

FACULTY SENATE
October 5, 2011
LEO JOHNSON 346
4:10 PM – 5:00 PM
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY-BOZEMAN, MONTANA
Minutes

Members Present: Biber (Music), Cantalupo (Ext), Caton (Business), Copie (Chem & Biochem), Dougher (PSPP), Engel (LRES), Franklin (Micro), Gerlach (Chem & BE), Greenwood (Math), Herbeck (Ed), Hostetler (Gallatin College), Kaiser (EE), Lawrence (Biochem), Lynch (Psych), Martin (Mod Lang), Merzdorf for Eiger (CNB), Moreaux for Olson (ARNR), Neumeier (Physics), Newhouse (Art), Reidy (History), Ricciardelli (Film & Photo), Rossmann (Library), Schachman (Nursing), Zhu (CS)

Others Present: Larry Carucci, Ron Larsen, Richard Smith

Chair –elect of Faculty Senate, John Neumeier, called the meeting to order at 4:10 PM. A quorum was present.

Discussion/Presentation of MSU's Program review Process – Associate Provost, Ron Larsen

Program reviews are mandated by the BoR in a six-year cycle. The current year is the last year of a six-year cycle for MSU and Larsen will be creating a new cycle to present to the BoR. The MSU program review document that has been online will be updated with new and more information, in response to the numbers that used to be in the BoR policy but have since been removed (e.g., “You must have 120 graduates to keep your program. . . .”) but have been maintained in MSU policy. External research funding for the masters guidelines might be challenged, since there is a lean towards PhD programs. The process for identifying reviewers has been clarified: The reviewer will be identified by the dean after consultations with dept head and faculty. Timelines have been added, and guidance about what should be included in the self-study reports, with actual number of pages, is suggested. Departmental strengths are being highlighted. The disposition of reports is now indicated. A FS member suggested that entire departmental faculty might be involved in program review. Another FS member noted that there were no metrics in the guidelines. Larsen reported that it is standard practice for department heads to look for metrics in their reports and although departments don't have the opportunity to set their own metrics, they do have the opportunity to make their own case in their self-study.

Larsen discussed a new document, “Program Assessment, Program Reviews and Program Prioritization – What's the Difference?” There is confusion about what is done with program assessment results: MSU uses the information to make our programs better. Program review is primarily designed to gauge where departments are, at the moment, and what opportunities exist for them. The intent of program prioritization is to allocate resources strategically. MSU does not currently have that process in place.

A FS member queried whether there is a clear distinction between program and department; whether a program within a department could be prioritized in the department as a whole or with other programs. Larsen stated that the term “program” is not clearly defined, but it definitely includes degree programs. The distinction between degree programs, minors, options, certificates, however, is nebulous.

Frequently, the outcomes from external reviews reveal that there is no money for new resources. FS suggested that the reviewing teams should be prioritizing and making the reviews something other than a period of internal reflection in the departments and a period of inaction by administration. Larsen stated that this may be changing, as the University Council presented a new strategic budgeting process tied to the future strategic plan and there may be greater opportunities.

The accreditation team will review the assessment/outcomes/indicators. Larsen stated that the NWCCU changed their evaluation cycle to seven years and, we will be reporting in year 1, 3, 5 and 7. We just turned in the first year report and that includes indicators. The NWCCU expects us to get the

processes in place over the next few years and by year five, we should be able to show progress in those indicators.

In regards to how the BoR interprets programs, Chair-elect Neumeier stated that the BoR would be taking a 25% slice out of the MSU budget to drive performance based funding. Larsen stated that he will present information and a more detailed explanation about our decision to keep or reject our programs to the BoR so they might better understand our rationale.

A FS member asked for clarification of the self-study versus program assessment. Larsen stated that assessment is looking at student performance against stated learning outcomes, while the self-study report is much broader. For every degree, option, minor and certificate over 30 credits, it must be assessed with stated learning outcomes. This may be accomplished by having the instructor assess their own courses and present them to faculty for discussion. It was noted by FS that discussions among the faculty about their departmental courses are met with enthusiasm. Whether this discussion methodology is acceptable and adequate to the accreditation team is not yet known. Larsen stated that the program assessment is primarily advocating "What do we want our graduate students to know, to do and be at graduation?" If students demonstrate their ability earlier in their college careers, then faculty may present an assignment/example to demonstrate that. There is an implicit assumption that you continually will be making improvements. On the other hand, a valid assessment response is to doing nothing. Student retention is under the category of program review and is usually done by those who are in the program itself.

Curriculum /Program Review Process

Chair Neumeier asked if there were any further comments/questions about the curriculum/program review restructuring. He stated that someone from FS would chair the undergraduate studies committee. Program and course approvals would come before the senate for final approval. Each college would be represented on the Undergraduate Studies Committee. Organizationally, there is no committee between USG and FS. If a proposal were rejected at UGS, it would go back to the college to be rewritten and then come back to UGS.

The Faculty Senate meeting ended at 5:00 pm, as there was no further business.

Signature

John Neumeier, Chair-elect

Signature

Gale R. Gough, Secretary