PROFESSIONAL COUNCIL MINUTES

March 8, 2017, SUB 236 Attendance: Amy Stix, Yvonne Rudman, Julie Clay, Gini Mohr, James Tobin, Brian O’Connor

Minutes from Feb 8, 2017 were approved with no comments/edits. Minutes from Feb 22, 2017 were approved with no comments or edits.

PC Position Reports:

James Tobin and Amy Stix presented on the University Council Meeting:

- No announcement was made regarding the trademark policy; it did not come up for vote.
- President Cruzado was asked how Professional Council could help her. She replied that she loves feedback and wants to hear when quality is substandard anywhere in university. She wants to hear about tuition, budget, and salary issues. She is very aware of legislative crisis, and her recent time in Helena indicates that the 23-million cut number may be lowered. There is a lot of time left, but she is feeling more positive about the budget.
- Romney—Because Romney is continued to be referenced as a gym...there is an effort to change that perception from “gym” to “hall with classrooms.” A fresh packet of designs of final drawings has been issued, and MSU employees can help by referencing Romney as a hall.
- Regarding job category changes...The president wanted to make it clear that this is not going to negatively impact employees except maybe with prestige—that it won’t impact salary and benefits. Some employees may get more benefits. This is just a categorization; no one will lose a job over this change. Cruzado emphasized that cutting the budget is not on the table at this time, nor is cutting professional positions, but she acknowledged that the communication was difficult. Amy and James are going to try and get more information. Brian asked if it was possible that we will get rid of any classification. Cruzado: professional positions will be cut back, but the designation of some sort will remain. She referred to when the state auditors decided that we were out of compliance. They wanted her to cut right then because we shouldn’t be in the position of having 600 plus professional positions. She wanted to make it clear that HR will make this as smooth as possible. No one has yet answered the question about how this affects people who have been here a long time and have invested a lot in retirement. It is a huge headache for the employee to change all these things. Job protection? Questions for Sara when she comes.
- Ombudsman.... we did have someone back in 2010 who came and went a couple of times. Her feedback at the time was that there were too many avenues someone had to go through...that employees were almost re-victimized and ended up telling the story three times. The president said to use the systems in place but point the query in the right direction. However, reassurance of protection is still not very clear. When MSU had an ombudsman, there was still a runaround; ombudsman sends you to HR or dept. but has no real power. Because HR protects the university, not the employee and because it can be difficult for an employee to “go above one’s supervisor, employees need to get advice. What models are available at other universities? An ombudsman can provide objective advice and
ideas for next step. The president also offered that an employee could go up the chain and come to her, and she was open to a meeting with staff senate after the legislature.

- The question about care.com being gone was not addressed at University Council Requests about babysitting, etc. are now directed to “Hire a Bobcat” since care.com was not sustainable.

**New Business:**

**Old Business**

- The PC is hosting the spring social Thursday, March 23 from 4-6.

**Announcements**

- **Upcoming Presenters:**
  - March 22: Sara King (HR)
  - April 12: TBA
  - April 26: Chris Fastnow

**Special Guest: Matt Caires, Dean of Students**

Matt asked if we are going to combine with Staff Senate. Rather, we will create a new organization Montana is a very pro-labor state with a complex system. Matt began with some reminders of where we are today. The first college in America was either Harvard or William and Mary. (The reason for this dispute is that this designation comes from a charter dispensed by the crown—1636). Higher Ed didn’t change very much over the next 400 years except for adding women and athletics. However, the GI bill changed everything. With this change, there was more value placed on Higher Ed in this country. Colleges tripled in size and experienced huge problems related to quick growth as a result. With the influx of GIs, came the advent of a more nontraditional student. Universities used to be in ‘loco parentis,’ but this not the case with these students. They wanted new freedoms and they got them in the 60s. Example: the Dixon case in 1961...six students in Alabama university were suspended when they sat in a white section of a restaurant. The students sued...how can a public school take away one of our rights for doing something fundamental like protesting? Because of this ruling and others, kids became adults with rights. In 1961 universities were struggling with civil rights and Viet Nam. Then, along came FERPA in 1974. And the results were akin to “Animal House.” Matt stated...“ We have been trying to get students to behave ever since.” In response, when the 1980s hit, we changed the drinking age. WY was the last holdout, and college students didn’t like the change from 19 to 21. As a result, drinking went underground in fraternities and other locations. By the late 90s, FERPA was modified so that universities could call parents if students broke alcohol and drug regulations. However, Oregon and Montana still prevent us from calling parents over drug and alcohol violations—just these specific violations. No school can release grades, etc. Public offenses can
be released but not university offenses, and this overlaps with mental health issues. Example.... Elizabeth Shen at MIT...the college knew she was suicidal. The counselling director worked with her one afternoon; then she started a residence hall on fire and killed herself. The liability settlement was made out of court and awarded parents 30 million. So, now if a university has a mental health issue on its hands, it must do everything possible. Another example....in 2007. Cho went into Virginia Tech and killed 32 faculty and staff. When the post mortem was done, it was clear he had severe mental issues. He had been seeking help, stalking women, and writing disturbing papers. However, FERPA got in the way of sharing this information. At MSU we need to know, however, that FERPA does not prevent any of us from sharing information. We cannot share records, but we can talk. Another example...Jerry Sandusky. Even though he had 52 charges of sexual molestation, the coach did not report and refused to communicate with student affairs. There is a sense that certain students “belong” to certain faculty. Their behavior is “pushed down the road.” Missoula still suffering as a result. If employees know of wrong doing with minors, women, etc., they have a responsibility to report. We must understand the landscape, even things that don’t relate directly to our jobs. The Cleary Act--Title 9--how does it impact us? Mandatory reporting—we need to know what are services offered for counselling. At the end of the day every MSU employee needs to take a portion of what we do to facilitate the MSU mission of educating students. When student behavior is inappropriate, it needs to be challenged. If the situation escalates, refer them to Dean of Students’ office. We can do better at challenging our students and giving them the grade they deserve. By refusing to let students treat us disrespectfully, we teach them critical lessons. At the same time, because of what we do, we need to hold ourselves to certain standards if we cannot answer emails and phone calls is important so we can hold them to those standards. This work helps create the next generation. Take the job but not self too seriously, and remember that students are watching me. Parent interference can be especially difficult. More conversations about tobacco, sexual assault etc. are occurring. MSU is giving more tickets and fewer warnings--more consequences. While we have been really good on the support, we need to uphold challenging students—allowing them to grow and to be a little uncomfortable.