

HELENA COLLEGE STAFF SENATE

Minutes

February 4, 2026 / 10:00 am / In Person Room 002 and on Teams

Helena College Mission: Helena College supports our diverse community by providing the paths and tools necessary to assist learners in achieving their educational and career goals.

Staff Senate Mission: Support all staff members and to enhance visibility and influence on campus and within the community.

Ratchford, Stephanie / Pres
 Mousel, Mark / Vice-Pres
 Caldwell, Kim / Secretary
 Thennis, Anna / Treasurer
 Adamek, Marika
 Anderson, Kelsey
 Bacon, Rick
 Benasky, Ed
 Carroll, Rebecca
 Collins, Brad
 Dalton, Natasha

Fife, Tyler
 Haikka, Tommi
 Hansen, Nina
 Hormell, Wayne
 Howard, Beau
 Kelly, Carie
 Marston, Mike
 Mortimore, Kathy
 Mousel, Melissa
 Nelson, Jeff
 Palen, Dana

Pierson, Patricia
 Reddington, Kasandra
 Romanic, Sophia
 Rogers, Tony
 Semenza, Holly
 Stergar, Christy
 Thompson, Greg
 Wagner, Cole
 Youde, Ellie
 Guest - Dean Bauman

Agenda

- I. **Call to Order** – Stephanie called the meeting to order at 10:11 AM
- II. **Review of Minutes** - Beau motioned, Anna seconded – minutes approved as written.
- III. **Treasurer’s Report** – Anna
Petty Cash – \$39.47
Budget in UMDW – \$500.00
- IV. **Old Business**—Stephanie
 - a. Stephanie reported on MUSSA’s November Board of Regents meeting. The surveys taken by staff throughout the UM system resulted in a discussion of having a consistent policy to address bullying and a continued focus on remote work policies. Stephanie considered it a good meeting with good progress. Our staff senate had the highest response rate to the survey.
- V. **New Business**—

- a. Dean Sandy Bauman was invited as a special guest. She received three questions ahead of time and focused her remarks on these:
- **What are the next steps for finding a new UM president?** This is not a traditional search. There will be no interim president. A search firm has been employed to identify candidates and meet with campus groups for feedback. Sandy and other affiliate deans emphasized that the new president will also represent their unique campuses. The Board of Regents will make the final decision and the process is expected to happen fairly quickly—in a matter of weeks.
 - **How do you see the Staff Senate role on campus—past, present, and future?** Staff Senate is a voice in shared governance. We are continuing to restructure communication to have full participation and representation from all groups. Shared professional development was mentioned. She focused on the need for Staff Senate members to take feedback to their committees, share information, and understand all perspectives.
 - **Can we close campus the day after Christmas and New Year?** No one on our campus can make that decision. The BOR creates the schedule for all the MUS and follows the state government statute. Changes require approval from the commissioner.
 - **Sandy asked what items we might want to see in the new breakroom.** She is waiting to find out the final amount remaining in the remodel budget to purchase furniture. Ideas shared by Staff Senate members were: plants, rolling TV trays, single comfortable seating, round tables, whiteboard, treadmill, massage chair, card games, bookshelf (from 130) and art from students and staff. She shared that the monitor is set up for individuals to log into their own streaming accounts to watch TV. Anything food related (paper plates, etc) can not be purchased with state money. Cleaning supplies (including paper towels) are okay.

VI. **Committee Reports** – attached

VII. **Adjournment** – Beau motioned and Anna seconded. Meeting was dismissed at 10:57 AM.

- a. Next meeting – April 1, 2026 @ 10 AM via Teams

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Budget Council – Trish

- **October**

BC reviewed the 3-year budget forecast template. The template will ask departments to request a budget for one year and forecast a budget for two additional years. Cari explained how biennial budgets work. Biennial budgets come from the legislative appropriation, and we treat each year slightly differently. HC can potentially use year one biennial surplus funds towards projects. At the end of year one, we are allowed to carry forward surplus funds, whereas at the end of year two, we have to move funds into the reserve.

Cari edited the budget forecast template using suggestions from the first October meeting. She will offer workshops when it is released.

BC discussed 2 fee pot requests at the 2nd meeting. First was a Machining Fee Pot Request for a HAAS machine (Total cost \$129,414.75). Part of the funding will come from Boeing Special Projects funding and Machining program fee pot. BC approved spending \$38,800 of the academic equipment (AE) fee pot pending the student Academic Equipment Fee committee approval. Second was a Science Fee Pot Request for \$6500 for science lab autoclave. This was approved pending student Academic Fee Pot Committee approval.

- **November**

Shauna Lyons, MUS Director of Budget & Planning, presented at a joint BC & Cabinet meeting. She discussed personnel planning and the appropriations process used to set budgets.

MUS takes a snapshot in October and April to determine how many permanent employees are working from the current unrestricted. Tenure and promotion/merit increases are added in January. The information is due in June and part of the allocation under Health and other. HC is not gaining all the pay plan increases it could because of fee pot positions. Position management is going to become more strategic to capture pay plan gains. HC should move our fee pot salaried employees incrementally so they are included in the snapshots.

- **December**

BC discussed draft documents/processes for requesting personnel/positions. In the second meeting, BC reviewed the procedure with edits from Jessie, Amy, and Cari. BC will continue to review process/documents.

- **January**

Val Curtain attended to discuss Cost of Attendance. The information is used to calculate Financial Aid packages for students and determine how much aid students can receive. Val used the LivingWage Calculator for Lewis & Clark County this year for the justifications. Last year she used the College Board Cost of Attendance calculations. Budget Council approved the COA calculations as presented.

Professional Development – Marika

Thank you to everyone for participating in our all-campus team building! If you want to share any feedback with the committee, please do so!

We have approximately \$3,000 remaining to allocate for this AY 2025/2026 for professional development. Apply now!

Please take advantage of all the professional development offerings we have available to us - NISOD or ACUE Commons.

We currently are planning a campus activity regarding student wellbeing headed by our own Katelynn Eberhardt.

Watch the MMM for more information.

IDEA – Marika

We are working through our recommendations from NWCCU. A dashboard and summary will be made available on the website this spring.

Employee Wellbeing & Engagement – Kim

We continue to meet regularly and are divided into a Wellbeing group and an Engagement group. The Wellbeing group recently used a wellness grant to provide insulated lunch bags and wellness goodies for employees. They are also planning a weekly lunchtime yoga class. The day and time will be announcement following the results of a survey that recently went out. The Engagement group is hosting the first annual campus Dip-Off competition for this Thursday, Feb. 5th from 11:30-1:30 in the new break room. Bring a dip to share and votes will be taken for the winner. The prize will be a bragging-rights trophy!