MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
PROFESSIONAL COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES
May 17, 2005
Montana State University-Bozeman
Strand Union 272
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM

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

Others Present: John Getty, Physics Department

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 PM. A quorum was present. The minutes from April 20, 2005 were approved.

PC COMMENTS FOR BOR MEETING ON MAY 18, 2005 REGARDING RECLASSIFICATION OF PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES AND RAISES

- During the April 26, 2005 meeting with Professional Council members and Commissioner Stearns, an inquiry was made as to why reclassification of professionals was being considered by the BOR. Commissioner Stearns stated that specific uniform guidelines were needed for all MUS campuses, and she could not discern what the difference between MSU-Bozeman and other campuses were such that Bozeman needed so many varied professional positions.
- Comments from the Commissioner’s Office for the upcoming BOR meeting must be approved and moved forward to the full BOR meeting. Those comments would include the new language in the MSU Administration Policies and Procedures Manual, which state: A. Provide consistent treatment of similar positions; B. Prevent the BOR contracts as a mechanism to circumvent the MSU Classification Staff program; C. Supervising, managing and controlling of the MUS system by the Regents.
- Justifying to the BOR why the structure of our professional employee system works and why it should remain in tact would include: 1. Professional Council represents over 400 professionals at MSU-Bozeman, and has not be given the opportunity to participate in the discussions and changing of policies affecting us; and 2. The Commissioner stated on April 26, 2005 that she would work with the MSU-Bozeman PC to craft language for the reclassification so it would address the professional positions at MSU-Bozeman.
- CEPAC, Chair Jones, (from Faculty Council), and Counsel Leslie Taylor will present their concerns. Administration asked Chair Jones to address raises and retention/raises issues. Additionally, Chair Jones also stated that the system of professionals/faculty work so well, any change would disrupt that collaboration and management of the university.
- PC member Kim Rehm made inquiries on campus about what the “across-the-board salary adjustments” are and no one in payroll seemed to know anything about it.
  - The new regulation now in place states that an employee receiving a raise would have to be on campus a full year. (Previous policy states the university allocates raises to departments and it is to their discretion how they are to be distributed.)
  - Additionally, in order for raises to be approved, they would have to be submitted to the COHE no later than October 1 or April 1 of each year to be included on the November/May BOR Consent Agenda.
- Kim Rehm, Jim Mitchell, and Sandy Rahn-Gibson will attend the BOR meeting.

RESULTS OF ELECTIONS AND NOMINATION OF CHAIR-ELECT - Chair Rahn-Gibson

- Rita Rozier, Advance By Choice, will represent Student Affairs; Stacey Scott, Montana Manufacturing Extension Center, will represent Academic Affairs.
- PC tabled nomination of Chair-Elect until the meeting in June, at which time the new PC members will attend.
- Gale Gough will schedule the June meeting.
PROFESSIONAL COUNCIL REPRESENTATION ON OTHER UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES REPORTING BACK TO PC

- It was unanimously agreed that communication between professionals on other committees and PC would be beneficial. Glenn Puffer volunteered to expedite the project during the summer and report to PC.

MARRIAGE PENALTY ON HEALTH INSURANCE FOR SPOUSES THAT BOTH WORK ON CAMPUS – John Getty

- Arguments presented for effecting change where both husband and wife work for MSU were presented. Presently, the compensation package for dual employees (both employed by MSU), enlists both employees to pay premiums into the benefits system. Each has separate deductibles. Consequently, dual employees are paying double what a single, married (with family) employee would pay who is working at MSU. Dual employees and single employees are subsidizing the health care system. How much should people fairly contribute to the system? John Getty suggested:
  - One spouse pick up insurance costs; the other would waive the $500 per month = $6000 a year of compensation and either put it into a flex account to defray the cost of benefits or put it directly back into the benefits system.
  - PC members suggested looking into what the Federal Government does with its employees.
  - Private employers in Bozeman would not comment when queried.
  - PC recommended contacting Craig Roloff and asked John Getty to come back to PC.
  - Chair-elect Rossmann stated that although she and her husband are dual employees, the university would be put into an awkward financial position of unpredictability and would not be able to count on a planned amount of money for benefits. Kim Rehm stated that it might be possible to link policies so deductibles are not more than the normal, single family deductible.

OTHER

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM, as there was no other business.

Signature

Sandy Rahn-Gibson
Chair, Professional Council

Signature

Gale R. Gough
Secretary