HELENA COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

HELENA COLLEGE STAFF SENATE

Minutes

*April 1, 2026 | 10:00 am | **via 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

Agenda

I. **Call to Order** – Stephanie called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM

II. **Review of Minutes –** Attendance names need to be updated with new/leaving employees. Anna motioned to approve, Kelsey seconded – minutes approved with attendance changes.

III. **Treasurer's Report –** Anna

Petty Cash – $39.47
Budget in UMDW – $500.00

IV. **Old Business**—Stephanie

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V. **New Business—**

a. **Nominations for next term**
- More discussion regarding combining the secretary and treasurer positions. Bylaws would need to be amended. Kim will create a voting form to be approved by the board and sent out asap. Members will have 48 hours to respond
- Marika nominated Natasha for the secretary/treasurer position and Christy for vice-president. Kelsey seconded. Christy declined. Natasha will consider. Further nominations will be held via email in preparation for the May meeting.

b. **Future of Staff Senate**
- The board met recently to discuss the relevancy of Staff Senate. The board consensus was a need for restructuring, including the possibility of quarterly meetings, clarifying our purpose, and the importance of support from directors for coverage. Discussion was had about encouraging interest and participation and addressing WHY should staff attend and participate. More focus could be put on two-way sharing of committee information and communicating with the dean. Are committee reports being read? Could making them a part of our discussion encourage more voice and connection? There are currently 27-29 staff members, considerably down from past numbers. Kim and Marika will look for the form used in the past to share questions and concerns with the board. If we go to four meetings, two could be in person and two via Teams. Hope was expressed that Teams meetings have a way of in-person connection for those without access to computers.

VI. **Committee Reports –** attached

VII. **Adjournment –** Kelsey motioned and Anna seconded. Meeting was dismissed at 10:43 AM.

a. Next meeting – May 6, 2026 @ 10 AM via Teams

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

IDEA Council – Marika

Curious about our Institutional Data? Take a look at our Semester Census Enrollment and Degree and Certificates Awarded dashboards on our website. How do we compare to our peers? Check out the 2025 IPEDS Reports.

On Fri., Apr. 17th we have a follow up meeting with NWCCU to discuss our progress toward our recommendations from our previous visit last year. You should have received an invite. If not, please reach out to Marika Adamek.

Professional Development – Marika

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. Are there thoughts you would like to share regarding professional development? Please complete the Staff Senate's Comments, Questions, Concerns form or reach out to Marika Adamek.

Did you participate in the student wellbeing event led by Veronica, Katelynn, and Kathy? If so, please let us know your thoughts.

Next month you will receive an invite to complete a survey for professional development ideas for the upcoming year. Please share ideas, comments, or concerns. We appreciate it all.

Budget Council June, July, August Report—Trish

February

Position request forms were voted on and accepted. Budget Council discussed timelines for 2027 budgets. Budgets will be due between 3/4/26 - 3/18/26. Some changes were made to the budget template: eliminate priority/risk category in favor of narratives explaining additional requests. BC also discussed having the cabinet-level budget manager attach an executive summary to include big ticket items, items that are high risk, areas where funding is no longer needed, etc.

March

Budget Council will begin evaluating the budget requests submitted. This will be done outside of meeting times, with members bringing their evaluations to meetings to discuss. BC members may be contacting departments for clarification as we go through the budgets.

Investment income and personnel costs are impacting the FY27 budget. Estimated personnel costs have increased approximately $500,000 due to pay plan and insurance increases, new hires, merit/promotions, and moving personnel from fee pots to unrestricted.

Another aspect of personnel costs will be discussing & deciding on possible adjunct pay raises and payment for dual enrollment instructors at the high schools.

Employee Wellbeing & Engagement (formerly QWL)—Kim

Wellbeing Workgroup: Applied for and received a grant that covered care packages for campus employees as well as the current Thursday yoga classes at 11:00 AM led by Virginia Reeves and Keri Jaynes.

Engagement Workgroup: Sponsored the Dip Fest in February, March Madness brackets, and currently conducts the MMM Employee Spotlight. The next event will be on May 28—a meet-up event prior to the Grandstreet production of *Guys and Dolls* that HC is sponsoring. More info will be shared asap.

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 Living Wage 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!

MUSSA – Beau
None received

Safety – Nina
None received

Dean's Office – Paige
None received