PROFESSIONAL COUNCIL MEETING  
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY  
WEDNESDAY, November 9, 2005  
PRESIDENT’S CONFERENCE ROOM – MONTANA HALL  
1:15 PM – 2:15 PM

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

Others Present: Bob Lashaway

The meeting was called to order at 1:20 PM by Chair, Doralyn Rossmann. A quorum was present. The minutes of October 26, 2005 were approved.

Parking Garage

- Rita Rozier presented the results of the Professional employee survey responding to questions regarding the new parking garage. Of 400+ Professional employees, 160 responded. The majority thought the campus population should be more motivated to walk, bicycle and find alternative ways to commute; there may be enough parking spaces now, but not all are convenient; and, that if a garage is to be built (for the sake of convenience), other locations should be considered. Most believe the north side of campus is not the ideal setting for a parking garage because of the added traffic congestion it would cause. Even though 75% of those surveyed said they would use parking far away from campus, the F parking lot remains half empty most of the time. Two thirds of those surveyed indicated they would use mass transit; Bob Lashaway stated there is no national statistic in the US that bears using urban transit to that extent. A cogent question asked in the survey was, “Why do we assume that a three-block walk from a parking lot is safer than a one-block walk from a parking garage with three tiers of nooks and crannies where someone could hide?”
- PC members asked if relocating women from Hapner Hall to another dorm was an option. Bob Lashaway stated that it was not.
- There are about 250 Hannon, Hapner, Johnstone Center students who do not have parking. Bob Lashaway stated that the parking garage is cloaked in the safety issue, when it is really a convenience issue and as the university goes forward, construction needs to become denser and buildings need to go “up”. Ideally, we should not construct any more surface parking lots. MSU has reached the level of parking below which if we try to reduce it, it will put a strain on those of us who are here. If, in the future, we get 15,000 FTE students plus staff (equaling 20,000), there will be a need for 2500 more parking spaces.
- Chair Rossmann noted that not all campus constituents have the same thoughts on the garage; CEPAC does not want the garage, ASMSU is waffling, and Faculty Council is supporting whatever the students want.
- Today’s Bozeman Chronicle featured an article about neighborhood residents’ reaction to the parking garage. The neighborhood residents thought the parking garage would contribute to the vehicular traffic on streets that support schools with small children e.g. Irving School. Bob Lashaway believed the residents were overreacting and that traffic is increasing all over town. He stated that the parking garage will not increase the number of vehicular trips to and from campus per day. He also stated that the residents are assuming all traffic will go past Irving School. Residents stated that they would have liked MSU’s plans presented to them before the parking garage progressed to this juncture. Chair Oudshoorn informed them that public information has been readily available since last spring. She will bring in a consultant to look at the traffic flow in that area.
- The impact this new building will have on campus is not fully known. PC members questioned whether there was a sense of urgency driving the process forward quickly. Besides women’s safety, is there another reason why the garage would be at the north side of campus rather than by the sub where everyone would like to have it centrally located? Jo Oudshoorn had reported that parking on the north side of campus will become scarce due to three new building projects. This northern location would accommodate the new chemistry building (50 people already parking on campus) and an additional 200 federal workers occupying a new animal science building. Chair Rossmann stated she understood that new animal science federal building would accommodate their own parking needs through grant money.
Bob Lashaway stated that the parking garage would be 3.5 levels, 530+ spaces. The existing parking lot has 110, and 8th Street accommodates another 40. MSU would reconstruct 8th Street as well as Cleveland (pot holes, etc.), and tag onto the garage project, not with parking funds, but with other maintenance funds to repair the streets, with the goal of removing on-street parking. Safety factors (e.g., children j-walking) are some of the reasons for this. By removing on-street spaces, there is a net gain demand for approximately 380 parking spaces. Paul Burns calculated that number based on the resident location of a person buying a decal, and the number of spaces in that area. There are 780+ decals purchased for that area and only about 500+ spaces available. There is an unmet demand for students in those residence halls who compete for the parking in that area, as well. If there are approximately 280 unmet demands and the chemistry building populace contributes 30-50, that would leave about 330 spaces that are unmet and an added increase in demand. The planning board decided not to build to solely meet demand, but to maximize the site’s potential.

It was noted that in the past, MSU wanted to make the south end of campus the entrance point and the present proposal seems contradictory. Bob Lashaway stated if we build the chemistry and other buildings, there is legitimate need for parking on the north side.

Bob Lashaway stated that historically, when MSU did the last phase of the tunnel coming down Grant Street, the state used the old field house lot for staging space for the project paid 50% of the replacement value of that lot. It was believed that with that kind of down payment, maybe MSU should consider a two-level garage parking solution there. Some people in the architecture department (who are now strong advocates of the present project) negated it so MSU ended up replacing that idea with the current one, which is only 5-6 years old. The oldest lots that MSU has relative to the parking lot location are the Gatton, the pay area, and north of Linfield. If you tore out something at those locations, you would have to reconstruct it anyway.

PC members stated that carpooling should be encouraged with more incentives to participate.

A PC member questioned whether catering to students with parking is an unusual incentive to bring them to MSU. Bob Lashaway cautioned that in the past, education was heavily subsidized with the state paying 85%. Now, students are paying 85% and the parking garage becomes more of a “customer service” issue. If they perceive there is a safety problem, they can choose to go somewhere else.

PC members would like the Master Plan to be finalized, showing future building projects, as the parking garage seems to have been done in isolation. Member Butler stated that it was well thought out, publicized and not made in a vacuum. His experience is that as soon as building is to begin on any project on campus, the perception is that it is/was an ad hoc decision.

Jo Oudshoorn, Chair of the Parking Committee, would like campus constituent input by November 11, 2005. Since November 11 is a holiday, Professional Council will provide their survey results by Thursday, November 10. PC members will forward the survey results to President Gamble, also. The PC recommendation will reflect what Professional constituents voted on with a final recommendation that more time is needed to study the need for the parking garage.

Reports from University Committee Members on the Professional Council Web - Gale Gough

Gale Gough, Stacey Scott, and Rita Rozier have prepared language soliciting monthly reports from university committee members. Gale will review incoming reports and pass them on to Chair Rossmann and Chair Elect Rehm for final approval before posting.

Other Issues

Chair Rossmann and Chair Elect Rehm will work with President Gamble on planning the next step in crafting the Professional Handbook.

The last report from the BOR was that they may approve the new Professional employee contract structure. If no progress is made, however, some PC members would like to help encourage the BOR to move forward.

The meeting adjourned at 2:15 PM, as there was no other business.

Signature
Doralyn Rossmann, Chair, Professional Council

Signature
Gale R. Gough, Secretary