

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 19, 2016, 3:30-5:00
STC Board Room
Faculty Senators & Administration

- Call to order: Beth Weatherby, Deb Hedeem, Erin Zavitz, Megan Kelly, Megan Chilson, Karl Ulrich, Linda Lyon, Michael Hengler, Laura Straus, Shane Borrowman, Tyler Seacrest
- Erin Moves to approve the minutes from December 5, Megan K. Seconds. Motion passes.
- Regarding Curriculum Proposals 1, 2, 5:
 - Megan K moved to approve these CPs. Linda seconded.
 - The motion passed (English Abstained, all other votes in favor)
- Creation of a Bookstore Taskforce
 - Bookstore has run into financial trouble for a variety of reasons. One reason is Amazon.com has a policy that allows students to try books for 30 days' charge free.
 - There will be two groups looking at the issue: one from the academic book side, and another from the merchandise side.
 - Both groups will be tasked with making the bookstore financially viable if possible, or determining what will replace the bookstore if it is not financially viable.
 - Looking for faculty to serve on the academic bookstore taskforce. Names should be in by the end of block 5.
- Updates from the Chancellor
 - Forward any questions regarding the departure of University of Montana President Egstrom to Chancellor Weatherby.
 - Keep an eye open for student leaders who would do well in the Montana NEW Leadership program, a women's leadership conference this summer at the University of Montana.
- Updates from the Provost
 - Four faculty searches underway in Math, Economics, Literature, and Education. These are posted and the searches will start January 16.
 - There will be a template for creating department websites available soon. Also, marketing is always looking for featured stories.
 - There will be Faculty Forums February 8, March 15, and April 12 (3:30-5:00), and a meeting on a potential ExperienceOne Institute on January 11, 3:30-5:00.
 - Accreditation, Strategic Planning, and Department Chair Meetings have all been set for spring. The assessment committee will start meeting again soon.
- Regarding the Director of eLearning and Academic Technology
 - We discussed questions and issues raised by Shane with this position (currently there is a search underway for this position). These concerns related to whether the job

description asked for someone with a strong enough academic and technical background to do research, set the primary vision, and implement those ideas. See appendix A.

- We broadly agreed with Shane's concerns and hoped they would be taken into consideration during the phone interview stage of the hiring process.
- We discussed a proposal by Education to put more general education classes online to help with their expanding early childhood education students. General Education put forward a statement regarding this proposal – see Appendix B
- The previous item raised some procedural questions
 - The education proposal was first brought to the All Chairs committee. What is the domain of Faculty Senate versus the All Chairs committee?
 - The provost clarified that the All Chairs committee was just a discussion – Faculty Senate is still the main place information for all faculty is disseminated and official recommendations are voted on.
 - Faculty Forum is another place any items can come to and then be funneled to the appropriate committee
 - The question was raised: if Chairs have (at least some) authority over faculty, does that limit the authority of Faculty Senate as being subservient to the All Chairs committee?
 - The authority being granted to department Chairs is very limited and boils down to being able to turn in forms and reports to keep the university running.
- Good of the order
- Karl moved to adjourn, and Erin seconded. Just then, Beth pushed the secret button only chancellors know about. A disco ball dropped down from the ceiling, panels opened to reveal giant speakers, and the conference table lowered and became a dance floor. Instant dance party!

Appendix A

From **Shane** Borrowman:

This director we're hiring is "responsible for the research, recommendation, development, implementation and management of emerging technologies to enhance teaching and learning. This position also provides primary vision, training, support, and maintenance of the online learning management system (Moodle)."

The last part of that description suggests a tech-support sort of role, given the "support" and "maintenance," but the bulk of this responsibility is bigger. Much bigger. This is a *director* we're hiring, and he/she is coming in with expectations related to "research" and providing "primary vision." That's the kind of language used to hire a program director within a department, primarily because research requires baseline knowledge developed across years of study and practice, and vision requires judgment. Without these skills--meaningfully constructed and deployed--we're reduced to bouncing from one hot technology to the next, with no logical consideration of value or even need.

The person being sought for this position may have only limited teaching experience (since "online teaching experience" is required but not any minimum amount, and face-to-face teaching experience is neither required nor expected). Experiential education isn't even mentioned in the list of qualifications, yet "social media" is.

Nothing wrong with mentioning social media, but social media isn't in Western's mission statement.

Experiential education is in the description of the university, naturally, but candidates are required only to "address all of the job qualifications" in their letters of application. So mention of X1 in the description of Western is irrelevant for practical hiring purposes; because X1 isn't listed in the qualifications, we can't even expect candidates to take note of it--although we can certainly hope that they will.

Hope, however, is not a hiring strategy.

The educational expectations for this director are vague: The person must have online teaching experience, so he/she presumably needs an advanced degree, although it's certainly possible to have online teaching experience with no degree. If we'd required "online teaching experience at a nationally-accredited university," this wouldn't have been an issue, at least in terms of the candidate possessing an advanced degree in some academic field.

Preference "may" be granted if the applicant has a master's in "instructional technology, education or related field." Practically, this position seems to be designed to fit the hiring profile of someone with minimal education and some online experience. That's the sort of

candidate who can "promote and support [the] use of academic technologies for instructional use." However, this position calls for research and vision, and the qualifications, as listed, simply don't demand the necessary level of education or expertise.

This "director" has no authority over faculty, yet he/she will make decisions that impact all faculty. Because this "director" is being hired as a staff member who reports to the Provost and "collaborates" with Outreach, it's simply another quasi-staff/administrative position orphaned from all academic departments. Since so many decisions regarding technology--the adoption of Moodle itself, the push toward EdReady--are made beyond this campus, it's unclear what authority this director may even have, regardless of his/her research results and vision.

The position is out there, and it'll be filled or it won't.

If this position had been discussed more broadly, however, then other paths forward could have been considered.

We need a training/support person. No question. But in relation to Moodle, we have two people already filling this role (in practical if not literal terms).

We need someone who can provide vision, someone who can truly consider the value of emerging technologies in relation to Western's unique mission. In fact, we have people here capable of providing vision in exactly this way; there are faculty in every department with the necessary knowledge and expertise. Rotating someone into this directorship for several years (while she/he continues to teach a 1-1 or 2-1 load with an additional stipend for the additional duties) has real value, and such a director walks in with no learning curve and immediate credibility.

But like the actual job ad that's been posted, there's no way to know if such an option was even considered.

This directorship is budgeted at a salary of \$40,000-\$60,000, plus the cost of insurance and retirement. Clearly, then, the money exists to consider alternatives, too.

Appendix B

From the General Education committee:

The university's primary mission is to deliver experiential education, whether face to face or on-line. We advise individual academic departments to proceed cautiously with regard to the Education Department's request for several general education classes to be put on-line. The General Education committee advises both the All Chairs body and Faculty Senate to adopt a resolution which outlines the uses and limitations of on-line course delivery.

The following guidelines should be considered:

- 1) If departments choose to participate, they will have final say over hiring instructors.
- 2) Participating faculty (whether they develop the curriculum or deliver it) should be financially supported by the administration. Such financial support may take the form of stipends to attend conferences or to conduct research on how to make on-line learning experiential or faculty may be offered additional development blocks.
- 3) Departments with more than five general education courses taught on-line should be offered the chance to hire a tenure-track instructor who specializes in on-line learning in the field of the department.