MINUTES OF MEETING NUMBER FIFTEEN
OF THE
SENATE OF MICHIGAN COLLEGE OF MINING AND TECHNOLOGY

17 March 1963

(Senate Minute pages: 135-145)

The meeting opened at 7:02 p.m., Thursday March 17, 1963, in the Faculty Clubroom. Since President Van Pelt was ill and Dean Kerekes was out of town, Vice President E. Williams acted as Chairman at the previous request of the Secretary.

The roll was taken. Present were:

The minutes of meeting No.14 were approved.

Old Business

President's Report: In the absence of President Van Pelt, no report was given. After the meeting, Dr. Williams spoke informally about the problems of MCM&T.

The report of the Senate Constitution Revision Committee was not given since the Committee has not been appointed.

New Business

Prof. Price stated that the agenda published for this meeting contained no items of business proper for the Senate. The agenda would be more appropriate for a meeting of the general faculty. He requested a ruling by the Chairman in this regards.

Prof. Romig stated that his part on the agenda included business proper for the Senate.

The Chairman, Dr. Williams, ruled that the agenda items were proper and that the meeting should proceed.

1. Academic Dismissal of Students - Dean Meese distributed copies of the "Academic Probation and Dismissal Policy for Undergraduate Students" to all members present. A copy of this, Senate Proposal 3-61, as now used by the College follows in these minutes. Dean Meese then presented his report (available by request from the Senate Office), followed by discussion.

2. What Success do Engineering Freshmen Have at Tech - Professor Pratt distributed two sheets of data (available by request from the Senate Office) to each of the Senate members and then reported. Discussion followed Prof. Pratt's report.

Item D next introduced before item C according to Senate choice.

Dr. Bredekamp moved, Prof. Price seconded the following:

Whereas, the assignment of prerequisites to courses has been the policy of the college for a number of years, and whereas, the value of such prerequisites has not been questioned.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Curricular Policy Committee consider the feasibility of setting general prerequisites for entrance to the Sophomore, Junior, and Senior year standings.

Discussion followed.

Dr. Spain: Who checks prerequisites?

Dr. Work: In E.M. our instructors do.

Dr. Neilson: the Curriculum Committee does this for new courses.

Prof. Robert: Does this motion mean that a fixed number of credit hours and grade points are required?
Dr. Bredekamp: No. It means that certain courses are required before becoming Juniors, Seniors, etc. This should be general for the College.

Dr. Berry: Since different curricula require different preceding courses, this plan hardly seems feasible.

Dr. Bredekamp: Calculus, for example, must precede and be a prerequisite for Physical Chemistry.

Dr. Hall: Doubtful, that such a policy could work.

Dr. Brown: Under this policy, students could be excluded from certain departments and have to change to another for their major courses.

Dr. Peach: Suppose a student becomes irregular, possibly failing in economics for example, then he would have to spend a year getting his economics before going on in his major department.

At this point, the question was called for. By a count of hand votes, the motion passed.

Prof. J. Romig prior to his presentation remarked that as a charter member of the Senate Agenda Committee, he could assure the Senate that the problems faced by that committee are very real. Prof. Romig gave a condensed version of his intended discussion of "Senate responsibility for the curriculum." The complete discussion presented to the Secretary in written form is included in these minutes (Available by request from the Senate Office).

At the meeting of the Agenda Committee of the Academic Senate of which I have been a member since its inception, I accused myself and all the ghosts of the past members of having failed in a job of leadership which we could have assumed, namely that of placing issues on the agenda on our own motion.

A Senate, which began with hopes of becoming an important spokesman of grass roots sentiment within the faculty, the rank and file, the front line soldiers in this business of teaching, research, and public service, found few items of interest placed on its agenda. There are many reasons for this, some of which were that we felt frustrated in being unable to bring up subjects which were of real interest to Senate members but which were ruled as not being within its jurisdiction.

Some of the things which are clearly within our jurisdiction, however, are matters of course content, degrees to be offered, standards of instruction, standards of admission and graduation, and scholarly productivity and creativity.

At the Agenda meeting mentioned earlier, one of the committee members mentioned that a course which he had taken in college, had here in our institution been cut up into seven courses. His remark sounded like an echo to me of what I had heard here on this campus previously and in other institutions. I was reminded of how a large and well known Eastern institution of higher learning had forty two courses in advertising listed in its catalogue including such courses as Retail Drugstore Advertising. If there were improper fragmentation of courses on our own campus, it would certainly be within the purview of the Senate to advise. I cannot know whether the fragmentation of which he spoke is proper or improper. However, the Curricular Policy Committee could certainly try to devise a policy which might seek to discourage fragmentation and its converse duplication where such fragmentation or duplication would be unwise.

In a recent informal conversation with the Chairman of the Curricular Policy Committee, he stated (and if I give an incorrect statement of his position, will he please correct me) that he felt that it was not necessarily the job of the Curricular Policy Committee to initiate policy. Though I cannot agree with him, it is understandable that a Committee which has several times worked hard, come up with a proposal, and then had the proposal referred to its committee which had already done all it could, would be reluctant to start on an arduous policy without some expressed sentiment from the Senate. Such expressed sentiment would at least give the Committee a fighting chance of having its proposals accepted or a reasonable facsimile of them.

The instructions to the Curricular Policy Committee at Meeting #2 of the Senate were as follows: "The Curricular Policy Committee of the Senate shall develop and recommend policies to enable the College to provide curricula which will best meet the needs of its students at all levels of instruction."

I am therefore moving tonight to instruct this Committee more precisely on several points. Originally, I had thought to ask the Committee to examine the curricula with a view to examining the present course offerings for unnecessary fragmentation or duplication of courses. One of the Committee members flatly told me that he would not do this.

The actual fact finding does seem, on second thought, to be more a job for administrative fact finding than a job for a policy making committee.

With no particular notion of whether my motions will die for a lack of a second or even if seconded, will be passed, I propose to make the following motions:

1. That the Curricular Policy Committee with such findings of fact as they are able to make, devise a policy to discourage improper fragmentation of course content into more courses than are necessary and,
2. That the Curricular Policy Committee devise a policy to discourage improper duplication of courses.
3. The third motion which I plan to make requires a bit of further explanation and a policy statement may well require more work on the part of the Committee. Many of us here are concerned with growth of the institution and also with improving its excellence.

One suggestion that has been made and on which the Curricular Policy Committee has already worked is that we should
arrange a curriculum which will permit a student to take three years of liberal arts presumably at another institution and two years of engineering and to receive both his Liberal Arts degree and his engineering degree with the five years of work.

Therefore, the third motion I propose to make is that the Curricular Policy Committee prepare a report on the desirability and the feasibility if the committee finds this possible, of a program which will permit a student to take three years of Liberal Arts at another institution, two year at Michigan Tech and to receive both his Bachelor of Arts degree and his Bachelor of Science in Engineering.

It would appear that I am out to give the Curricular Policy Committee a lot of work. Not necessarily so. It is just that the points which have recently come to my attention appear to fall within its jurisdiction.

Some have said to me that we are in the midst of constitutional revision so how can we act? I suggest that the State of Michigan has been in this state for some two years and we are still operating and must act under our "horse and buggy" constitution if that is what it is.

If the faculty intends to have any voice in improving the excellence of the institution, we must act through the body we have. If we act vigorously within the area which is clearly within the jurisdiction of the Senate, we may be able to enlarge our powers. If we fail to act, we will surely lose, if we have not already lost the few powers we appear to have.

First motion of Prof. Romig, seconded by Dr. Bredekamp, passed by voice vote.

Second motion of Prof. Romig, seconded by Dr. Bredekamp.

Discussion followed.

Dr. Hesterberg: The Curriculum Committee frequently investigates, with the department head concerned, the area covered in this motion. It is not a cut and dried matter. Frequently, the decision is very difficult to make.

Prof. Romig: I am aware of measures taken to prevent duplication. I thought it wise to have the Senate on record as against improper duplication.

Prof. Niemi: It appears that this motion infers lack of activity to the Curricular Policy Committee.

Prof. Romig: No criticism is intended.

Dr. Williams: There are two college committees, the Curriculum and the Curricular Policy. The membership of these committees is the same. This committee tries to do its two jobs.

Dr. Neilson: The academic departments should study this.

Dr. Williams: Prof. Romig has proposed a policy.

The question was called for and the motion passed.

Third motion of Prof. Romig, seconded by Dr. Brown.

Prof. DelliQuadri stated that the problem involved had already been solved by his department.

Prof. Romig: I will be happy to withdraw the motion if such is the case.

Dr. Williams: Prof. Been, Chairman of the Curriculum Committee must be notified of this.

Standardized Grading

This item on the agenda was discussed. Prof. Sermon was asked to start.

Prof. Sermon: I give records of grades but have little in connection with standardization.

Prof. Robert: Isn't the old grading system influencing our standards? Other schools may rate 60% = D, 70% +C, etc.

Dr. Schnelle: You can graduate from Yale with D's.

Dr. Berry: Another school requires 3 C's for each D.

Dr. Williams: We are getting off the track.

Dr. Berry: What does standardized grading mean?

Prof. Sermon: Perhaps you would be interested in this tabulation which I shall put on the blackboard.
Dr. Berry: How do fewer D's and F's lead to more dismissals?

Dr. Snelgrove: A study of the Phi Kappa Phi list might show that some departments get few students on it.

Prof. Sermon: The entire graduate school is in this tabulation but results little if any changed.

Dr. Bredekamp: The letter grading system lacks discrimination a number system provides. It can be unfair to borderline students. It can hurt those planning on graduate school. It might return to a number system.

Dean Meese: We worked into the new dismissal policy gradually. Greater restrictions this year stiffens requirements.

Dr. Berry: Was there a correlation? More students receiving F's this year.

Dr. Spain: If you were lenient last year and didn't follow the policy this year, should the policy be changed?

Prof. Sermon: The philosophy of regulation is important. Prof. Pratt pointed out low correlation between records made at high schools and here.

Dr. Williams: Should this problem of grading be referred to a committee?

Dr. Bredekamp moved, Dr. Spain seconded, the appointment of a committee to study the problem of standardized grading.

Dr. Bredekamp: Students are confused by the different methods of grading now used by instructors.

Dr. Peach: Objection to standardized grading. Students can be informed by their instructors as to the grading system they employ.

Dr. Schnelle: In favor of committee study. B.A. Department graduates have 2.3 average grade point. Other schools report B+ etc. Recruiters to our campus are shocked by the C, D, F grades that they see here.

Dr. Neilson: Shouldn't the Academic Standards Committee make this study?

The question was voted on and passed that a committee be appointed to make this study.

The report by the Committee on Committees was not given since it had been returned by the Senate Secretary to that committee for correction.

Other Business

Prof. Boyd, Senate Secretary stated that a general faculty meeting planned for the early part of the Winter term had not been held for reasons unknown. At that time the election of three additional members to Senate Group II was to be held. Lacking this, the Senate was asked to approve the election of these extra three at the annual spring election. Prof. Bayer moved, Dr. Bredekamp seconded and the Senate voted approval that this be done.

The meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G.W. Boyd, Secretary