

DRAFT Minutes of
The Academic & Student Affairs Committee
Of the Montana Board of Regents
Wednesday, May 18, 2005
9:30 a.m. – 2:40 p.m.
Room B36, MSU-Billings College of Technology
Billings, Montana

Regent Lynn Hamilton, chair of the Academic & Student Affairs Committee, called the meeting to at 9:30 a.m. and introduced the other voting members of the committee, Regents French and Barrett. Regent Foster, the fourth member of the committee, joined the group later in the day.

Regent Hamilton noted that this is an open meeting, invited everyone to join the Committee at the table, and asked everyone to feel free to make comments as the agenda proceeds. There is a time at the end of the meeting for public comment on non-agenda items, she said.

I. REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA.

Regent Barrett moved to adopt the agenda. Motion carried.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

A. *From the March 16, 2005 meeting of the Committee.*

Regent French moved to approve the minutes. Motion carried.

III. PORTION OF THE MEETING DEVOTED TO CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICERS.

A. *Action: ITEM 126-2851-R0305, Certificate in Creative Arts Enterprise, MSU-Great Falls College of Technology.*

Vern Pedersen gave background on this item, a follow-up to a highly successful workforce development pilot program funded by OCHE. The program includes a business component, a mentoring element and a Montana Heritage strand. Regent Hamilton complimented MSU-GF on their marketing efforts for this program, which is bringing recognition to Central Montana. Regent French moved to forward this item to the full Board. Motion carried.

B. *Action: ITEM 126-301-R0305, A.A.S. degree in Surgical Technology, Flathead Valley Community College.*

This program was initially approved for a two-year period in response to community needs. Kathy Hughes said that the program has now gone through the national accreditation process. The associate degree, rather than the certificate, is now the preferred norm, so that change was made in this proposal. Regent French moved to forward this item to the full Board. Motion carried.

C. *Action: ITEM 126-302-R0305, Certificate in Medical Coding, Flathead Valley Community College.*

This program was also originally approved on the “fast track” for a two year period. Regent French moved to forward this item to the full Board. Motion carried.

D. *Action: ITEM 126-201-R0305, Permission to change the A.A.S. degree in Chemical Dependency Counseling to an A.A. degree in Chemical Dependency Counseling, Dawson Community College.*

This request is slightly unusual because AA and AS degrees usually don't carry a designation unless required for accreditation or by statute. The 2003 legislature raised the standards for chemical dependency counseling, as part of a move toward the national standard of a baccalaureate degree. The designation is now required by statute, and Dawson Community College's proposal has been reviewed and approved by the Two-Year Committee. Regent Hamilton asked if this degree will transfer or

articulate into baccalaureate programs; Dawson plans to work on this in the future. Regent Barrett moved to forward this item to the full Board. Motion carried.

E. Action: ITEM 127-108-R0505, Revision of Policy 303.3, Program Review.

This revision represents a significant change, giving responsibility for the review process to the campuses and spreading individual program review over a seven year period, to coincide with accreditation review cycles. All programs that are part of the degree inventory, including options and certificates, are to be included in the review process. The Chief Academic Officers worked on this policy revision for many months and unanimously support it. Regent French moved to forward this item to the full Board. Motion carried.

F. Action: ITEM 127-109-R0505, Academic Program Planning.

This new policy would require campuses to keep the Board of Regents informed regarding their academic program plans over a three year period, and to identify the programs they expect to bring to the Board in the next year. The intent is to encourage collaboration between campuses, and to allow the Regents to plan on a system-wide and long-term basis. The policy also includes a compliance incentive. Regent Barrett supports the compliance incentive, and noted that the academic program planning process will synchronize nicely with the new program review process after the first few years. Regent French wondered whether collaboration would be the responsibility of the Regents, OCHE or the campuses. Regent Hamilton said that this is best done at the campus level, but campuses should be aware that the Board will be paying attention. Regent Barrett moved to forward this item to the full Board. Motion carried.

IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS.

A. Regent Mercer's request for information on "fast track programs" in the Montana University System.

Information regarding early degree completion was assembled at the request of Regent Mercer. Roger noted that the "time to degree" programs have not been very successful, except on the UM-Missoula campus. Students often use the time to degree programs, such as "Four Bear", to gain entry into high demand classes in the first year or two, only to drop out of the program before completing their degree. Regent French raised a question regarding dual enrollment limitations, and she will discuss this further with Arlene Parisot so that Arlene can take it to the Dual Enrollment Task Force of the P-20 Committee.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS.

A. Level I memorandum.

MSU-Billings asked to remove Item 127-2702+R0505 from the Level I approvals.

Roger pointed out that the Board of Nursing formally authorized the joint Board of Nursing/Board of Regents review and approval process for nursing program changes at its April meeting. The Regents approved the new process at their May 2004 meeting.

Regent Hamilton asked if the large number of programs MSU-Northern put on moratorium were reviewed using the old or the new program review process. Cheri Jimeno said they used the old process, but that the result would be the same under the new one.

VI. PORTION OF THE MEETING DEVOTED TO TOPICS OF CONCERN TO BOTH ACADEMIC & STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICERS.

A. Action: ITEM 126-105-R0305, Minimum Course Grades.

Roger explained the three options for a minimum course grade policy that were included in the Board packet. He clarified that this policy will apply to **all** students, not

just transfer students. Although including all students exceeds the recommendation of the transfer audit, creating separate categories of students for grading purposes was deemed inappropriate. Inherent in all of the policies is recognition that the entire system will go to plus/minus grading.

During the discussion regarding plus/minus grading it was noted that some professors will elect not to use plus/minus grades. Although this may seem unfair to students, faculty must be free to set their own standards and grade as they choose. UM-Missoula and MSU-Bozeman currently use plus/minus grading, but round differently. This results in different GPAs for students receiving identical grades on the two campuses, illuminating the need for a system-wide numerical standard for each grade. The numerical standard will not affect an instructor's ability to structure grades for individual courses, but relates only to how the letter grade is reflected numerically on the transcript.

Dave Dooley stated that the ability of individual programs to establish higher minimum grade standards (included in some versions of the policy) is vital, especially in terms of accreditation. He strongly urged including optional higher standards in the final policy, while recognizing the importance of ensuring that students are aware of those higher standards if they have been adopted.

Discussion turned to the value of the "D" grade—if it should be acceptable as a minimum for various types of coursework, the potential for grade inflation if the C- becomes the minimum standard, whether or not students who receive a D are prepared for the next level of coursework in a series, and if two-year programs should have a different standard to accommodate the circumstances of non-traditional students. Regent Hamilton advocated for setting meaningful standards while providing the support systems students need to succeed (e.g. tutoring, childcare). It was also noted that this policy does not abrogate faculty's ability to make discretionary decisions allowing individual students to demonstrate competency in ways other than grade performance. Roger clarified that faculty may waive or substitute a course normally required for a degree, but any course used to fulfill graduation requirements must meet the minimum grade standard. A course that is not used to complete a degree requirement does not have to meet the standard.

Roger distributed a fourth alternative of the policy, which combines some of the features of the other proposed policies. Regent Barrett asked for discussion regarding changing 1 (c) from a minimum of C- to a D-, since programs would be free to set a higher standard in this version of the policy. Some thought this would give more flexibility in enabling students to move through a program. Others said it would make the transfer situation even worse, because students would be unprepared to meet the higher standards that many programs would choose to set. Regent Barrett moved to recommend alternative four to the full Board, including a system-wide standard for grades in part three. Motion carried.

Implementation of the minimum grade policy is proposed for Fall 2005, and will apply only to new or readmitted students, not to continuing students. However, plus/minus grading will begin in the Fall for **all** students. It was recognized that existing students may see a change in their GPA when the uniform numerical standard is set due to the current rounding variations between the Missoula and Bozeman campuses. No Banner problems are foreseen in implementing plus/minus grading. Campuses will be asked to notify students of the minimum grade policy through catalog inserts and information on their websites. Regent Barrett moved to recommend implementation in Fall 2005. Motion carried.

B. Action: ITEM 127-102-R0505, General Education.

There was concern regarding the language in the Block Transfer Procedure (procedure one). It will be modified to refer to only lower level courses. Regent Hamilton said the other question regarding block transfer relates to A.A.S. degrees, but this policy does not apply to A.A.S. degrees. Regent Barrett moved to forward this item as amended to the full Board. Motion carried.

Celia Winkler, chair of the UM-Missoula Faculty Senate, initiated a discussion of the composition of the General Education Council (procedure six). She and Warren Jones, chair of the MSU-Bozeman Faculty Senate, urged revision of the policy to require faculty senate representation from each campus on the General Education Council. Roger pointed out that the General Education Council will oversee the MUS Core, which belongs to the system, not to the campuses. He also cautioned against the Regents forfeiting the prerogative to determine membership of a standing committee of the Regents. Following additional discussion, the motion carried again as previously amended.

C. Action: ITEM 127-103-R0505, A.A.S. Degrees.

Roger expressed concern that this policy revision, while clarifying policy on two-year degrees, doesn't satisfy all of the expectations of the performance audit. Credit totals, general education requirements and transferability of coursework are issues yet to be addressed. The Two-Year Education Committee will assume responsibility for continued work on those issues. Regent Barrett, recognizing this as an initial step, moved to forward this item to the full Board. Motion carried.

D. Action: ITEM 127-114-R0505, Revision of Policy 301.11, Undergraduate Degree Requirements, to include B.A.S. Degrees.

Regent French moved to forward this item to the full Board. Motion carried.

E. Action: ITEM 127-104-R0505, Overall Grade Point Average.

There were significant and disparate opinions regarding this policy, and so two versions were presented in the Board packet. One version requires that all students' transcripts show a cumulative GPA, and the other allows each student to decide if they want it to appear on their transcript. Regent French said that a majority of students would be negatively impacted by the "all or none" option, so the students would not support it. Discussion included the limitations of the Banner system in implementing the choice option; and the differences in how campuses use the cumulative GPA to make admission decisions, award scholarships and determine graduation honors. Regent Barrett asked if this issue was important enough to students to make system-wide changes. Allen Yarnell replied that statistically it's not a problem for a significant number of students. Regent Barrett moved to recommend that the Board decline to adopt a policy regarding the overall GPA. Motion carried. The Committee also recommended establishing a workgroup to develop a standardized format for recording transfer classes, credits and grades; and to standardize policies and procedures relating to use of the cumulative GPA in making admission and scholarship decisions.

F. Action: ITEM 127-105-R0505, LPN Nursing Programs.

Roger prepared an extensive narrative to accompany this item, trying to include all of the benefits and limitations of the proposal. The proposal has the endorsement of all of the LPN programs, some albeit reluctantly. The workgroup that developed the proposal included LPN and RN program managers with input from Board of Nursing members. The Board of Nursing is cautiously supportive of the plan, but will need to see actual program proposals before giving final approval.

This proposal accomplishes the objectives identified by the Board and the transfer audit to standardize the type of credential and number of credits, and to develop common pre-nursing and nursing courses. Susan Patton asked if the new curriculum will require

master-prepared faculty, and Roger replied that the Board of Nursing will be looking at those requirements.

Regent Barrett was impressed with the buy-in from such a wide range of constituencies, and moved to forward this item to the full Board. Motion carried.

G. Action: ITEM 127-107-R0505, Single Admissions File.

This policy is limited to current students of the MUS who wish to transfer or to take classes at more than one campus in the same semester. New students must still create a separate application for every campus to which they apply for admission. Suggestions were made for changes to the Request for Transmittal form. Regent French moved to forward this item to the full Board. Motion carried.

H. Action: ITEM 127-112-R0505, Appeal Process for Transfer Evaluations.

This formalizes the process currently used by many campuses, and has been endorsed by the Chief Academic Officers. Regent Barrett moved to forward this item to the full Board. Motion carried.

I. Action: ITEM 127-115-R0505, System of Controls Policy Amendments.

OCHE staff attorney Cathy Swift worked with Roger to address the concerns the Regents had with the policy adopted in March. It expands the policy to include transfer students from outside the MUS, but requires them to provide more information to assist in making transfer of credit decisions. Section four, compliance, excludes automatic entitlement if deadlines are not met, and was added on the advice of Ms. Swift. An editorial change was suggested in the first sentence. Regent French moved to forward this item to the full Board. Motion carried.

J. Action: ITEM 127-113-R0505, SAT Scores for Admission to Four-Year Campuses.

After consultation with campus representatives, it was decided that a proportional shift was the best way to accommodate the new SAT scoring. SAT scores are just one of several alternatives that satisfy admission requirements to the four-year campuses. Regent Barrett moved to forward this item to the full Board. Motion carried.

K. Action: ITEM 127-128-R0505, Mathematics Proficiency from 2-Year to 4-Year Programs.

This math proficiency statement was developed by math faculty from around the state. Dave Dooley requested a change to the language in item one to reflect the MSU-Bozeman path to demonstrating proficiency. The change will be prepared for presentation at the full Board meeting. Copies of a color-coded chart were distributed showing how the math courses in two-year programs will fulfill the math proficiency requirement, and the chart will soon be available on the web.

Discussion turned to use of the exemption pool. Roger clarified that there are two different exemption pools. Campuses can make exemptions to the college prep requirements (not to exceed 5%), and there is also a 15% exemption pool for students with special talents, minorities and others who demonstrate special needs. The Student Affairs Officers are in favor of using the 15% pool to admit students that don't meet the math proficiency standard, while the Math Proficiency Committee opposes using the exemptions in this way. The Math Proficiency Committee also advocated strongly for a minimum grade of C, not C-, to demonstrate proficiency. Regent Foster asked about the connection between the proficiency standard and the degree a student might be pursuing (e.g., art)—just how difficult is the math standard? Jan Clinard said that the threshold would be a course below "Math for Liberal Arts." Regent Hamilton asked that a report on the success of students admitted under the exemption pool be prepared in the future. She also commented that admission policies should be systematically reviewed to eliminate obsolete language and to determine their effectiveness. Regent

French moved to forward this item to the full Board with the addition of new language to include the MSU-Bozeman path to proficiency, and including the statement allowing use of the 15% exemption pool for students who do not meet the math proficiency standard. Motion carried.

- L. Discussion of a preliminary assessment plan for the new Transfer Audit policies.**
Jim Rimpau said that once the transfer policies are adopted by the Board, his group will be able to see the policies as an entire package and develop an integrated assessment proposal for the September meeting.

VII. PORTION OF THE MEETING DEVOTED TO CHIEF STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICERS.

A. Discussion Items:

1. Follow-up on the priority security issues.

The Student Affairs Officers on each campus prioritized their top three security needs and identified those that are currently unfunded. Several campuses provided additional information for the needs and cost analysis. UM-Helena hopes that their priority items one and three will be included in new building funds. Item two was originally in their budget request for this year, but was eventually removed. MSU-Northern will need additional funding for item one, residence hall sprinklers. MSU-Great Falls will try to incorporate their unfunded projects into their operating budget. MSU-Bozeman will be able to fund item two, higher police salaries, if enrollment is higher than anticipated. Item three, AED defibrillator equipment, is still being discussed by an MSU-Bozeman committee and no consensus has been reached yet on the need for such equipment at several campus locations. The Budget Committee of the Board of Regents will now be asked to look at the unfunded items, with the hope of making them a high priority in the long range building plans.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS.

Dean John Cech welcomed everyone to the MSU-Billings COT and issued an invitation to a reception beginning at 5:30.

Jan Clinard offered her appreciation to all of the campuses that hosted the recent writing proficiency tests. She has the results for those who are interested.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT.

There was no public comment.

X. CLOSE: REVIEW ASSIGNMENTS.

There will be new language for four of the items to be brought to the full Board on Thursday.

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Submitted by Cathy Doyle