

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
Leon Johnson 346
November 29, 2023
3:15pm-4:30pm

Name	Represents	Attended
Ellis, Colter	Chair	X
McCalla, Stephanie	Chair-Elect	X
Alexander-Ruff	Julie	X
Amendola, Roberta	EN/Mechanical & Industrial Engineering	X
Anderson, Christina	AR/Film and Photography	X
Brennan, Alison	EHHD/HDCH	X
Brown, Lisa	Gallatin College	Remote
Caton, Gary	Business	X
Coffey, Jerry	Emeritus Faculty	X
Downs, Doug	English	X
D'Urso, Brian	LS/Physics	X
Flory, Dan	LS/History & Philosophy	X
Goosey, Hayes	Extension/On Campus	X
Janzen, Gesine	AR/Art	X
Kalonde, Gilbert	EHHD/Education	X
Lauchnor, Ellen	EN/Civil Engineering	Remote
Li, Hua	LS/Modern Languages	X
Maher, Rob	EN/Electrical & Computer Engineering	X
McCalla, Scott	LS/Math Sciences	X
McDermott, Tim	AG/Land Resources	X
McPhee, Kevin	AG/Plant Sciences & Plant Pathology	X
Neufeldt, Sharon	LS/Chemistry & Biochemistry	X
Orendorff, Karie	EHHD/FSNK	X
Orme, Devon	LS/Earth Sciences	X
Posbergh, Chris	AG/Animal & Range Sciences	X
Rushing, Sarah	LS/Political Science	X
Stoneback, Sarah	AR/Music	X

Stowers, Steve	AG/Micro Cell Biology	X
Thorsen, Maggie	LS/Sociology & Anthropology	X
Walach, Michael	AG/Agricultural Education	X

OTHER ATTENDEES	Represents	Attended
Babcock, Michael	Center for Faculty Excellence	X
Beck, Carina	AYCSS	X
“Community Person”	Community	X
Donohue, Ariel	Diversity and Inclusion	Remote
Lachapelle, Paul	Political Science	Remote
Meyer, Jim	History	X
Mokwa, Robert	Provost	X
Motzer, Nicole	Research & Economic Development	X
Reyes, Albert	Graduate Student	X
Voyich, Jovanka	Microbiology & Cell Biology	X

- I. Call to Order
 - a. Meeting was called to order at 3:17pm

- II. Approval of FS Minutes from November 8, 2023
 - a. Jerry Coffey moves to approve. Maggie Thorsen seconds. None opposed. Approved.

- III. FYI Items
 - a. Faculty Athletic Representative Position
 - b. Announcing this year’s Art Wall competition for Norm Asbjornson Hall to replace the third floor Art Wall with a new 20’ x 10’ design.
 - i. Applicants must be MSU students, but the contest is not limited to art majors!! Any undergraduate or graduate student can submit a proposal. A special panel of faculty, staff, students, and community members will judge the student artwork project submissions.
 - ii. A news release about the competition is available.
 - iii. The competition website, including guidelines and deadlines, is available.
 - iv. The remaining drop-by session will be held on the third-floor central atrium of Norm Asbjornson Hall on **Friday, December 1, 2:00-3:00 p.m.**
 - v. The online submission site for proposals will be open December 1, 2023 – January 19, 2024.

- c. Reminder about the Health Minds Study: MSU, in conjunction with the University of Michigan, is conducting a campus-wide survey about faculty and staff health and well-being called the Healthy Minds Study.
- d. Research Development Day is on January 11, 2023; **RSVP by December 7:**
 - i. <https://www.montana.edu/research/ord/research-development-day.html>

IV. Follow-up Items

- a. Thank you again to the Provost, VP Terry Leist, All-Staff Council, and Faculty Senators for making the All-Staff Council and Faculty Senate Reception a success.

V. Information Updates

- a. Nicole Motzer, Research Development Day
 - i. Info in slide presentation

VI. Undergraduate Courses and Programs

- a. New Courses – First Reading
 - i. [ECNS 335](#) : Energy Economics
 - ii. [M 194](#) : Introduction to Mathematical Sciences
 - iii. [NRSG 488](#) : NCLEX Preparation
 - iv. [SOVI 363](#) : Crime Prevention

- b. Course Changes — First Reading
 - i. [ANTY 467](#) : Archaeological Field School
 - 1. Change from 1-9 credits to 3 credits
 - 2. Addition of two learning outcomes
 - ii. [BIOH 411](#) : Advanced Human Appendicular Anatomy
 - 1. Title change from Advanced Human Anatomy
 - iii. [BIOO 162CS](#) : Insects and Human Society
 - 1. Change from 2 credits lecture, 1 credit lab to 3 credits lecture
 - iv. [NEUR 409](#) : Human Neuroanatomy
 - 1. Change in number from 309
 - 2. Request to change to 400 level to accommodate graduate students needing the course.

- c. Course Inactivations – First Reading
 - i. [FILM 493](#) : Study Tour
 - 1. We have not offered this class in years. It may be resurrected in the future in a different format, study tour format not dependent on travel to a Hollywood model but perhaps associated with travel to film festivals.
 - ii. [NEUR 455](#) : Molecular Medicine
 - 1. No faculty available to teach course.
 - iii. [STAT 217](#) : Intermediate Statistical Concepts
 - 1. Replaced by STAT 337

- iv. [STAT 401](#) : Applied Methods in Statistics
 - 1. Renumbered to STAT 500
- d. Course Inactivations – Second Reading
 - i. [NEUR 430](#) : Neuroethology
 - 1. No faculty to teach course
 - ii. [NEUR 435](#) : Cognitive Neuroscience
 - 1. No faculty to teach course
 - iii. [NEUR 440](#) : Neuroscience of Mental Illness
 - 1. No faculty to teach course
 - iv. [NEUR 444](#) : Modeling Brain Disorders
 - 1. No faculty to teach course
- e. New Programs – First Reading
 - i. [BS](#): Environmental Economics and Policy

VII. Graduate Courses and Programs

- a. New Courses — First Reading
 - i. [CSCI 583](#) : Integrating Computer Science in Science Classrooms
 - ii. [ERTH 587](#) : Invertebrate Paleontology for Teachers
 - iii. [M 554](#) : Abstract Algebra II
 - iv. [NRSB 616](#) : Psychiatric Case Formulation
- b. Course Inactivations — First Reading
 - i. [NEUR 510](#) : Topics in Neurobiology
 - 1. No faculty to teach course
 - ii. [NEUR 535](#) : Principles of Neuroscience
 - 1. No faculty to teach course
 - iii. [NEUR 545](#) : Current Neuroscience
 - 1. No faculty to teach course
- c. Course Changes — Second Reading
 - i. [FILM 515](#) : Science and Natural History Film Production
 - ii. Credits changed from 3 to 4
 - 1. The course is listed as a 3 credit course, yet the class meets for the time required for a 4 credit course. The required workload meets our requirement for a 4 credit course as well. The change to a 4 credit course will better reflect the importance of the course and also better reflect the time commitment students are making to the course and the work requirements.
- d. Steve Stowers comments on NEUR course inactivation.
 - i. One of the charges of faculty senate, as written in our by-laws, is to uphold academic standards. To that end I have prepared a statement prompted by the proposed inactivation of eight neuroscience courses on today's agenda, originally taught by the former Cell Biology and Neuroscience department. While I support the inactivation of these courses because their listing in the course catalog misleads current and prospective CBN students about the depth of neuroscience education at

MSU, I think it is worthwhile to review how we got here and to provide a status report on the current state of the CBN major. This requires going back four and a half years to when Provost Mokwa sent a campus-wide email with the heading “Important changes to strengthen Cell Biology and Neuroscience” in which he announced his unilateral decision to dissolve the CBN department and transfer its faculty and programs into the Microbiology and Immunology Department. In his email Provost Mokwa promised the CBN students there would be “no reductions in course offerings”. The proposed inactivations on today’s agenda lay bare Provost Mokwa’s broken promise to CBN students. Inactivating these eight courses, along with a previous CBN course inactivation last academic year, totals nine CBN course inactivations since the merger. In addition, several other CBN courses that are still being offered are taught by instructors of lesser expertise than the former CBN tenure-track faculty they replaced. Less easily quantified, but also of significant importance, is the loss of research opportunities, particularly in neuroscience, due to the resignation of seven former CBN research active tenure-track faculty, most of whom were NIH or NSF funded. With reductions in both the quality and quantity of course offerings, as well as reduced research opportunities, CBN undergraduates today get significantly less for their tuition dollar than they did before the merger.

Turning to the CBN graduate program. For at least a semester preceding his decision to dissolve the CBN department, Provost Mokwa repeatedly expressed his dissatisfaction with low enrollment in the neuroscience doctoral program and used it as his primary justification for the merger. Since the merger there have been zero new student enrollments in the neuroscience doctoral program and all the students in the program at the time of the merger have since graduated, bringing the total current enrollment to zero. While enrollment in the neuroscience doctoral program may have been low in absolute numbers prior to the merger, on a per capita basis the program numbers met or exceeded published student-faculty ratios for neuroscience departments nationally, and they were relatively stable. Although it isn’t yet before us today, termination of the neuroscience doctoral program is also in the pipeline. The neuroscience doctoral program would be better off today if Provost Mokwa had simply done nothing.

The final issue I want to address is the process that got us here, as I think there are some important lessons to be learned. Despite his oft-stated commitment to shared governance, Provost Mokwa abandoned this commitment when he wielded his power unilaterally in dissolving the CBN department. Shared governance can facilitate course corrections in cases where an individual might get it wrong. While I certainly wouldn’t

claim to be a scholar of management, even I know the foundational principle that groups make better decisions than individuals. Why Provost Mokwa didn't utilize the expertise and collective wisdom of the relevant faculty for his merger decision remains a mystery. Additionally, when Provost Mokwa sent his email announcing he was dissolving the CBN department he did so in violation of the BOR policy requiring prior BOR approval, effectively preventing oversight or public discussion, and denying due process to the affected stakeholders, namely CBN students and faculty. In conversations I have had with former CBN faculty who have since resigned they expressed to me that the disrespect and alienation they felt because of the abrasive process Provost Mokwa chose to use in dissolving the CBN department was the primary reason for their resignation. Thus, Provost Mokwa's autocratic leadership style had direct negative impact on faculty retention. Since the merger, there have been 10 tenure-track faculty resignations from the combined department, seven of whom were former CBN faculty. To date, the merged department has hired only three replacement faculty, none of them neuroscientists, for a net loss of seven tenure-track faculty. As Chief Academic Officer, Provost Mokwa has sole decision-making authority on faculty hiring decisions. His choice not to replace any of the neuroscience faculty that resigned is directly responsible for the inactivation of the eight neuroscience courses on today's agenda and why the neuroscience doctoral program will soon be terminated. The CBN-MBI merger has thus ultimately resulted in a massive withdrawal of educational resources by Provost Mokwa from CBN students in the form of seven research-active tenure-track faculty who were previously dedicated to CBN student education and training. The consequence to current CBN students is that, compared to their pre-merger counterparts, they are less well prepared to compete in the highly selective admissions processes of medical and graduate schools, and thus less likely to realize their career hopes and dreams.

In closing, I ask you to consider whether Provost Mokwa's merger succeeded in the goal he set for the university of "strengthening" Cell Biology and Neuroscience? The combination of his flawed merger strategy and authoritarian leadership style has synergistically backfired. Any objective observer looking at the facts can only conclude that the merger has been a failure for CBN students now being offered a curriculum with academic standards that have substantially diminished since the merger. Unilateral decision making goes hand in hand with sole ownership of outcomes. The sons and daughters of Montana deserve better.

VIII. Senators' Open Conversation

- a. School of Music has some great events coming up
 - i. <https://www.montana.edu/music/events.html>
 - ii. Bozeman Symphony is also presenting a Holiday concert on Saturday, December 16 7:30pm and Sunday, December 17 2:30pm both at Willson Hall
- b. Sara Rushing: Final week is confusing for faculty and students
 - i. Not sure why we are doing it.
 - ii. How can we communicate better to new hires and students?
- c. Jerry Coffey
 - i. Regarding Neuroscience issue
 - 1. What is the policy to recruit when you lose specialized faculty?
 - a. How will they be replaced?
 - 2. Neuroscience program is essential to the university
- d. Tim McDermott
 - i. How many pre-med students would have been taking these courses?
 - 1. See Jovanka Voyich's comments below.

IX. Public Comment

- a. Jovanka Voyich-Microbiology and Cell Biology
 - i. 39 students in the Cell Biology and Neuroscience - Neuroscience option and 186 in the Cell Biology and Neuroscience - Biomedical option (total 225). The CBN-N option only differs from the CBN-BioMed option by one course, a math course. Due to no differences between the major in content MCB voted to move the CBN-N to moratorium and only accept students in the CBN-BioMed option. We still offer four neuroscience courses taught by experts.
 - ii. Dr. Mokwa approved the hiring of three neuroscience professors, we filled two (faculty started this year) due to the startup expense of these types of experts we couldn't afford the third. We also have two hires approved for MCB (searches underway) by Dr. Mokwa.
 - iii. The Neuroscience option that is being deactivated, is only one math course difference from the Bio Medical option.
 - 1. Overwhelmingly, this is where the pre-med majors sit
 - iv. Not misleading students. Very clear with them.
- b. JP: Neuroscience student
 - i. When started science was in standard pre-med with an emphasis on neuroscience. Now the number of biology electives offered has gone way down. Now looking for course for senior year to finish out.
- c. Senior in Pre-Med track.
 - i. Not CBN major
 - ii. Biological sciences in general have been gutted
 - iii. Hard to find enough classes to take to graduate in time
 - iv. Would like to take those types of classes as a senior.
- d. Junior in Cell Bio Neuroscience student

- i. Part of the reason I signed up for this major is to take those courses that are no longer offered
- e. Albert Reyes, grad student
 - i. How long does a course need to be low on enrollment before being inactivated?
 - 1. There is no policy in place that states you must inactivate a program due to low enrollment.
 - 2. If someone deactivates a program in CIM, it will go through the department curriculum committee, department head, college curriculum committee and the college dean before going on to any of the university level committees.
- f. Doug Downs
 - i. What is the impact on the empty labs?
 - 1. Almost all of the faculty we lost were researchers.
 - ii. How many students?
 - 1. 2-4 undergraduates per lab
- g. Scott McCalla
 - i. How do you get into graduate programs without the undergraduate research?
 - 1. Jovanka Voyich: We do have a robust undergrad biomedical research program. 60 graduate students.
- h. Provost Mokwa
 - i. The statement read by Dr. Stowers was full of inaccuracies, falsehoods, and disinformation. I disagree with his statement in its entirety.

There is not adequate time for me to address all the inaccuracies and fabrications in his statement. However, I will mention there is a significant body of documented history on this matter beginning with a faculty committee that conducted in depth reviews of all MSU graduate programs, which ultimately led to the May 15, 2019 email mentioned by Dr. Stowers. I encourage any interested faculty to read the email in its entirety.

The decision to merge the micro and CBN departments was the result of many months of meetings and discussions that started with recommendations provided in a program review process conducted by a committee of faculty from across the university. The faculty-led review highlighted the underperformance of CBN graduate programs and identified multiple areas of significant concern in the department.

The entire process included substantial discussions with faculty in the former CBN department who were given multiple chances to develop a plan to improve performance. The process and final remedy were supported by the Board of Regents with lengthy public discussions at two

Board of Regents meetings. The decisions for the merger are well-documented and the process included extensive discussions with faculty and faculty senate leadership. In summary, the decisions on this matter were by no means unilateral nor made in a vacuum.

X. Executive Session (Honorary Doctorates)

- a. Chair Colter Ellis adjourns the regular meeting and calls for Executive Session.

XI. Adjourn

- a. Chris Posbergh moves to adjourned. Karie Orendorff seconds. Executive Session adjourned at 4:24.