Special Guest – Tracy Ellig, MSU Communications Executive Director: Tracy presented an overview and history of MSU’s role within the Montana State Legislature and how funds are allotted for each member campus under the MUS. Tracy, as the MSU-delegated lobbyist, essentially works for the Commissioner of Higher Education Clayton Christian and the MT Board of Regents (BOR) while the legislature is in session. His role is to assist the BOR, and respective legislative committees on higher education to advance the entire MUS system and provide legislators with an opportunity to understand MSU’s role within the MUS system. Tracy also explained the unique relationship between the State of Montana and the MUS: the MUS has autonomy from the State of Montana within a $500 million overall operating budget, of which $194 million is earmarked MSU’s operating budget, as one of eight MUS member institutions.

Additional notes of interest:
- House Bill Two is the bill that covers public funding for state agencies. It is a very large bill and the MUS is included with 14 other state education “units.”
- The seven-member Joint Subcommittee on Education make recommendations in regard to funding public education in the state of Montana.
- The Montana legislature includes 150 seats; 100 in the house and 50 in the Senate. The House represents 10,000 districts and the Senate represents 20,000 districts.
- Higher education in Montana bucks the national trend that college isn’t affordable for state citizens. It has the lowest tuition rate of all public higher education in the country, as the Montana has put tuition-hike freeze for the last ten years, which is up for renewal this session.
- Renovating Romney Hall is again the top priority in the Governor’s budget for infrastructure funding, as MSU is the largest and fastest-growing public institution in the state and classroom, veteran, writing and math tutoring space is desperately needed. Tracy said the last two-days of the session in April is when the most surprising legislative/funding movement is made and there is no way to tell what will be funded.

PC Position Reports
* Tabled to next meeting to make time for Tracy’s presentation

New Business
- Firefly award update from Amy; the Firefly PC member committee has identified a selected winner. To be announced soon.

Old Business
- PC Committee Representatives Update
  - None
- PC Positions Update
  - None

Announcements
- Upcoming Presenters: TBA
  - Dec. 14: Betsy Webb, MSU HR
  - Jan. 11: Janelle Rasmussen (Outreach/Engagement)
  - Jan. 25: David Kack (Facilities Planning)
  - Feb. 8: Yvonne Rudman (Status of Univ. Women)
  - Feb. 22: Walt Banzsiger (Planning Council)
  - March 8: Matt Caires (Dean of Students, tentative)
  - March 22: