College of Sciences and Arts
October 8, 2013
Agenda, 9:00AM – 11:00 AM

I. Information
   A. Jackson Center Blended learning grants
      Meyer email - 9/30
   B. Dave Reed and start-up policies
   C. Mobile devices in the classroom – my email 10/3

II. Discussion:
   A. Salary increase process and procedures (cont.)
   B. Honors College proposal – draft from Max – attachment from last week.
      (Discussion of document distributed last week)
   C. New proposal: MS in Data Science - attached
   D. Humanities – Name change in Ph.D. program (cont.)

Ongoing:
   1. Biomaterials Conference: Terry Sharik
      October 3-4, Traverse City
   2. C2E2 submission schedule: October 17 deadline
   3. CSA Strategic Plan update, with department revisions during AY 2013-14
Hi Dean Huntoon,

Thanks for attending last night's GSG meeting and for clarifying some student questions. A couple student concerns and suggestions came up later during the evening that I would like to bring to your attention.

Concerns regarding quality of teaching at Michigan Tech
Students very respectfully raised concerns regarding the quality of teaching at Michigan Tech. Many times students cannot understand the instructor due to poor teaching ability, poor course structure, or poor English skills. Students have mentioned their frustrations several times on the course evaluations and in some cases by speaking with their Department Chair, but students feel that this does nothing to improve the level of teaching. It's a common belief among students that very few professors and Department Chairs actually read their course evaluations - and if they do - even fewer act upon the suggestions they receive. In addition, some students fear retaliation from their instructor if they offer constructive advice mid-semester and a couple Representatives mentioned rumors of this happening within the past year or two. Students would like to help improve the quality of teaching at Michigan Tech, but many feel as though their voice doesn't matter, nothing will result from their feedback, or they are concerned for their course grades. Representatives voiced a couple suggestions regarding this:

Students respectfully mentioned that if the University expects GTAs to have a certain level of English skills, teaching faculty should be held to the same requirements. I don't think this is a result of anger toward the new policy passed by the Graduate Faculty Council, but genuine interest in improving the level of teaching at Michigan Tech. If instructors receive course evaluations mentioning that students could not understand due to the instructor's poor English skills, could these instructors be required to participate in IGTAAP or similar programs?

Some professors take the initiative to have anonymous midterm evaluations in their courses and many make changes to their courses based upon this feedback. This has gone a long way toward making both the students and the instructors happy. Students suggested that it may be beneficial for University policy to change to require instructors at both the graduate and undergraduate levels to perform anonymous midterm evaluations. Do you think this would be feasible regarding cost/resources? Would faculty members be upset by this? I think this might be a University Senate policy, but I am not familiar with how the end of the semester course evaluations work.

If instructors receive poor course evaluations, for reasons other than their English speaking abilities, could they be required to take some of the short courses offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning (especially if they don't yet have tenure)?