Minutes from Professional Council’s 2/2/11 Meeting with Provost Martha Potvin

Members Present: Jeff Littlefield, Carolyn Plumb, Erika Swanson, Patricia Lane, Julie Tatarka, Jeanne Wilkinson, Betsey Pitts, Adam Edelman, Nancy Filbin, Nora Smith.
Guests: Julie Geyer, Lois Evans

Members introduced themselves to Dr. Potvin and Nancy gave an overview of Professional Council’s mission.

Dr. Potvin gave us a summary of her office’s wide responsibilities which include retention, recruitment, accreditation and teaching salaries.

Topics of discussion followed:

- **Advising:** The link between good advising and retention. Centralized vs. departmental advising. Many demands on faculty, especially with rising student numbers. Effectiveness of degree audit programs to electronically verify progress toward degree completion.
- **Culture of service here at MSU:** Dr. Potvin is impressed by staff willingness to find answers for students and families, and to make their office the “last stop.”
- **Core themes:** MSU’s Planning Council is working to define a mission statement for the university that will align with our strategic plan, budget process, and accreditation cycle. Projects that enhance these core themes will be prioritized for funding.
- **Employee contributions to student success:** Anne Milkovich’s suggestion for a mentoring program. Figuring out a way to ask professionals to connect with students, and encouraging them that they do have something to offer. How do we incentivize the involvement? Great story from Julie about befriending (mothering?) an out-of-state student, with the circle of support widening to include much of Montana Hall’s 4th floor.
- **Balance between enrollment growth and quality of services:** Acknowledging that in many offices, staff are stretched thin and that there may be a point where too much growth compromises services.
- **On Campus Experience:** More opportunities for students to work in university offices could increase service learning and staff involvement.
- **Future input:** Dr. Potvin appreciates feedback and will consult with Professional Council as needed.

Other Business:

Adam Edelman agreed to represent Professional Council on the Dean of Students Search Committee.

The Council agreed on the date of 3/30/11 for the Professional Development Seminar with Jeff Kauffman.

Next Meeting: 2/16/11, 10 – 11 am, 415 Reid. Kathy Tanner will report from the Benefits Committee.