MSU PROFESSIONAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
September 14, 2005
Montana State University-Bozeman
415 Reid Hall
1:15 PM – 2:15 PM

Members Present: Diane Allen, Kim Rehm, Sandy Rahn-Gibson, Doralyn Rossmann, Rita Rozier, Stacey Scott

Members Absent: Jim Mitchell, Jeff Butler

Other present: Corky Bush, Leslie Taylor

The meeting was called to order at 1:15 PM by Professional Council Chair, Doralyn Rossmann. A quorum was present.

Meetings with Geoff Gamble – Chair Doralyn Rossmann
- Chair Rossmann polled PC members about meeting with Geoff Gamble on a weekly basis with the chair and chair-elect, only. President Gamble would be asked to attend regularly scheduled PC meetings only when issues arose where all Professional Council members were in attendance. PC members were in agreement with the arrangement proposed.

PC Comments for BOR Meeting on September 21, 2005 Regarding Reclassification of Professional Employees and Raises – Leslie Taylor
- The latest round of proposed policies from the BOR represents dramatic changes from the original documentation proposed last semester. There appears to be partial capitulation to some of the proposals from this campus. Corky Bush stated that she believes the BOR proposal to make across-the-board reclassification of professionals into classified professionals has disappeared, for now. The document, however, has ambiguous language and would be difficult to implement. The document has some inconsistencies and Kevin McRae in the COHE’s office has formed a subcommittee to address this. Kathy Swift from the COHE’s office indicated that we have time to work on the contract, and the pace of having it enforced has been slowed down. President Gamble discussed the issue with Steve Barrett (local regent), who understands HR and has worked with large corporations, and knows the document needs massaging. Leslie Taylor is not certain what will happen at the September BOR meeting and believes they will keep the document moving forward and that we should support the BOR in their endeavors to improve the document.

- The new proposal states there will be a limited number of people receiving BOR contracts; Option A states that very high level administration, such as vice presidents; or, Option B, which would include Option A, down to levels of directors.
  - Leslie Taylor recommends Option A because she believes it is the level of employee the BOR should be concerned about. The attempt to have equity lower level positions do not translate well into the current proposal, and the BOR should not be as concerned with setting salaries or appointments with positions unique to every campus. A second instrument used for professional employment contracts is needed for a “university employee” (those not at the highest level) namely, contract professionals. For example, they would get a university contract from the president who would set the salary (via shared governance discussions). Then, there would be a letter of appointment for soft-money employees. There is not a clear distinction between a letter of appointment and university contracts. There needs to be a clearer distinction between soft money contracts and more permanently budgeted positions.

- Leslie Taylor stated that there also continues to be discussions about how the BOR will fulfill their statutory responsibility of hiring and fixing compensation for the un-unionized campuses. She believes the BOR will ask that campuses be charged with developing criteria or fixed salary policy to give guidance to the BOR on this issue. She believes there will discussions of delegation to the president with respect to fixed compensation and how to hire and fire employees.

- There is a strong cadre of regents who do not understand why the campuses are different niches operating from the same policies and is at the heart of this very issue. They also believe there has been some abuse within the system regarding a coach. However, Leslie Taylor made it known to them that we are anxious to work with the BOR on these new policies and to present a salary guideline and evaluative structure that will bring a measure of consistency on the campus.
Corky Taylor stated that they may adopt language that is not collective bargaining, per se, may emulate some of the abstract concepts it presents.

Past Chair Rahn-Gibson asked about university employment contracts with respect to termination of employment; would it be similar to the BOR contracts. Letters of Appointment have no notice and BOR contracts have 6 months. If asked, Leslie Taylor would state that retention and recruitment would be advanced by providing a determinate timeframe for termination, say 1 month, 3 months, 6 months.

- Member Scott stated that professionals should be involved in contributing language regarding the university contracts and would like that relayed to the BOR.
- Past Chair Rahn-Gibson asked if the new contracts would fit into the raise distribution policy. She stated that professionals were discouraged when underpaid professionals’ pay raise came from the ½% equity pay pool.

Leslie Taylor believes that from this point forward, the BOR will control all the raises.

- It was noted that across-the-board merit raises, discourages meritorious behavior.
- Conversely, Member Rosier researched merit pay, and stated that employees in other parts of the country were more satisfied with a large percentage, across-the-board merit pay raise. She stated she would produce the documentation.

Chair Rossmann will send out an agenda of what she intends at the BOR meeting via email.

**Report from Committee Representatives on Campus – Chair Rossmann**

- Chair Rossmann would like to invite university committee representatives to report to Professional Council members.
  - May have them report to PC once a semester.
- Past member Glenn Puffer stated that he would follow up with this task and report to the Professional Council members on his progress. Chair Rossmann will follow up with Glenn Puffer.

**Ombudsperson – Chair Rossmann**

- Report from Nancy Dodd, Ombudsperson, was distributed to all PC members which mentioned a lack of a “professional handbook.” Chair Rossmann made a motion to have Dr. Dodd speak at one of our meetings→seconded→passed.

**Other**

- UGC meeting every second Wednesday and Chair Rossmann encouraged all PC members to attend.
- Chair Rossmann will share the new concept of a “Shared Governance Committee” with all PC members via email.
- Chair Rossmann will broach the research professional issue with President Gamble after the BOR meeting, as the description of research professionals may become redefined.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 PM, as there was no other business.

Doralyn Rossmann
Chair, Professional Council

Gale R. Gough
Secretary