Methodology for Dating Michigan Technological University Degrees

This overview will explain the methodology for determining the degree approval dates for existing degree programs at Michigan Tech linked to this webpage, and determining the official start and end program dates for our student information system.

The starting point was a list developed in 1991 and continually updated for Michigan Tech’s Board of Control (BOC) by Helene Hiner in the Office of the Provost. The list was extended by researching additional sources:

- a two-page paper list found in the Office of Student Records and Registration (OSRR) vault of degrees conferred and year in which each degree was added,
- a black three-ring binder, Degrees Conferred By Name, 1888-1974, found in an OSRR storage room (since relocated to the OSRR vault) which included original listings of names of graduates with specific degrees conferred for those years,
- Degrees offered from each catalog (located in OSRR vault) excluding missing volume from 1943-1944 (possibly not printed due to WWII shortages?),
- Board of Control Minutes books (located in the Administration Building, fifth floor vault),
- “Courses” section, Abstract of the Proceedings of the Michigan College of Mining and Technology, Annette L. Sibilisky, 1935 (located in the Administration Building, fifth floor vault), and
- Faculty Senate Minutes (University Senate web site).

Each of these resources was useful as no one source was complete. This gave a framework of years in which the program was offered, but no approval date. These years were cross-checked with the OSRR catalog information; this was not completely accurate, since in some years certain degrees were not published as offered, but they also were not formally terminated. BOC minutes were used for the year in the conferred list to locate an approval date by the board for each degree. There are several M.S. and one Ph.D. that were conferred as regular degrees (not honorary) that have no formal BOC approval date. It may be that an approval granted in 1926 was applied broadly, resulting in the granting of these degrees. The degrees do not have month and day.

Matching exact BOC dates to year-conferred was made easier with the discovery of Annette Sibilsky’s 1935 Abstracts which summarized BOC minutes from 1888 to 1935 in a set of typed, tabulated, binder-formatted cross references. The original, older BOC minutes are all hand-written in beautiful (albeit difficult to read) script. Once found in Annette Sibilsky’s abstract, the actual BOC minutes were checked for corroboration.
Faculty Senate began formally here at Michigan Tech in 1959, with minutes now published on the University Senate website. There were some degrees where no BOC approval date was found but there was a Senate approval. Those degrees have the full date followed by (S). There also were some degrees which are mentioned in Sibilsky’s abstract which do not have exactly the same mention in the BOC minutes. Those degrees (which do show they were conferred in OSRR records) are listed with the full date followed by A.

One interesting finding is that relatively few degrees were formally terminated using the current process involving the Senate, BOC, and state. This seems to be a relatively recent process. Those Bachelors’, Associates’, and Minors’ are listed under the titles with Suspended. There was no evidence of any advanced degrees being formally suspended, but these have not been cross-checked. It would not be difficult to come up with a list of degrees that we currently do not offer but are not formally suspended.

Finally, Lake Superior State University is no longer a Michigan Tech branch campus. Since references were found for degrees specifically approved for that location during the time it was affiliated with Michigan Tech, these degrees are listed separately.

--submitted by Helene Hiner, Office of the Provost, April 2009