



Staff Senate Monthly Meeting Minutes

December 17th, 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 21st, 2025

9:00 am – 11:00 am

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