Professional Council  
November 16, 2011  
415 Reid Hall Montana State University  

Minutes from the 11/16 meeting: notes submitted by Smith, Chair-Elect  

Present: Pat Lane, Jeff Littlefield, Carolyn Plumb, Chancey Ringer, Nora Smith, Erika Swanson, Julie Tatarka, Jeanne Wilkinson, Donna Negaard  

Absent: Adam Edelman, Betsey Pitts, Chair Emerita Filbin  

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 am by Chair Wilkinson. The minutes from the 11/2 meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved.  

Professional Development Work Group Update - Tatarka presented an update on the Professional Development work group meeting. Tom Calcagni will provide a general session for PEs on the MSU vision for communications, and how PEs can contribute to that vision. The session is slated for December 19 at 11am, venue to be decided. Other ideas for general sessions on professional development: public speaking (perhaps in February), essential bio-safety information, the future of higher education, Montana’s economic forecast, and customized Excel training for PEs. Customized training (e.g. Excel) might be too costly for the size of the group (15) that could be accommodated.  

Student Mentor Project Update - Swanson updated the PC on the potential student mentor project (spearheaded originally by Filbin). Discussion of PEs role and scope in mentoring undergraduates, and a ‘navigating system’ to structure such a mentoring program, ensued. Ringer suggested that PC might hone its focus on developing educational opportunities for PEs across campus specifically related to student support services across campus, and perhaps providing some workshop opportunities with emphasis on cross-college referrals and support structures. Swanson mentioned the faculty ‘info fair’ and the possibility of somehow dovetailing the efforts of the PC with an established event. (10:22am). Also discussed the potential for pursuing a Professional Employee Mentoring project.  

Other Work Group Updates  
PC Member Emeritus - PC discussed venues (coffee, lunch, pre-holiday gathering) for inviting past PC members for meaningful discussions about their experiences while on the council.  
PE Categories – Plumb stated three options that were entertained by the PE Categories Subcommittee for classifying professional employees: leave the classification status quo, change the representation so that it more closely resembles the proportions of professional employees or, remove all classifications. The current representation does not accurately reflect proportions of research professionals. The Professional Council seat elections create confusion among professional employees about how they believe they are classified. More input and discussion are necessary. Currently, professionals are classified by Planning & Analysis as input into Banner, via title and the area within which they work. Swanson suggested consulting the new director of HR for input regarding categorization/classification with the data PC already has: current categorization, lack of categories, current proportional make-up.  

Announcements – Wilkinson reported that the lunch with President Cruzado was informative, and discussions centered on communication; President Cruzado has a campus-wide deployment of information philosophy, while professionals cater to their constituent group. There is a communications chasm that includes administrators, deans, directors, department heads, VP’s. Often, when policy has
been created/changed by this group, e.g., campus is not informed. OSP Roundtable meetings are one venue for dissemination of that information. Pitts is following up with the Research Council about how research professionals may better communicate with one another across campus. Wilkinson invited Senator Bob Hawks, who is on the Education Subcommittee, to the next PC meeting, December 7, 2011, with the intent to inform him about what professional employees do and how legislators may benefit from mutual interaction and collaboration with PC. During Senator Hawks’ visit, Wilkinson will provide an introduction to Professional Council and highlight what professional employees do, Pitts will present professional employee impact survey results, and the video will be shown. Lane will bring refreshments. Future PC guests might include Doug Steele; new Dean of Students, Matthew Caires; a regent; a student regent. Smith reported on the first Facilities Services (FS) forum conducted on 11/7 3:30 PM. The steam pipe damage that occurred in Montana Hall dominated the discussions. Subsequent discussions were dominated by concerns from engineering faculty. Negaard attended the second forum held on 11/10, 9:00 AM and she reported that faculty questioned why FS invoices were not descriptive. FS stated that the reason details are not printed on invoices is because the system used for billing is antiquated. A new web based system is being installed and it will show projects in real time, what each step of the project entails, progress on the project, and how much each step will cost. Regarding project rates, a survey is conducted every year to collect data on outside vendor rates vs. Facilities Services (FS) rates. The College of Business questioned if FS is a non-profit entity, there should be no profit margin and the work they do, therefore, should be discounted. FS noted that many of their employees are in unions thus, making labor charges higher. President Cruzado may form a task force to address concerns by collecting data, performing an audit, and generating a report. Kevin Thane, Chair of ASGL, reported that President Cruzado encouraged Staff Senate to conduct an inventory of professional training activities on campus. She suggested to classified staff that they should conduct professional training once per semester. The search committee for the VP for Administration and Finance submitted an RFP to hire a search firm. Terry Leist formed a working group, a subgroup of Budget Council, to determine equitable allocation methods for extra tuition money. Budget Council will begin reviewing the proposal sent to the campus community in January. Wilkinson reminded PC members to wear their name tags, as the BoR will be meeting on campus tomorrow.

As there was no other business, the meeting ended at 11:00 am.

Nora Smith, Chair-elect
Professional Council

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