

HELENA COLLEGE STAFF SENATE

Minutes

October 8, 2025 | 10:00 am | 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.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ratchford, Stephanie / Pres	<input type="checkbox"/> Fife, Tyler	<input type="checkbox"/> Reddington, Kasandra
<input type="checkbox"/> Mousel, Mark / Vice-Pres	<input type="checkbox"/> Haikka, Tommi	<input type="checkbox"/> Romanic, Sophia
<input type="checkbox"/> Caldwell, Kim / Secretary	<input type="checkbox"/> Hansen, Nina	<input type="checkbox"/> Rogers, Tony
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thennis, Anna / Treasurer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Howard, Beau	<input type="checkbox"/> Semenza, Holly
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adamek, Marika	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kelly, Carie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stergar, Christy
<input type="checkbox"/> Anderson, Kelsey	<input type="checkbox"/> Marston, Mike	<input type="checkbox"/> Thompson, Greg
<input type="checkbox"/> Bacon, Rick	<input type="checkbox"/> Miller, Candice	<input type="checkbox"/> Wagner, Cole
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Benasky, Ed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mortimore, Kathy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Weber, Joe
<input type="checkbox"/> Benge, Jeremy	<input type="checkbox"/> Mousel, Melissa	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Youde, Ellie
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carroll, Rebecca	<input type="checkbox"/> Nelson, Jeff	<input type="checkbox"/> Guest
<input type="checkbox"/> Collins, Brad	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Palen, Dana	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dalton, Natasha	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pierson, Patricia	

Agenda

- I. Call to Order – Stephanie called the mtg. to order at 10:02
- II. Review of Minutes – Anna motioned, Stephanie seconded – minutes approved.
- III. Treasurer's Report – Anna
 Petty Cash – 59.46
 Budget in UMDW – 500.00
- IV. Old Business—Stephanie
 - a. Possible updates to bylaws – Stephanie was unable to make any progress with updates but will meet with Sandy 10/27/25 and Staff will vote on updates next mtg.

- MUSSA Rep—Melissa and Beau – please complete the survey sent via Teams and email by this Friday, Oct. 10th. MUSSA Rep, Beau, and Stephanie will bring to MUSSA mtg. later this month. Collective comments will be brought to Regents who meet Nov. 20/21.

V. New Business—Stephanie and Marika

- Refrigerator in break room – Stephanie asked for feedback. *Discussion* regarding the freezer and lack thereof. Dana and Paige lead clean up and “rules.” A suggestion was made to purchase a stand-up freezer for all areas e.g. TRIO, LLH, ASHC etc. to use so that individuals can utilize the refrigerator freezer. Beau pointed out we are unable to use our current budget for anything other than travel. Action: Stephanie will ask Sandy if an upright freezer could be purchased for department use.
- Update on the New Employee Onboarding Taskforce (OWL) – Marika gave an overview of the new OWL system of two employees from admin and another from faculty to guide the onboarding tasks. We want the process to include perspectives from both admin and faculty for new employees. OWLs coordinate the task checklist and utilize the resource binder given to the new employee.
- Festival of Trees (Dec. 3-7) – Marika gave history and timeline of Festival of Trees (FOT). Staff Senate participates in this event as community outreach that supports our mission and annual plan. Beau made a motion to use up to \$50 of our petty cash. Kathy seconded and the motion passed with a majority agreement. We use a combination of petty cash funds and donations. Action: Marika will lead project with the help of Trish and anyone else interested. This project will be complete by next schedule meeting so info and updates will be through email.

VI. Committee Reports – Updated Committee Reports are on the attachment titled “committee reports 10.8.2025” sent in a follow up email from Stephanie. Please update the agenda and minutes accordingly.

VII. Additional Items –

- It was suggested that an activities committee be formed within Staff Senate to coordinate activities and fund-raisers including FOT and a December in-person meeting. Action: Committee consists of Beau, Kathy, Stephanie and Marika.
- Speakers – Do we want speakers at meetings? Action: Stephanie will invite Sandy to our December 3rd meeting. Ed offered to speak on anything IT. Please share suggestions to Stephanie.

- c. Meeting frequency – Stephanie asked if the current format was sufficient. Hearing no concerns, we will continue with current format.
- d. Fundraisers—Beau brought up the idea of fundraising as has been done in the past to refill our petty cash budget. Stephanie requested the discussion be tabled to our next meeting.
- e. Newsletter – *Discussion* regarding updates for months we are not meeting in a newsletter. Action: The Staff Senate Board will send out updates.
- f. December meeting—Will be in-person with potluck drinks and treats. Action: Christy will book a room.

VIII. Adjournment – 10:45 am

- a. Next meeting – December 3, 2025 in person

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Budget Council (BC) – Trish

The Council discussed goals for the annual plan. Goals include

- the 3-year budget rollout, with development of a template that includes guidelines/expectations for all departments
- implementation of data dashboards with potential trend analysis use (revenue, expenditures)
- determination of adding some kind of long-range forecasting and/or equipment renewal schedules

Focus of the meeting discussion was what the 3-year budget template will include/look. Items discussed were adding a required narrative section with a description of the reason, providing guidelines in the template, adding possible designations such as required, fixed, cost, priority. The group discussed ways to account for inflation, such as reminders, percentages for certain categories, and/or worksheets. Cari offered to conduct workshops for budget managers to talk about forecasting and projections over three years.

Cari discussed potential revenue shortfalls. Non-resident and WUE enrollment is lower at Helena College and across MUS with a shortfall potentially projected at \$40-50K. Lowered federal interest rate can impact short-term investments

Dean's Office – Paige

Nothing to report.

IDEA – Marika

IDEA transitioned from a committee to a council to better reflect its role in monitoring mission fulfillment and progress on the strategic plan. We updated our list of [peer institutions](#) to better comply with The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities' (NWCCU) requirements and take advantage of another benchmarking tool called the Postsecondary Data Partnership, which provides additional metrics for comparison to other colleges. The primary focus of the council's work currently is reviewing annual plans. Each member reviews several annual plans across the spectrum of our institution. We review plans for clarity and goal alignment to the strategic plan. Find our minutes [here](#)

MUSSA – Beau

MUSSA is still working on Anti-Bullying proposals and evaluating the employee survey. Helena College had 67% participation so we do want to thank everyone who

completed the survey. We had the highest participation among all MUS affiliates – both UM and MSU! We are attending the November BOR so we are asking our staff to present topics/concerns they would like to be considered for discussion with the Regents and Commissioner. Please submit your questions to Beau and Stephanie or you may submit anonymously on our TEAMs channel. A form has been created for that purpose.

Professional Development – Marika

Our committee is committed to improving processes for reviewing and scoring applications, awarding and added a place for applicants to report key takeaways from their professional development. Early application is essential to ensure consideration. But do not let this discourage you from applying. For more information go [here](#). Please consider registering for the upcoming NISOD's [Fall Virtual Conference](#) to be held October 22-23, 2025. There is a track for Student Services, Support, and Well-Being. Check it out!

Employee Wellbeing & Engagement – Kim

New break rooms are in progress. The Wellness workgroup has received a grant and will be ordering items for employees. Other events under consideration are a walking club and a Tai Chi class for employees. The Engagement workgroup has begun spotlights in the MMM, advertising HC community events, and planning Soup Fest.

Safety – Nina

- Fire and Earthquake drill dates and times set.
- Camera by Cashiers office is up.
- Talk about restocking the First Aid cabinets.
- Front line training for Welcome Center on Friday.

Possible other safety trainings.

