PROFESSIONAL COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES – January 16, 2013

ATTENDEES:    Nora Smith
              Donna Negaaard
              Jeanne Wilkinson
              Carolyn Plumb
              Betsey Pitts
              Julie Tatarka
              Liz Grant
              Patricia Lane

              ABSENT:   Chancey Ringer
              Jeff Littlefield

              GUESTS:  Diane Letendre

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am in SUB 235.

Several professional employees attended this meeting which was encouraging as we are trying to get more PEs to attend PC meetings.

Minutes from the December 19, 2012 PC meeting were approved. They have been submitted for posting on the PC web site.

Betsey Pitts opened discussion on the upcoming social event we are planning for this semester. Jeanne offered to check on the budget available for this event. The group decided that either a late February or early March date would be preferable. A Tuesday or Wednesday would also be preferred as there are many other scheduled activities on Thursdays. The social event will not be a formal meeting and is intended to be a forum for suggestions and questions from our professional employees at MSU in a casual setting. Food, beer and wine will be served.

Diane Letendre, Director of the Office of Institutional Equity, presented to the group on three issues: Title IX, the ADVANCE Grant and the President’s Commission on the Status of University Women. Briefly, Title IX in this context relates to sexual discrimination issues.

Federal mandates have been issued regarding policies and reporting sexual misconduct cases on campuses. Many presentations have been made to campus groups in the last year regarding Title IX issues. Diane indicated that there are four offices on campus that are involved in the establishment and implementation of new policies: The Office of Institutional Equity (compliance, investigation and coordination), The Dean of Students Office (student conduct), University Police (criminal activity), and The Voice Center (advocating for and supporting survivors). These four offices do not actually share information about specific cases, but OIE is responsible for investigating all incidents. Protecting students and enforcing the laws is a very delicate and sensitive administrative task and the goal of each of these offices is to prevent recurrence of an incident.
Mandatory training online will be available to all MSU employees on all four campuses very soon and OIE intends to enforce completion of this training diligently.

The ADVANCE Grant, which was awarded to MSU Bozeman only, is a $3.4 million grant from the National Science Foundation dedicated to improving the work environment for women in the STEM fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics and the SBS fields of social and behavioral sciences. These are two areas where MSU women are outnumbered by men. The grant will help enhance workplace life, research opportunities, cultural attunement and equity at MSU. Jessi Smith of the Psychology Department is the Director of ADVANCE.

The President’s Commission on the Status of University Women is a four campus advisory committee whose focus is on gender equity and diversity. Anne Camper from Engineering is the chair of this 24 member commission which was formed in September 2012 by Dr. Waded Cruzado.

Donna Negaard updated the group on the recent Board of Regents meeting in Helena. She indicated that emphasis for the upcoming legislative session will be on K-20 education issues and advocating as a whole cohesive university system with one voice rather than each individual university attempting to promote its objectives. Themes that emerged from the BOR meeting were: health care, business entrepreneurship, community service, arts and culture, and quality of life. Other important focuses will be making college affordable, enhancing pay plans as well as decreasing time to degrees for students. There are currently 30 university oriented bills and the plan is to consolidate some of these.

Matt Caires, Dean of Students, will be the featured guest at our meeting on February 20th. He will be presenting on student affairs policies and procedures.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia Lane, PC Secretary