

MUSSA

January 19, 2016

Notes from meeting with Board of Regents, Helena OCHE headquarters

Present:

- UM: Jen Zellmer-Cuaresma, Maria Mangold, Judy Wellert, Luke Alford
- Helena College: Mary Ann George, Karina Moulton, Brenda Johnson
- Montana Tech, Butte: Peggy Delaney, Theresa Froehlich-O'Leary (arrived late due to car trouble)
- Great Falls College: Carol Berg, Cheryl McGee
- MSU Northern, Havre: Debra Bradley, Jennifer Anderson

### **Pre-Meeting Planning**

It is MUSSA's responsibility to set the agenda for our Board of Regents meetings.

After introducing ourselves, the MUSSA reps present planned their presentation to the Board of Regents with the goal of impressing on them the value of classified staff affecting student success. Emphasis needs to be placed on student retention, completion, mentoring, and advising – demonstrating how it is most often staff that make these things happen.

Reps from Great Falls expressed the concern that they are experiencing employee reductions due to lower enrollment though the administration seems heavily staffed. Also, vacant faculty positions are being filled, but vacant staff positions are not being filled.

### **Board of Regents Meeting**

- Regents present: Casey Lazar, Bob Nystuen, Bill Johnstone, Paul Tuss, Fran Albrecht, Martha Sheehy, Asa Hohman
- Others present: Clayton Christian, Kevin McRae, Grace Gardner, Amy DeMato

Jen, Brenda, Jennifer, and Cheryl described the roles of the staff members from their respective campuses featured in the "Student Success: Mentoring" booklet. Carol remarked that Great Falls College has a question/motto that the employees use – "What can I do today to get a student to come back tomorrow?" Regent Tuss thanked us for adding the human touch, Regent Albrecht thanked us for providing the booklet; Regent Sheehy stated, "The student's contact with staff is important. Thanks for providing it."

Carol stated she wishes there was a way for her to add notes to a student's record so the other staff and faculty could read her observations about a student. Some kind of staff access to retention software could help advisors, faculty, and other staff members share valuable information. There was discussion regarding various retention software used by campuses and the feasibility of having the ability to communicate between campuses.

Mary Ann asked the Regents to please advocate for staff when considering student retention and completion.

Maria stated that Bystander Training needs the support of the faculty. The relationships between faculty and staff vary.

Luke stated that, in his experience, faculty are happy to mentor but would prefer staff members do advising.

Regent Nystuen asked, "Are your colleagues moving to private sector employment?" Deb answered that MUS wages are low, and staff are demoralized despite MUS offering good benefits. Jennifer added that University employees find it difficult to move up career ladders.

Judy mentioned that UM has made strides in shared governance.

Jen pointed out that all employees need to be accountable for fulfilling their roles. She questioned that adequate credence is given to evaluations. Commissioner Christian stated that evaluations must be honest, and there are current policies in place for employees with tenure and those without tenure.

The meeting was concluded.

### **After-the-meeting Meeting**

Deb would like to have conference call meetings in March and April to plan the next Board of Regents meeting which will be on May 19-20 in Havre.