Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes  
December 8, 2016, 4:00 P.M. Law 201

Call to Order   
Chair DeBoer called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.   
The Faculty Senate Administrative Associate called roll.  
  
**Members Present:** J. Banville, D. Beck, T. Beed, A. Belcourt, S. Bitar, M. Bowman, J. Bunch, S. Caro, A. Chatterjee, Y. Cho, G. Collins, Z. Cooper, T. Crawford, J. DeBoer, A. Delaney, D. Erickson, L. Fern, L. Frey, E. Gagliardi, J. Gallo, K. Griggs, , M. Hamon, K. Harris, B. Harrison, L. Howell, J. Hunt, S. Johnson, U. Kamp, C. Kirkpatrick, G. Larson, J. Laskin, C. Lawrence, P. Lukacs, D. Lurie, D. MacDonald, M. Maneta, D. Patterson, G. Peters G. Quintero, T. Sanders, T. Slater, A. Sondag, S. Stan, A. Szalda-Petree, S. Phillips, J. Thomsen, E. Uchimoto, M. Valentin, N. Vonessen, A. Ware   
 **Members Excused:** B. Allred, N. Greymorning,

**Members Absent:** O. Berryman, M. Bowler, B. Halfpap, W. Holben, M. Kia, J. Sears,  
  
**Ex-Officio Present:** Commissioner Christian, UFA President Haber, ASUM President Forstag, President Engstrom, N. Lindsay, S. Whittenburg, Associate Provost Zagalo-Melo

**Guests:** numerous

**Minutes:** The minutes from November 10th and November 29th were approved.

## Communication

### **President Engstrom**

Thanked senators for their service on the Faculty Senate and the opportunity to work with them over the past six years. He believes the senate is a good example of shared governance in action. He appreciates the work of the senate and the opportunity to engage with the senate leadership. He hopes that the senate will give support to Interim President Sheila Stearns. He finished with the comment that the University of Montana is a great institution and he wishes the best for everyone.   
  
Chair DeBoer provided the President with a Certificate of Appreciation.

### ASUM President Sam Forstag

In light of last weeks’ news, the greatest gift over the last few years is a strong shared governance system. Our senates have a larger voice than any other campus in the MUS University System or in the state. The shared governance leaders were in a four hour meeting about our current challenging situation. Chair DeBoer is a strong advocate for the faculty. The student voice in these conversations does not exist elsewhere. Over the next few months we need to stay united on our goals such as the search for a new Provost. ASUM unanimously passed a resolution at its meeting last night to move forward with bringing the candidates to campus. Another resolution asks the administration not to move beyond listening sessions in the program prioritization process until a permanent Provost is hired.   
  
He thanked President Engstrom for strengthening the student voice. He believes this will be an asset for the campus moving forward.

* Associate Provost Nathan Lindsay – Graduation Candidates  
    
  The list of graduation candidates compiled by the Registrar’s Office were available for senators to review on Moodle. The list includes corrections to the summer list, the list of students that have applied for fall graduation, and the teacher licensure candidates. The lists were approved.

## Committee Reports

### ASCRC Chair John Eglin

The [Curriculum Consent Agenda](http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/curriculum/approved/ascrc/ASCRC%20Curriculum%20Consent%20Agenda_12-16.docx) was approved. These items will be available in next years catalog.

The [Revised (202.50.5) Writing Exemption Appeal Guidelines](https://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/procedures/ASCRC_200/202%2050%205_WritingExemptionAppeal12-8-16.docx)were also approved. The revision clarified confusing language.

### Graduate Council Chair Linda Frey

The [Curriculum Consent Agenda](http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/curriculum/approved/grad_council/Graduate%20Council%20Curriculum%20Consent%20Agenda12.8.16.docx) was approved.

The motion to approve Occupational Therapy was briefly discussed. The justification for the program is compelling and the plan to move toward accreditation is well articulated. The Council agreed that it has the responsibility to approve new programs that are needed in the state. The logic is irrefutable, but there are questions about the funding (over $1 million for the first year), which could come from program prioritization. Thus the Council submits its recommendation with the added language in the motion:

The Graduate Council moves to approve the creation of a new department and master’s program in [Occupational Therapy](http://www.umt.edu/winapps/media2/facultysenate/committees/grad_council/Science/Occupational%20Therapy%20MS/OT_Curr%20BE%20edits.pdf) (OT) on academic merit with the following considerations for the Faculty Senate.  The Office of Public Instruction (OPI) funded a [feasibility study](http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/documents/FSDocs%2016-17/Occupational%20Therapy%20Program%20Feasibility%20Study%20as%20of%209%2015%2016.docx) that clearly identifies the need for an OT program in the state of Montana.  The proposal submitted by Dean Humphrey demonstrates academic merit and provides a plan towards accreditation. Further, as outlined in the letter of support from interim [Provost Edmond (11‑28‑16)](http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/documents/FSDocs%2016-17/edmond015%20Response%20to%20Graduate%20Council_OT.docx), funds to start this new program could come from several external sources or through UM program reallocation (Program Prioritization). The GC has deep concerns about the lack of committed funding sources essential for program development and start-up.   Specifically, the GC feels that an OT (or other) program that does not exist and is needed to serve the state of Montana should be provided with start-up funding from the state, or other external sources, and not through reallocation, which could weaken already struggling programs.

It was noted that the Faculty Senate does not have purview over budget allocation, it oversees academic matters. Last year Business Analytics was approved without appropriate funding and is now struggling to offer required courses. The Council did consider not approving the program until a source of funding was identified. The issue is that this is a chicken and egg situation. It would be easier for the Dean to acquire funding with the approval. In the long term this could be a significant revenue generator similar to Physical Therapy that has well over 400 students applying for 36 slots. The program would not break even until the third or fourth year. The motion was approved by a show of hands (36 in favor, 7 against, and 3 abstentions).

## Continued Communication

### Chairs Report

Associate Provost Zagalo -Melow prepared a report on [International Recruitment](http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/documents/FSDocs%2016-17/PZM_2016-17%20Intl%20Recruitment%20Strat%20Report_Dec2016_forFacSenChair.docx) at the request of ECOS to address some of the questions that have been asked about efforts to increase international students. ECOS had an informative discussion with him and wanted the Senate to be provided with some information.

Questions:   
Senator Velentin: Last year there were approximately one million international students in the United States, but he believes UM only has 17. How does UM plan to recruit more international students? He heard that the staff in International Programs was cut. Is the Office able to manage this task?

Associate Provost-Zagalo Melo: Last fall we had close to 700 international students enrolled at UM. This fall there are 652 including 226 new students. One out of three international students goes to New York, California or Texas and 20% study engineering. The report includes other background information. The Office of Global Engagement has a staff of 1.5 FTE dedicated to recruitment and .5 to International student admissions. The plan for international recruitment is to focus in areas where UM has contacts and strengths and in developing countries where there is a growing middle class. The Office of Global Engagement is working with programs that have capacity and advising appropriate for international students. The hope is to attract 53 additional students from the new markets, which would generate 1,258,273 in fees and revenue**.** UM is also on various digital platforms and is known in certain areas which will also initiate applications as usual.

### UFA President Paul Haber

In an effort to be efficient and get to the point UFA President Haber read a prepared statement:

The main issue here is in my view meaningful shared governance.

This issue is always important but more so when the going gets rough and/or big decisions are made that affect the quality of our institution.

Given our current challenges, shared governance must include the meaningful participation of the major membership organizations on campus: ASUM, MPEA, staff senate, faculty senate, Missoula College Faculty Association, and UFA. That is why we all co-convened a meeting last week, which by the way, administration also attended and participated. I think it was a really good event. More such meetings are planned.

The major topic on most of our minds is budgets and the logic that informs reallocation processes.

Obviously, we have been doing this in the toughest of all possible times: budget cuts. So, not surprisingly, a lot of people are on edge. Especially the most vulnerable staff and faculty amongst us, those with the least job security.

Shared governance means that the various stakeholders are meaningfully involved in the decision-making process. My view, a view I know is shared by a number of others, is that this has not been the case over the past several years. Not only have we not been allowed to be meaningfully involved by administration in important decisions that affect us all but we have not even been able to obtain clear information about decisions taken by others that influence us in important ways.

In my judgment, this state of affairs continues to be unfortunately true of budgetary reallocation processes currently under way.

However, I have had conversations with the commissioner and I am heartened that he has expressed to me his commitment to making concrete steps in the direction of meaningful shared governance. I look forward to having conversations soon with our incoming interim president. I think it is important that we engage in successful trust building exercises regarding current budgetary realities so that we can take these positive experiences into even more fundamentally important decision making processes slated to take place in the near future.

The commissioner and administrators have asked us to participate in good faith in some kind of structural realignment process over the next couple of years. The position of the UFA is that we are willing to seriously engage in and share responsibility for a process in which we can be meaningfully involved.

I would also like to share with you my enthusiasm for conversations of the shared governance committee that includes faculty, student, and staff organizational representation. Our focus is on student success/retention and we are beginning discussions of a campus initiative. This will include new asks of faculty and staff. So, stay tuned.

I think I can say with confidence that faculty are prepared to step up and make significant contributions to solutions so long as we are involved in the design of those solutions.

### Commissioner Clay Christian

The invite to attend the meeting was extended way before the events of the last couple of weeks. The legislative session is coming up and the reality is this is going to be an incredibly tight budget year. The Governor’s budget is basically flat, which is in better shape than most state agencies. Most state agencies are facing cuts of about 4- 5%. It will be a challenging session. The University receives funding from only three sources –the State, Tuition, and need-based-aid. In the last several sessions there has been a substantial influx coming from the state (over 70 million of new money added to the base). The reality is this will likely not be the case this session. An area that will be focus on is need-based-aid, where we have lost ground. There is some infrastructure in the bill. We are asking for some authority for projects that are soft funded. There is little new money and there is not much interest in increasing taxes. We will do our best to hold on to resources.

Questions:

Sue Bradford: What is the Governor’s or Regents position on tuition re-alignment?

Christian: Tuition is set by the Board of Regents. The Governor can fund the university at whatever level he believes is appropriate, then the Regents set the tuition in May. We just spent several hours talking about this. The Board discussed the issue of Governance Structure at the September meeting. The Board is looking at mission differentiation of the tiers: flagship, regional, two-year, and special class –focus institution (Montana Tech) and how they fit and are priced given Montana students expectations The Board will have to make the structural policy decision to determine the differentiating factors. How will campuses compare? There will need to be some benchmark related to scope and size. We will look at campus comparators. When you compare the brackets, our prices are very low. We want to be a great value, but not a bargain price. We must look at the mix to determine what will serve the students best. We are looking at where tuition compare across the state. He is not sure students look at the price. There is more discussion that needs to take place.

Senator Valentin: In this time of flat fiscal revenue, and enrollment erosion, how will the core of humanities and languages be prioritized? Is the logic to cut humanities or would you find creative ways not to erode them further. Is this another way for retrenchment to eliminate weak vulnerable programs?

Christian: There needs to be a broader discussion. He is not married on any definitive term (program prioritization for example) of what we are going to do to make decisions. The organization is under significant change. Looking at the data it started around 2008. At the same time the country is under significant change. We have run the gauntlet on sources of revenue. Pell is limited, most states have cut support, and we have run out of room to increase tuition in terms of what families can afford. So we are in a limited resource environment. We know that the demographics do not show a tremendous amount of growth in k-12.

It is a changing landscape and we need to find a way to work together. Priorities are changing, decisions are happening all the time. Some form of prioritization happened a year ago. We have to have discussions about what the institution can afford, and what can be done to serve students, and relevant areas for students. We have to have the discussions together to come up with the best solutions. The budget is dynamic. This is why he brought Dickensen to campus. There needs to be a format for the discussion, so that decisions are not made around you, but with you. Dickensen’s is one model. There are others. We cannot stop what has happened. We can work to change the trajectory, but the numbers are where they are until we attract more students / revenue. We can’t just ignore the declining revenue. The discussion needs to take place using whatever mechanism feels best for a systematic approach. Something has to initiate the dialog.

G.G. Weix: Please address whether need- based aid for Montana resident students would be system-wide or target institutions with the greatest need. MSU offers financial aid packages to non-resident students. Is this a strategy that should be implemented system-wide? Should we be more aggressive in recruiting international students given that the University of Idaho has over 800 international students? That was one of the significant factors that helped them balance their budget.

Christian: The hope is that the legislature can be convinced that need-based aid is a worthy investment for the system. The foundations are also willing to help. If the state puts in some money we can likely get matching funds from the foundation and other philanthropist. The waiver topic will be explored as a platform of access to success. The request would be at system level to target students of need at institutions of need. This would be used to drive student success and ultimately enrollment.

The use of waivers for non-resident students is system wide. Historically the legislature set a 2% cap. In the 2013 legislative session this was removed and the Board implemented a policy that campuses could use waivers at their discretion to attract non-resident students. Bozeman has used the waivers very successfully. The policy mandates the aggregate amount may not drop below the cost of education. This stop gap measure ensures that non-residents must be adding to revenue not taking away from it. Both institutions are close to the benchmark now. So there is not a lot of room to increase the discounting model. Vice Presidents Mike Reid and Tom Crady are looking at how we can best utilize the waivers to help attract students. They are also looking at some pricing models. Recruiting international students is a good opportunity for institutions across the country, but there is significant competition for those students now. They generally pay full non-resident tuition and succeed when there is an environment where they fit in. We are looking at all three of the strategies.

Senator Salzda-Petree: How will a program prioritization process begin and end with an interim provost and an interim president?

Christian: The interim leadership will have to continue to make decisions. We either find a format that provides input into the decisions or we let them be made. What needs to change is that decisions are sought out a strategically ahead of time. So we know what students need. The budget will not allow us to put program prioritization on hold. We will have to evaluate in some form how campus will strategically set priorities with input from the faculty. We will also look at how the Regents will help with the price and the state investment. All of these things will be considered in order to find a more sustainable budget. We don’t have the luxury to wait to figure out these pieces.

In terms of the transition, AGB Search Consultants has been hired and will have two representatives on campus next week to attend the listening sessions. He has worked with the firm in the past. Jim McCormick has extensive experience in higher education and can help attract great people to the position. He wants to move as efficiently as possible without rushing the process. The intent is to have solid candidates visit campus and be thoroughly vetted by a representative committee. The listening session will be Tuesday and Wednesday of next week. The schedule has been sent via email and posted to the [website](http://www.umt.edu/president/Presidential%20Search/default.php), UM. Comments regarding the search can be sent to [UMSearch@umontana.edu](mailto:UMSearch@umontana.edu)**.**  The consultants will receive these comments and will compile the information from the listening sessions to form the prospectus.   
  
He talked to the search consultant about the timeline. Christmas break creates an interesting gap. After the holidays he will form the search committee. His hope is to have a good start on process and a committee ready to seat when we come back in January. We need to leave advertisement open for a while to attract candidates. The plan is to vet candidates in order to bring them to campus around mid-March. If all goes according to plan, a job offer will be made in late April to start the first of July.

Professor Weix: What has happened to the Provost search?   
  
Christian: We are still trying to figure out our options and then make the best decision. He hopes to make a decision by early next week. The changes at the President level effects the mindset of the provost candidates. We have contacted them about the situation and are assessing their interest level to remain in the pool. We are also talking with the Registry to determine Interim Provost Edmonds availability.

Senator Beck: He is happy to hear there will be significant role for shared governance in the program prioritization (or whatever it is called) process. It has been difficult not having timely information about the budget situation. He urges the decision makers to provide a clear understanding of the budget situation before engaging in the review process.

Christian: Sheila Stearns will be a fantastic interim president. She has been associated with the institution since the 60s and is passionate about it. He has already had these conversations with Sheila. We need to do a better job. We are a public institution and have to find a way to lay the budget on the table. We have to prioritize our thoughts and decisions. It’s not all about programs, because we need money to recruit students and faculty. We need money for infrastructure, growth and new programs. We must make conscious decisions on these priorities moving forward. This needs to happen in an inclusive environment. Sheila has been successful at this during her career. She can help facilitate the process. We have to have earnest conversations about how we find our way moving forward. We have some things going in the right direction. And we have the ability to take this to the next level.

Senator Banville: What weight will you give to ASUM and ECOS going on record with the desire that the Provost search to go forward.

Christian: We need to know whether the candidates are still interested knowing what is going on. There has been some expression of continued interested, but with the sentiment of waiting to see how things go. Once the questions are answered and there is still a strong pool of candidates we will determine when to bring them to campus.

Senator Brady Harrison: Many faculty members in the humanities feel that much of the decision making has already taken place. Programs have already been targeted and that is not going to turnaround. Schools outside the humanities will be favored in the process. Can you assure that voices from the humanities

Christian: He has not taken part in any of these targeting discussions, and it is certainly not direction from OCHE or the Board. Six of the 7 Board Members have liberal arts degrees and very much embrace what liberal arts institutions bring to the table. So respectfully disagrees that the humanities are being targeted. He is proud of the institution. It is his alma mater. We do not need to change who we are. We have to make sure we are serving the needs of the students in terms of relevance. There is no interest or desire to see humanities damaged in any of this. Humanities are an integral piece of education and our society. They need to be a part of every education and this is the position of the Board. It is unfortunate that there is a perception of the humanities being targeted. We have to face the realities of the budget. If we face these together we can protect our liberal arts identity. He is not promoting any item over another. The program prioritization discussion workshop a few weeks ago mentioned a mechanism to maintain programs without the highest enrollment because of a societal need. The process is not as simple as eliminating the programs with the smallest enrollment. He welcomes and embraces the discussion that is needed.

Senator Chatterjee: He is heartened to hear the statement of the UFA President and the Commissioner’s about working together. There is a misperception on campus about what is going on. It is really hard to keep new faculty when this happens every year. He knows Assistant Professors that are already looking for other jobs after the second year. Part of the problem is that statements from various offices that get quoted in the Missoulian. The statements seem incredibly ill-informed and create an atmosphere of fear among the faculty. It would be nice if the campus leadership turn this around, so faculty have confidence in the institution.

Christian: We need to turn this around. It is a great place and has been for over 100 years. It was great when his grandmother attended in 1927. The Board is interested in maintaining all that UM means to the state, the region and the country. He appreciates the comment. It is challenging for reporters to distill a conversation to a few word. A member of his used some inappropriate words and he has apologized for this. It misrepresents the larger conversation. We are in this together and his office and the Board want to be support mechanism for the campus. His intent is not to dictate the process, but rather to provide tools and support in as many ways as possible. We need to be careful about the message and talk more so we understand one another better. This is why he is here today.

Senator Bitar: What changed to initiate the shared discussion? Will you initiation a review of the decisions made without consultation that eroded our programs?

Christian: Nothing changed. The reality of the situation is that it is a priority of the Board to ensure UM is on sound footing. OCHE needs to help with this. The discussion is about how we get there. He wants to be available from a system-level to do this. More specific questions about programs need to happen at the campus level. He believes Interim President Stearns will embrace this part of the conversation, whether it is prioritization or something else. We need to listen to all stakeholders. We need a focus on the future and where we are going to be. Status quo does not serve us well. We are at a point where we need to take the next step forward and decide on the relevant salient pieces. He doesn’t think anything is off the table. Interim President Stearns will engage the faculty in the discussion regarding the direction of the process. These are not system-level decisions.

Bitar: This is his 17th year at UM. He is the founder of a program. He was not consulted in any of the decisions. He has exhausted all possible venues- the UFA (4 times) and the Affirmative Action Office. He now finds that it is necessary to file a grievance against the grievance officer.   
  
Christian: There is a governance structure in place that should be used. He is not going to step in the middle and elevate any one concern over another. We need to work as a campus together to make sure people are heard. Even hard decisions need to be made together. You should be included in the discussion. What this looks like depends on what structure the campus agrees on moving forward.

Valentin: There was greatness, but we have financial challenges. The university is under attack. You talk about priorities and status quo. Would you consider privatizing the football team to generate revenue for the humanities?

Christian: The heart of the question is what is on the table and what is off. He met with the Cabinet today. His suggestion is that we truly put all things on the table and look at various sources of revenue and expense. We have to think outside the box at what is available. He is not sure about privatizing. As a group we need to look at what shapes our future- how we are going to serve the students of Montana. He has no boundaries on topic. If it is good for the institution and the institution embraces it then the Board would consider it.

Professor Darryl Jackson: Have you or the Board thought about how the negative publicity is effecting recruitment? What are you going to put in place to counter this?

Christian: Yes, they are. We know that moving forward we are going to try to find additional resources at a system-level. The Board has asked for more recruitment effort. There was money moved out of that budget in the last year. This needs to be restored. I don’t think we should put more pressure on Vice President Tom Crady. He brings new ideas to resolving the issue. We need to provide him with resources. He is looking into whether the system has any potential resources that can help. The Board is very aware and is looking at ways it can help.

Senator Eglin: The elephant in the room in these discussions over several years is the assumption is that our revenue must be based on enrollment. We do not have control over demographics so we chase after every available student and try to keep them enrolled as long as possible. We need to look long range at all the institutions in the system. Montana has a lot of campuses for a small population.

Christian: For the past 10 years we have looked at the best way to split up the state allocation so everyone is not chasing the same FTE. The number of students is not the right benchmark. Performance funding is based on quality students that we retain and ultimately graduate. The discussion that started in September about structure and governance will continue at the March and May meetings. Hopefully there will be some movement on the allocation model.

Eglin: What about encouraging institutions to accumulate endowments so that fluctuations in enrollment are not as problematic?

Christian: The Board has talked about this issue a lot. We can’t simply divide the appropriations by the number of institutions. To some extent the money has to follow students. The Board has a tremendous interest in finding a better way. If you can suggest other models, they would be happy to take a look. Certainly all the institutions are trying to build philanthropy and financial aid. The three legs to the funding are financial aid / philanthropy, tuition, state funds or federal funds, and scholarship. The Board is definitely open to have a conversation.

Student in audience: ASUM does not speak for all students. It is a small, highly institutionalized organization. It does not speak for the student body as a collective whole.   
You keep inferring that we have to deal with the consequences as they come. This is a bureaucratic institution and some people have power while others do not. You can say that we are not going to damage the liberal arts mission of the University, or the capacity of students to get a well-rounded education. But to what degree do you ensure that the bureaucratic system does not work against that. You have said that you and the Board value humanities, but how can you ensure the humanities will not disappear. There hasn’t been an effective system of collaboration in decision making, so what are your ideas to create an effective mechanism? How will those in charge and the faculty actually work together to ensure everyone, including the students have a voice?

Christian: The Faculty Senate is a voice. It is necessary to work within the structure. He understands the bureaucratic part of the argument. There are representatives that represent the students, faculty and staff. The Board has to engage with the structure that exists. It is challenging to interact with everyone. There are 48,000 students across the system. It is impossible to interact with every student, although that is certainly the goal. We use the representative structure. But perhaps the voice has not been heard enough. His plan is to engage the shared governance groups more concretely. He understands that the ASUM President may not represent each student on every issue, but this is the structure that is in place. Students should try to embrace this structure. It’s important to recognize the structure and work within it.

As the Commissioner of Higher Education, he is interested in maintaining access to the humanities and liberal arts. He cannot ensure anything about the future. The Board changes as does his position. He can only speak to his thoughts while in the position. The humanities have an important part in education across the system and he is interested in defending this as an integral part of students education.

Senator Frey, Graduate Council Chair: The Council wants to make sure that research and graduate education interests are represented on the President’s Search Committee. Graduate programs play an important role at the University. Graduate students are extremely important as researchers. They help with grants, prestige, and teaching. The University’s strategic plan created in 2014 that is intended to extend to 2020 has the goal to increase the number of graduate students by 50%, but as 0f 2016 the numbers remain essentially flat and have been flat or decreasing for over a decade. Graduate Council recognizes that undergraduate enrollment is clearly and economic driver for the university, but excellent graduate programs distinguish UM from four-year colleges. The Graduate Council’s hope is that a faculty member is appointed to the search committee that represents these interests.

Christian: The message that you can send back is that he shares those values. He has overseen two Presidential searches in his time as Commissioner and has had representation from the graduate/research interests of the campus. The last presidential search at UM had a graduate student on the search committee. UM has the largest graduate education in the MUS system. Graduate education is a big part of the institutions identity. He and the Board are very supportive of this.

Ross Best, Graduate student non- degree: You suggested that students should work within the governance structure of the university. The most important deliberative body in the governance structure is the President’s Cabinet. The President’s Cabinet’s meetings are generally not open to the public, not to students, faculty, or staff. And no opportunity is allowed for public comment. Bozeman appears to be more open. MSU has an analogous body. How can the universities justify closing meetings, especially in light of the Supreme Court decision some years ago regarding the Commissioner Croft’s group? Can you explain why UM’s President Cabinet meetings should not be open? Can you help to get these meetings open to the public? Allow for public participation, proper notice, minutes, and so forth?

Christian: The Commissioner’s Office has received your correspondence on similar topics and has had Legal Counsel review your requests and responded several times. Students and Faculty are part of the President’s cabinet. The President has tried to embrace making them as open as they can to do the work of the institution in as efficient manner as possible.   
  
Best: The meetings are closed to the public in violation of the Montana constitution.   
  
Christian: Fair enough. He cannot provide an answer that you will find satisfactory today. The President is trying to be inclusive. Interim President Stearns will be as inclusive as she can and still get the work done of the institution. They discuss a variety of topics in the Cabinet. We can continue the discussion after the meeting if necessary.

Senator Annie Belcourt: There are amazing things available on this campus. She is an alumni and has a mixed liberal arts and science background. These disciplines go well together. She has been fortunate enough to receive grants to work with communities. These have focused on blending humanities and creative arts with science. She hopes that the opportunity for working together is kept in mind. The conversation can be very constructive. In terms of continuity, how do we continue our collaboration with tribal communities that preserves commitments that have been made in the past?

Christian: He appreciates the comment and confidence. UM is a fantastic campus and Missoula is a fantastic city. He is incredibly optimistic about the future of the University of Montana. We have to get all of us working together to resolve the current challenges. UM is still rated one of the best campuses in the country and we can sell this. In the last year a new group was formed by the Commissioner’s Office to work with the new state funded position, American Indian and Minority Achievement. OCHE is putting a tremendous amount of effort into this initiative. The new group will work to identify the barriers to Native American students. The goal is to help attract native students, and to put support systems in place to help them retain and complete. The numbers don’t speak well. Over the last 20-30 years, the system has put a lot of money into these efforts, without seeing results. So we must be doing something wrong. We need to find a way to meet the native population where they are. He was discouraged by a 16 year study report that came out for the western states. There have been improvements for every minority group with the exception of Native American students. This is our Achilles’ heel in Montana and we need to embrace the Native population. OCHE is working on this, but there is certainly more that can be done.

The Commissioner was thanked for visiting with the Faculty Senate

Chair’s report continued

* Chair DeBoer has a copy of the preliminary bibliography prepared by the Executive Committee of the UFA and will make it available to the full senate.
* Board of Regents meeting update  
  The Montana University Faculty Association Representatives (MUSFAR) had a breakfast meeting with the Regents. The focus of the conversation was general education, and the meaning of liberal arts and the humanities on all of our campuses. Professor Haber shared a Wall street journal article about how students who study liberal arts tend to be successful in their learning potential throughout their lives. We tried to engage the Regents with the idea of preserving the foundational core. There was also an informal conversation with legislators about the importance of liberal arts.   
    
  We need to start an information gathering period to inform the discussion on prioritization. The Faculty Senate, the UFA, Staff Senate, and ASUM need to get prepared for the conversation. We will be gathering your thoughts regarding prioritization, alternative models, and information on units that are already making strategic adjustments to programs with an eye toward growth. His program has initiated changes. We need to know about these things so we can strategically speak to the administration and with Helena about the positive steps being taken to move forward.   
    
  He and MaryAnn met with Interim Provost Edmond on Tuesday and he met with Associate VP Becky Christians to gain an understanding of what is happening with money on the campus. Faculty members, for the most part do not understand the mechanisms at work. He will also be meeting with Paula Short in the President’s Office. He hopes to put some information together over the break that will help clarify the current situation. He had an earlier meeting with interim President Stearns and she intends to clarify the budget situation when she fully understands where things are.

The information gathering survey will be an opportunity to explain past issues that shared governance should be aware of.

* We are establishing a generic faculty senate Chair email address. This will be a dedicated email address that will pass to the chair each year.
* Recruitment and retention is a priority issue on campus, therefore Chair Deboer briefly informed the senate of the new [Banner XE Student Advisor Profile](http://www.umt.edu/oss/for_faculty_staff/toolkit.php). The Advisor link in Banner now provides information on your advisees. It shows their picture, their current enrollment, and links to their pen number. There have been improvements in the advising section of Cyberbear. Degree Works is also up and running. It is critical that we work to retain our students as they move into their sophomore year. Faculty need to be available to listen to their concerns and help mentor them to continue their academic careers at UM. Our numbers are working against us given our budget is partially based on performance. Retention is one way to help the budget equation.
* Please complete the Evaluation of Administration and remind your colleagues the deadline is December 16th. This is an opportunity to give valuable input to our administrators that do work on our behalf. Please be thoughtful, specific and constructive. We will aggregate information in the spring semester and complete the drawing for the gift certificate and the President’s Box for the basketball game on February 18th.

Good and Welfare

* Lorrie DeYott, a long time staff member in Information Technology is going through some hardship. Her son suffered 1st degree burns due from a fire in her home while she was away. A [Fundraising](https://www.gofundme.com/help-support-lorrie) site has been established for donations.

Adjournment  
The meeting was adjourned at 4:51 p.m.