Minutes from the 12/21 meeting: notes submitted by Smith, Chair-Elect

Present: Jeff Littlefield, Carolyn Plumb, Chancey Ringer, Nora Smith, Erika Swanson, Julie Tatarka, Jeanne Wilkinson, Donna Negaard, Chair Emerita Filbin, Elizabeth Bird (PC rep for Facility Services Advisory)

Absent: Carolyn Plumb, Pat Lane, Betsey Pitts

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 am by Chair Wilkinson. The minutes from the 12/7 meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved.

Facilities Services Advisory Update – Bird debriefed PC on recent FSA listening sessions chaired by Jeff Butler in the Procrastinator Theatre, and asked for any follow-up concerns or questions from PEs. Edelman suggested use of the PE list serve to solicit broad feedback, and Bird agreed to develop some language for a quick memo encouraging PEs to relay any FSA questions or concerns. Swanson suggested that another memo, reminding PEs of representative membership on myriad MSU councils and committees, might be appropriate info to disseminate early in 2012, and after further discussion, agreed to draft an email for February delivery.

Calcagni/University Communications presentation feedback - Chair Wilkinson thanked Tatarka for her legwork and support in advance of the presentation by the UComm group on Dec. 19th. PC members shared several thoughts. Bird suggested that the session lacked a “functional vision.” Given the attendance at the session (almost 80), Wilkinson commented on the apparent campus-wide interest in communications and the way such work feeds into the larger institutional mission. Edelman suggested (and others agreed) that PC convey to Calcagni that once UComm has established an articulated strategic direction, PEs would be interested in meeting with UC staff again. Swanson suggested a follow-up seminar that would focus on internal communications within and across departments and functions, and others agreed that the new chief HR officer might be the best person (in conjunction with UC) to facilitate such a topic in the future.

Strategic Plan Update – Smith provided an update on the vision subcommittee, and the SPC is scheduled to meet again on January 17.

Budget Council Update – Wilkinson provided a brief synopsis of the recommendations of the working group on unallocated revenue, a subgroup of Budget Council, to determine equitable allocation methods. The subgroup recommended that $1.5 million will be distributed to instructional funding after BC discussion of the historical plateaus for such funding, with another $1.2 million going to proposals with a focus on emerging institutional priorities. Budget Council will begin reviewing the proposals sent to the campus community in January, and several dozen RFPs are anticipated for review.

Senator Hawks’ visit with PC – PC members thought Hawks’ perspective on strategizing communication with smaller Montana communities was helpful. His comments on the general (external) perception of university campuses as venues of “in-fighting” were duly noted, and discussed as part of a larger and ongoing communications effort of both PEs and students.
Noon hour office coverage—Wilkinson discussed the recent unofficial mandate regarding MSU offices staying open and providing services over the noon hour. Susan Alt made an announcement during the OSP Roundtable meeting in December. There is no official mandate for the Bozeman campus regarding this however we are told it is state policy that offices remain open during business hours 8 – 5pm. Any office at MSU, especially those who serve students directly, is expected to remain open from 12 – 1pm. One-person offices are encouraged to forward their phones to a Dean’s or Director’s Office, and hang notice on the door directing students toward available staff. Smith stated that she found reference to this policy in the Administrative Rules of Montana and would share with the group as she continues her research on this issue.

CIO search update: Edelman pointed out that it’s not yet clear how the position will function, viz., system-wide operational structures. Levels of collaboration across the MSU campuses are the minimum, but the direct reporting (CIO to Provost?) has yet to be clarified.

PC received a holiday card—and a nice one, from the Provost’s Office, Edelman got to keep it to help liven up his desk space.

VP for Admin and Finance Search update—Wilkinson noted that she’s on the search committee, who have met with a search firm and are developing a position description. The hope is to post the position sometime in January and have candidates on campus for interviews in March and April.

The BoR January meeting was discussed, and it was confirmed that Wilkinson and Smith will attend the staff luncheon on January 19th. As OCHE has announced concerns that the expense of attending these meetings is becoming prohibitive for some system officers, the November meeting, typically held in either Bozeman or Missoula, will become the “public meeting.” Representatives from university employee groups are still welcome at all the meetings, and PC will continue to send representation (confirmed with Provost Potvin on Dec. 16).

MSU Councils Election Processes—Chair Wilkinson debriefed the PC on two working group sessions held made up of some members of PEC and the employee group chairs regarding council memberships and election processes, with particular intent to “open it up” to broader campus constituencies. Once the processes are established, PC will amend the bylaws to clarify demographics and selection of PC representatives on the councils.

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

Nora Smith, Chair-elect, Professional Council on behalf of:

Gale R. Gough
Administrative Associate
Professional Council