



## Staff Senate Monthly Meeting Minutes

December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025

9 am – 11 am

SUB Alumni Legacy Lounge

- I. Call to Order
  - a. Called to order by Kayla Lee at 9:03 am.
- II. Approval of Minutes
  - a. *November 2025*
    - i. The minutes from the September 2025 meeting were reviewed, motioned, and seconded.
    - ii. Approved unanimously.
- III. Public Comment
  - a. What has the university done to support staff with increased workload from enrollment rising?
  - b. There has been a stark decline in SafeZone training, how can we make sure you can participate in belonging trainings and safely work at MSU?
  - c. Inclement weather policy for getting to work, concerns over employee and Staff safety.
    - i. Advisors live further from the university, often out of town.
    - ii. Is there flexibility to work from home due to inclement weather? How does this work with the remote work policy?
- IV. Speakers
  - a. *Mike Becker – VP University Communications*
    - i. *Free Speech and First Amendment Discussion*
      - 1. If you do not know how to handle a situation with the First Amendment, reach out to Legal Counsel or Mike Becker.
        - a. Call and ask for help in that situation.
      - 2. First Amendment exists to protect people from the government.
      - 3. There are limits to free expression.
        - a. Where free expression crosses over into protected speech,
        - b. Unprotected speech can be discriminating against protected classes or speech promoting violence.
      - 4. Montana.edu/freespeech is a great resource for faculty, staff, and students.
      - 5. What happens when free speech is violated?
        - a. Outcome could be legal action against the University or individuals.
        - b. Infractions could be discretionary action at the HR level.
      - 6. When can I speak vs when I should not speak
        - a. Like tying university identity to what you say outside of work? When is it appropriate to use your title or job tie to the university?

- i. You can sign a letter to an editor with your job title but make it clear somehow that you are expressing personal opinions and not speaking on behalf of the university.
- ii. If you post online, make sure that you are not speaking on behalf of the university.
- iii. Political opinions go into Commissioners' directive.
  - 1. Cannot use electricity, Wi-Fi, work hours, or state resources for political purposes.
- 7. Call Kellie Peterson from legal services or Mike Becker from communications if you have a question or need help.
- 8. Questions?
  - a. For media inquiries staff are not under any obligation to talk to them; they can wait or find a better person.
    - i. Their deadlines or their own deal.
    - ii. Can reach out to communications to help find the right person.
  - b. How does it work for employees who live on campus and are using campus resources all the time?
    - i. Being at work or on the clock is when it matters.
  - c. Flyers and printed matter in and out of offices?
    - i. It is not allowed to post outside of a public bulletin board like a university surface, such as on a light pole.
    - ii. People can post anything they want on bulletin boards if it falls under university policy.
  - d. Inside vs outside of office?
    - i. Discussions an employee should have with their supervisor to make sure they are following their office guidelines.
    - ii. Does it have the potential to alienate individuals from your office based on what you have in their office?

## V. Previous Business

### a. *Operating Agreement and Constitution read through*

#### i. Constitution

1. Staff Senate name change was completed; Counselors into Senators and Council Members into Senate Members.
2. Changed the date of when it was approved.
3. Program coordinator changed to program manager
4. The executive board originally had five voting members and now it has changed back to 7.

#### ii. Operating Agreement

1. Executive board chairs can send a proxy to the meeting in case the chair cannot attend. The proxy does not have voting rights.
2. Changed naming to Staff Senate throughout the Operating Agreement.

3. For continuity, the MUSSA representative is going to serve for two years.

VI. New Business

- a. *Introduce new member Richard Owens*

VII. President's Meeting Update

- a. Gave President Tessman updates on BOR MUSSA meeting and discussed the staff survey.
  - i. How they want to keep the momentum going for the Staff Survey and possibly make their own.

VIII. MUSSA Information

- a. *November Board of Regent's Meeting*

IX. Informational Items

- a. If you are ordering items that have the MSU logo or name, make sure you are running it through communications so that products follow university policy.
- b. The Senate Staff needs to select a new Member-at-Large.

X. Staff Senate Committee Updates

- a. *Diversity, Equity & Inclusion*
  - a. Discussion about changing the committee's name.
- b. *Governance*
  - a. Went over the Operating Agreement and Constitution.
- c. *Professional Development*
- d. *Special Events & Recognition*

XI. External Committee Reports

- a. *Budget Council*
- b. *Campus Sustainability Advisory Council*
- c. *Classroom Committee*
- d. *Diversity Council*
- e. *Outreach and Engagement Council*
- f. *Parking Appeals*
- g. *Planning Council*
- h. *Public Arts & Artifacts Committee*
- i. *Research Council*
- j. *Space Management Committee*
- k. *University Facilities Planning Board (UFPB)*

XII. Adjourn

- a. Meeting adjourned at 10:59 am by Kayla Lee.

**Next Meeting:**

January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025

9:00 am – 11:00 am

*SUB Alumni Legacy Lounge*