

FACULTY COUNCIL MEETING
FEBRUARY 1, 2006
STRAND UNION ROOM 276
4:10 AM – 5:00 PM
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY-BOZEMAN, MONTANA
Minutes

Members Present: Amin, Ashley, Bailey, Becker, Catoira, Cherry, Christopher, Croy, Dyer, Erickson, Giusti, Levy, Lynes-Hayes, Marlow, C. McClure, Neeley, Ryker, Taper, Taylor, Watson for Metz, Yoo

Members Absent: Bennett, Bradley, Brown, Idzerda, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Larkin, M. McClure, Prawdzienski, Pratt, Psychology, E. Schmidt, Scott, Seymour, Stringam, Stroup

Others: Carucci, Fedock, Kevane, Lansverk, Monahan, Moshavi, Schontzler, Thompson

Chair Shannon Taylor called the meeting to order at 4:10 PM. A quorum was present. The minutes from January 25, 2006 were approved.

Announcements – Chair Taylor

- Regents Foster and Barrett, during the shared governance visit to MSU this afternoon, acknowledged that the cost of living in Gallatin County has made it difficult to recruit and retain students, faculty, classified and professional employees. The state of Montana needs to generate more money before it is able to distribute it. It is a known fact that Montana has some of the lowest wage distribution/income in the United States, and increasing the taxes on wage-earners is no longer a viable solution. Unless the income from retirement funds, rent, and dividends are somehow able to be taxed, you will not see more money going to the university system. Montana had a \$300M surplus last year and it is believed the money came from coal bed methane/gas exploration. If citizens support these endeavors, they may see more money coming into the educational system.

Parental Leave (Last year's notes are italicized)

- *Last year, at a March 30, 2005 Faculty Council meeting, the Parental Leave Committee (PLC) met with Joe Fedock about initiatives for the core of the new leave package to bring to Faculty Council (and all departments) for feedback. Faculty Council made a motion (which was seconded and passed) to bring a parental leave concept to Faculty Affairs to review/bring back to FC/subsequently go to the President for adoption into the Faculty Handbook. Cogent points reviewed were:*
 - *PLC would like adoption of institution climate for parental leave.*
 - *Tenure clock stoppage with a cap at two years? Up to the faculty member in question.*
 - *Six-week paid leave.*
 - *Active service; modified duties.*
 - *Supervisor would have a way of assessing work being done; accountability.*
 - *Pregnancy may result in a disability and that may be referenced in a separate, well-articulated section.*
 - *Policy may, in the future, include bereavement, accidents, and illnesses.*
 - *Cost estimate based on MSU's make-up is negligible.*
 - *People taking advantage of this would be very small but presents MSU as a very progressive institution; good for recruitment.*
- *Overall, language should not treat pregnancy/parenting as a disability, as it is now articulated in the current policy. May want to make a separate policy for disability and separate policy for parenting.*
- *Faculty Council gave consensus to move forward with the policy.*
- *Past-Chair Jones suggested a compendium of policy already written be compiled.*
- *Presently, there are faculty members who may need to utilize parental leave, and a policy should be put in place, soon.*
- *To implement a parental leave policy, it was stated that the first change needs to be environmental – support on campus - beginning with discussions.*
- *There should be a clearly designated place where employees may get this information.*
- *In the current Faculty Handbook there is language that allows the faculty member and the department head to negotiate contracts for parental leave release time.*
 - *If the proposed parental leave were to be for six weeks, finding an adjunct to fulfill teaching obligations may be difficult. Most adjuncts are hired for a full semester, or AY. Additionally, if a department did not have the funds to finance course relief or have enough faculty in the department to substitute teach, then students may suffer as those courses would, most likely, be cancelled.*

- Chair Lansverk summarized what Faculty Affairs has done since last March.
 - Working on language to make tenure clock stoppage specific and immediate.
 - The current draft language states that faculty gets one year per child (both parents automatically); maximum two years.
 - Parent receives six-weeks (or a semester), with no front-end, back-end teaching responsibilities?
 - The front-end/back-end teaching options, now, are flexible benefits. No other work environments offer such an option. Some departments, however, have no one to teach the class and a new employee must be hired. Some departments have more money than others and may be able to accommodate this process. Poorer departments may not be able to.
 - UPBAC would need to approve the proposal;
 - The Benefits Committee would then need to review the concept to put a policy into place. Some FC members would like to see money set aside as part of the benefits.
- FC members believe that the parental leave policy should go through the correct processes and channels so that the final policy is definitive. The policy FC decides upon now will set a precedent.
- Suggestions for short-term parental leave buy-outs were:
 - Faculty members putting their tenure block money on hold for a year thus, the university is saving \$2500 in promotion pay;
 - BEST program and other faculty awards, could be used to buy out course obligations in exchange for parental leave.
 - FC attendees believe administration should craft language, in the interim and until the policy is fully examined and put into place, which provides guidance to employees.
 - FA may highlight what the Faculty Handbook already has in place in the meantime.
- Chair Taylor will bring the Parental Leave funding issue to administration with high priority. He will also request a something be written that clearly states the current Faculty Handbook policies.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM, as there was no other business.

Signature
Shannon Taylor, Chair

Signature
Gale R. Gough, Secretary