MUSSA WebEx Minutes

Friday, February 16, 2018          10:02 a.m.

I.  Call to Order
    • Chair Priscilla Azure called the meeting to order. Those present included:
      Bozeman: Ramie Pederson (MUSSA Vice-Chair) & Candace Mastel
      Billings: Sheri Steiner
      Butte: Peggy McCoy
      Great Falls: Priscilla Azure (MUSSA Chair) & Laramie Smovir
      Helena: Jessie Pate
      Missoula: Maria Mangold & Luke Alford
      Representatives from Havre were not present.

II. Information/Announcements/Updates
    • It was noted Lisa Hespen, Interim Bozeman Staff Senate Coordinator and MUSSA Administrator, was unable to attend. Members expressed their desire for her to physically attend MUSSA meetings to be on hand if there are any questions or to look up information during the meeting.

III. Current Business
    • BOR Followup:

      Background Information: On 2/14/2018, Kevin McRae of OCHE sent an email to MUSSA leaders regarding the MUSSA Annual Report that was submitted to OCHE in January regarding the collection of personnel data, collective bargaining, and MUSSA’s role.

      There was considerable discussion on what the role of MUSSA and Staff Senates is as the voice of the staff. It was expressed that while it seems wages are an issue and part of the staff retention issue, MUSSA should not be focusing on wages. Instead MUSSA should look at the bigger picture—how to keep staff engaged and build positive morale, as well as address potential reasons people leave the system. Each campus should look at the areas that had low satisfaction ratings on the survey and identify steps their senate could take to positively affect these areas.

      Great Falls informed the group that their staff senate has already formed a committee to look into ways they can improve morale on campus. Positive morale means less people leaving. It was commented that while the union is a big piece of the pie, Billings is trying to change the culture of employees.

      Discussion was had in regards to the fact that not all members of the staff senates, nor all of the employees whom are represented, are part of a union. If members and/or constituents are not part of a union, where are they supposed to address or discuss these issues? Billings noted some of their senators are part of their union and they are able to share what is happening in regards to their unions.

      The question came up of which senates, if any, include contract professionals on their councils. Bozeman is currently working on gathering information regarding combining their Staff Senate with Professional Council, which is made up of professional and/or contracted employees. Butte is one group made up of professional and classified employees. Billings has members that are classified and on LOA’s. It was suggested MUSSA
members refresh themselves with who each staff senate represents. It is important that OCHE and the BOR, as well as MUSSA members, are aware that each senate represents a diverse group of people and not all of them are part of a union. It was commented that MUSSA needs to make sure they do not push the issue so much that they alienate OCHE or the BOR and lose their support. MUSSA does not want to alienate, but rather inform and instruct in regards to whom staff senates, and MUSSA, represent.

• **Board of Regents May Presentation**
  Discussion shifted to what the focus of MUSSA should be, as well as the May BOR presentation. Some members believe the focus should be on student retention and ways staff can positively impact student retention. It was noted MUSSA did not have an agreement to solely focus on student retention every year and should instead focus on topics that are relevant to the current environment.

  Priscilla recommended everyone send proposals regarding what MUSSA’s visions and goals should be moving forward to Lisa. More specifically, what are specific goals for MUSSA and what is the strategy to obtain these goals? Once Lisa compiles the list of proposals, members will vote on what the next steps and focus of MUSSA should be. It was commented that it would be a good idea for MUSSA’s goals and focus to line up with OCHE’s and the BOR’s.

  Once the goals and focus of MUSSA are defined, the group decided it would be advantageous to include these in the May presentation. It was further suggested a small committee be formed to create the presentation. It was proposed the issue of only two lines of the current BOR Strategic Plan are devoted to staff and faculty, in its appendix, should be included in the presentation. Can the strategic plan be amended to make this section more robust and to include measurable metrics?

IV. **Campus Reports**

**Great Falls:** Great Falls has officially created and adopted their Bylaws and became an official governing body on their campus. Great Falls further noted that they have received approval to send one or two of their representatives to the May meeting.

**Butte:** Butte is going through a program prioritization and is in the middle of making their way through it. It was also noted their former Chancellor, Frank Gilmore, passed away on February 14th and the campus will be holding a memorial in the spring or summer in his honor.

**Bozeman:** MSU is celebrating their 125th Year Anniversary today (February 14, 2018) and is hosting a multitude of events such as a Ferris wheel, human-size snow globe, statue unveiling, ice skating rink, food vendors, etc. Ramie offered a huge thank you to all the Bozeman staff and facilities members who have been working hard to make this event a huge success. It illustrates how dedicated the staff is and how much they want to make a difference across the system.

**Billings:** Billings has hired their Vice Chancellor and is now conducting a search for their Chancellor. It is hard for staff senate to take much action until the new team is in place. They have a lot of people looking for jobs on the administrative level. It was noted it is hard for them to pick something specific to focus on other than improving morale, staff engagement, etc., until their Executive staff is in place.

**Helena:** Helena is in a similar position as Billings- they have a new Interim Dean whose current term is for 1½ years. They will also be looking for a new Provost. The Helena Staff Senate is currently working on having staff representation on their hiring committees.

Meeting adjourned.