our administrators while Allegiance solves pending issues.

Pay Issue Salary Compensation Issue
- The salary survey, as crafted by the Commissioner’s office, is the MSU-B campus compared to what ought to be our peer institution, and those chosen as our peer institutions.
- Shows all employee categories are low, as compared to the national market by using the Research Intensive Category – Carnegie Classes (CC).
- Problems with this comparative:
  - No land grants; MSU and land grants from the Dakotas were the only schools with that data.
  - The Dakotas didn’t report the year they collected data, therefore MSU’s College of Ag is not part of the equation, either.
  - We are compared to second tier institutions in most states, and that is not realistic; lumps us in with small colleges in Louisiana and Mississippi that have no relevance to what we are doing on the Bozeman campus.
  - As an example, there is nothing analogous to Geoff Gamble’s salary.
  - The CC will be defunct next year, so this methodology is questionable.
  - We cannot make comparisons to strictly state-wide salary averages; need to factor in cost-of-living in Bozeman/Gallatin County.
  - Cost-of-housing in Bozeman is 125% of the national average, and 150% of the Montana average.
  - Montana overall is 86% of the national average.
Bozeman and Missoula are the two highest cost-of-living areas of the state, and 67% of MUS employees live in those cities.

Several Regents use a “Montana Factor” for justification of their perception of our already high salaries.

Reminder: Regents cannot put salaries on the table; rather, the state authorizes pay.

Legislature awards all state agencies their pay, except us. They only give us half, and we must “raise” the rest.

- All our pay either comes from state or the students (tuition).
- Geoff Gamble asked the Regents to plan what they intend for the next 10 years and that it should not be a one-size-fits-all plan.
- Pointed out, as an example, that at the University of Utah, the BOR allowed two tier tuition increases last year. First tier was to offset cost of operations; second tier allowed at a local level devoted to salary.
- Believes state will do something this year. They are sitting on surplus that must be used for one type of thing, but if they use it to offset other burdens, it will free them up for base adjustments such as salaries.

**Supplemental Increase for Professional Raises Made Available in January – Anything Similar This Year in Addition to the $500 Increase?**

- Commissioner’s Office has a new policy that has changed our ability to access these raises this year.

**Upcoming Issues Professionals Should Be Aware Of?**

- The Board of Regents also considered the issue of DNRC trust administration fees imposed on distribution of income from the university’s trust land. For some time, DNRC has deducted fees from the income of lands granted in trust for the use of the university system by the federal government at statehood. Currently, DNRC’s entire budget is funded from income from the various trusts, including the common schools. The Legal Counsel for the Board of Regents has issued a legal opinion that such deductions from the trust land income violates the Montana Constitution. Recently, DNRC discontinued its practice of deducting fees from income generated from the Morrill Act lands received by the state for the funding of the land grant college. This leaves open the question of what restitution should be paid for past deductions and whether deductions from other university trust income is legally permissible. The Board considered the options, including an option to seek a declaratory ruling from the courts. The Board has instructed its Legal Counsel to see if it can work with DNRC and the Legislature to resolve the issue without resort to litigation. A report is expected at the next Board Meeting.

**Update on Status of Professional Development Proposal**

- Geoff Gamble very supportive.
- Faculty & Staff Tactical Planning Committee is reviewing the document.

**Will There Be Expanded Programs Within Fee Waiver?**

- Fee waivers have costs that are foregone revenue, so as you think about the program’s expansion and what it should include, where do you draw the line?
- Thoughtful policy must go into such ancillary programs, and presently the structure is purposely restricted.
- It was noted that a PC continuing education program that is self-funding has 1000’s of dollars sitting in a general fund to fund fee waivers for faculty and staff.
  - Would this money be used across the board for fee waivers or on a case-by-case basis?
  - This program has a different status because it is unique consortium.
- Geoff Gamble asked the PC member to communicate with him directly, and he would research the question.
**Other**
- Final disposition and enrollment unknown for a few more days, however, we are down in grad enrollment and continuing students of junior and senior status. Budget committee gave three scenarios: best, middle, worst. We are in the middle, slightly below, $200-$250, to make that middle budget. This will provide initial work for UPBAC.
- Record breaking freshman class in terms of SAT’s and ACT’s and quantity. Good students stay longer. We cannot keep increasing freshmen, however, and one must begin to work on the back side of the equation. Each student that leaves before they graduate is equivalent to $4,000 that MSU loses. Our mission is to make sure students get what they need to graduate. This is a university-wide issue. Scholarships would help keep students in school. It is a serious issue that some classified staff are working 2-3 jobs to supplement their low pay at MSU.

**Professional Handbook**
- It was recommended that professionals build a web site which brings all policies together, via hot links, to one location.
- Jim Manning will be contacted about this project.

**Elections**
- Chair Elect – Doralyn Rossmann has volunteered→moved→passed
- Steering Committee – Diane Allen has volunteered→moved→passed
- Nominating Committee – Sandy Rahn-Gibson→moved→passed

Meeting adjourned at 4:08 PM as there was no other business.

**Signature**

Glenn Puffer  
*Member, Professional Council*

**Signature**

Gale R. Gough  
*Secretary*