

**PROPOSAL 21-00**

(Voting Units: Full Senate)

**REFERENDUM ON PRESIDENTIAL PERFORMANCE**

The University Senate will conduct an official referendum of Senate constituents upon the following call for Board of Control actions in response to the Report of the Administrative Evaluation Commission. The Senate proposes this step as a highly public action that will gain the Board's attention and encourage steps to remedy the difficulties identified in that report. A vote of yes below indicates agreement with the Senate request for the Board to take action in response to the Evaluation Commission report, and a vote of no indicates disagreement with the Senate's request for the Board to take action. Individuals also may abstain. The results of the referendum will be reported to the Board of Control at its meeting on May 19, 2000.

The University Senate respectfully requests the Board of Control to take immediate and direct steps to change the internal management and leadership style that are at the heart of the concerns identified by the Report of the Administrative Evaluation Commission. The Board's actions might include:

- Holding meetings with key groups on campus (such as the Administrative Evaluation Commission, Senate Executive Committee, department chairs, deans, and other administrators) to discuss the report's findings and to consider possible remedies.
- Insuring that the job description for the Provost identifies this position as the chief academic officer with clear authority and responsibility, including control of academic budgeting, to carry out such a mandate.
- Defining the President's job to emphasize external relationship building and fund raising responsibilities.
- Insisting that ALL evaluated administrators take steps to improve in areas identified as weaknesses by the Commission.
- Releasing publicly the Board's annual evaluation of the performance of President Tompkins as required by his employment contract with the Board of Control.

YES, I AM IN AGREEMENT WITH THE SENATE'S REQUEST FOR THE BOARD TO TAKE ACTION IN RESPONSE TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE EVALUATION COMMISSION REPORT.

NO, I DO NOT AGREE WITH THE SENATE'S REQUEST.

I ABSTAIN FROM THE SENATE'S REQUEST.

## **Proposal Background**

The University Senate of Michigan Technological University endorses the findings and recommendations of the Administrative Evaluation Commission concerning the entire upper administration. We believe that this report points to fundamental flaws in the internal management and governance of the University, especially in regards to the performance of the University President. We are especially disappointed by President Tompkins' written response to the Commission, which suggests that MTU's current difficulties can be traced to an ineffective Provost, and which indicates his apparent belief that accessibility by e-mail and at social gatherings at the University residence constitute effective substitutes for consultative governance processes.

In addition, Michigan Technological University currently is experiencing difficulties in several areas, including budgeting and finances, long-range planning, enrollment, shared governance, and employee morale. Many of the problem areas could have been foreseen, addressed, and even prevented with good leadership. The President of the University bears ultimate responsibility for providing such leadership.

The difficulties have developed over a period of years. At a basic level, the University community's complaints grow from the failure of the President to live up to his own repeated statements about the importance of shared governance, including his stated desire to develop a strong Senate at MTU. His actions and rhetoric are not in alignment. A number of specific incidents demonstrate this point and, in combination, have inflamed the University community. In addition to the general picture sketched in the Administrative Evaluation Commission Report, these events include:

- President Tompkins' assertion that Senators acted in opposition to their constituents' wishes in approving a 14-week academic calendar in spring 1999.
- President Tompkins' unilateral decision not to follow University policy governing the search for a Provost.
- President Tompkins' inability to lead by example in terms of his compensation package increase last summer, which he accepted after the campus community had come to believe that the University faced budget difficulties.
- The uncertainty and instability of the budget process since April 1999 has created an environment in which units do not know how to proceed. The culminating event was this spring's 5 percent budget-cutting exercise, which was decided upon and set in motion without consultation with the campus community and only minimal justification or explanation, resulting in an enormous impact upon campus morale.

Each event was not vital in itself, but the pattern is. Moreover, the Senate believes that none of the above needed to flare into major controversies. Unfortunately, a failure of leadership and lack of shared processes allowed them to do so, with cumulative, debilitating results for Michigan Tech. For these reasons, the University Senate concludes that President Tompkins has lost the trust of the campus community and action by the Board of Control is required to address this situation.

## **Proposal History**

This proposal was developed by the Senate Executive Committee in response to multiple requests from constituents that the Senate address the matter of President Tompkins' performance. The Executive Committee authorized bringing this proposal to the Senate floor on April 26, and agreed that it will be debated at a special meeting on May 3, 2000.