MINUTES OF MEETING NUMBER THIRTY-ONE
OF THE
SENATE OF THE MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY
21 February 1967

(Senate Minute pages: 269-278)

The meeting opened at 7:10 p.m., Tuesday February 21, 1967, in the Faculty Lounge, Senate President G.E. Bahrman presiding.

The roll was taken. Present were: Anderson, H.B., Berry, Brown, Kennedy, Krenitsky, Niemi, Oswald, Tidwell, Bahrman, Boutliier, Johnson, J.A., Johnson, V.W., Miller, Noble, Pollock, Yerg, Barstow, Bayer, Boyd, Bredekamp, Halkola, Hamilton, Hennessy, Stebbins.

Absent were: Lee, Heldt, Been, Bovard, Keeling, Smith, R.L.

Guests present were: Eaton, Gade, Price, Rakestraw, Rall, Sachs, Schnelle, Schumacher, Steinhilb.

The minutes of Meeting #30 were approved as previously distributed.

Old Business

A. Senate By-Law 7A: With a quorum (20) present, a majority vote of those present shall be required for the adoption of proposals and the passing of motions.

Prof. Oswald moved, Prof. V.W. Johnson seconded and vote approved the acceptance of this by-law. The complete set of by-laws was published as attachment to minutes of meeting #30 (Available by request from the Senate Office)

B. Policy on Outside Committees of Staff Members. Prof. Bahrman requested Senate approval for the appointment of a committee to provide an improved version of this policy (minutes pp. 265-266) to be acceptable to Faculty and Administration. Dr. Brown moved, Prof. Krenitsky seconded and vote approved the request.

C. Policy on distribution of MTU Senate minutes to the other members of the Inter Faculty Council. Prof. Tidwell moved, Prof. Boutliier seconded that distribution be made. Lengthy discussion followed concerning the form of the minutes. Some expressed their opinion that no mention of who said what in debate on the Senate should be part of the minutes, particularly those minutes sent outside of Tech because of possible misunderstanding by outside readers. The majority of expressed opinions was that the present form of the minutes is more informative concerning Senate thinking and action and should be retained (as previously approved when the Secretary requested instruction on the matter). Vote was taken and the motion passed.

D. Final Examination for Seniors. Prof. Hennessy distributed copies of his committee's report which is reproduced here:

Report to Senate by Committee on Final Exams for Seniors
February 21, 1967

1. The Committee considering their Departments to represent a fairly typical sample of the faculty has explored the attitude in this sample on the question of excusing seniors from final exams in the quarter preceding graduation. The four proposals of the Student Council were specifically considered.

2. Based on the results of our investigation, the Committee concludes: (a) the faculty in general believes the request from the Student Council deserves serious consideration, and (b) none of the proposals made by the Student Council could be adopted as University policy without strenuous objection from a significant portion of the faculty. Our investigation indicates that proposal number 2 - final examinations be eliminated entirely - to be overwhelmingly unpopular; and the other proposals there is a wide range of reaction from Department to Department but overall the split is about fifty-fifty on each.

3. Objections may be put into two categories - practical reasons and philosophical considerations.

a. Under practical reasons the following are typical objections:
1. None of the proposals accomplishes the objective of easing the mind of the senior approaching graduation sufficiently in advance of that date to have any practical significance. In fact, only proposal number two really bears on the situation in which a senior does or does not know if he should invite his family.
2. Some Departments use the final exam as a means of putting final grades in multi-section courses on the same curve.
3. Final exams count as much as forty percent in the final grade in a significant number of courses, particularly large sections where conditions for hourly quizzes are very cramped, and only evening exams are given.

4. Elimination of final exams or reduction in their weight in the final grade would lead to an increase in night examinations during the course, a situation that is already undesirable if not out of hand. (Cramped conditions in large sections are a factor in this situation.)

5. The final quarter is already cut up by interview trips and other distractions associated with graduation. The elimination of final exams for any significant portion of the graduating class would for all practical purposes reduce the requirements for a degree from 12 to 11 quarters of academic effort.

b. Under philosophical objections the following are typical:

1. All students should be treated the same.
2. There is no difference in importance in a course taken in the final quarter and a course taken in any other quarter.
3. Requiring an instructor to give a final examination is not encroaching on his academic freedom so long as the form, nature and objectives of the final examination is left unspecified. The reverse, preventing him from using a final examination, may, however, very well upset his entire approach to a subject and result in quite literally telling him how he shall teach.
4. There shall be no relaxation in the requirements for graduation or in the number of hurdles, or in the length of the course set for each student between matriculation and graduation.

4. Principal support for adoption of some policy responsive to the request from the Student Council can be put under one of two headings:

a. After three years and six months (or more) the University, and particularly the degree granting Department, should have settled the question of eventual professional acceptability of the student. If serious doubt exists on the matter he should never reach the final quarter. Therefore, to approach graduation ceremonies without knowing one's status is a situation hard to defend on a rational basis. Moreover, to hinge the question of graduation and entry into a profession on a test given in the final week after four or more years of academic work is putting a lot of emphasis on this one examination. (Draft status in some students increases the significance of this point.)

b. Waiving examinations in courses in which the student has satisfactorily demonstrated his competence permits him to concentrate on the final examinations for those courses in which his command of the subject matter is in doubt. This could contribute to reducing unnecessary repeats and delays in graduation.

5. The Committee after considering the various pros and cons within our three Departments is of the opinion that:

a. Department traditions and practice and the actual requirements for a degree vary so much from one degree to another that any uniform required policy with regard to elimination of final examinations is not consistent with the flexibility in approach that marks the educating enterprise.

b. There is little serious objection to a system in which the matter of a final examination is left up to both the degree granting Department and the instructor involved, the concurrence of both being necessary before a student is excused from a final exam.

6. Therefore the Committee presents the following resolution:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Committee recommends that the Senate of Michigan Technological University recommend to the President of the University that the matter of final examinations for seniors in their last quarter of work be decided by the degree granting Department and the specific instructor involved in each course, the concurrence of both being necessary to support an excuse from taking a final examination.

Richard Bayer  
J.A. Oswald  
R.L. Hennessy, Chairman
Prof. Hennessy: Department authority should suffice since Department prestige is at stake. Students are involved with Departments. A University policy might not be the right solution.

Prof. Oswald: Arguments on uniformity not valid since final examinations are not uniform.

Prof. Bayer: Departments can decide their examination policy. If requirements are reduced for the last quarter it will be effectively lost.

Dr. Bredekamp: If the Registrar must certify graduation at time of the exercises then they must be delayed until he can do so.

Dr. Stebbins: One University should have one policy. Firm hard rules should not be forced against individuals.

Dr. Schnelle (guest): If a policy of no examinations is adopted for seniors then instructors can't fail seniors and all automatically pass.

Dr. Stebbins: Examinations can be given where student's status in doubt.

Dr. Schnelle: Large classes require examinations for proper rating.

Prof. Hennessy: Of 70 senior courses, a majority are too large for the instructor to know all the individuals.

Prof. Oswald: In many cases the final examination is needed to determine the necessary 2.0 G.P.A.

Dr. Pollock: No difference between the argued points and the committee's recommendations.

Prof. Anderson: Recommends that the Departments manage to determine fact of graduation prior to the ceremony.

Prof. Hennessy: Stated that in discussion with a student who is a member of the Student Council he disclosed that the real aim of that body in making their recommendations was to avoid Friday examinations and they should have so stated. Arrangements for this for senior courses can be made.

Vote was taken on the motion and it was passed.

New Business

Prior to the initiating new business as itemized on the agenda, Prof. Bahrman reported Dr. R.L. Smith's announcement in acceptance of the Sabbatical Leave policy by the Board of Control which had made some changes as follows:

Minutes page 260, Part I, strike "It is the policy of the institution to be liberal in interpreting various kinds of activity as appropriate to sabbatical leave, but --". Capitalize "T" to start sentence, "The granting --."

Part II A - insert "no more than" between "on --- half."

Also prior to initiating new business as itemized on the agenda, Dr. Stebbins reported action by the Dean's Council intended to reduce student attrition particularly in the Freshman and Sophomore years. Prof. Lucier had, as chairman of a committee, recommended informing students of their standing in their courses around mid-term. Approved by the Dean's Council, this idea asserted to mean lots of examinations, etc., is recommended to reduce attrition.

This was recognized by the Senate as not new and having a previous Senate history (Proposals 3-61; 1-63; 5-63; 12-63) all of which are related to it. Discussion followed:

Prof. Bayer: The method used is to return quizzes to all students to inform them of their standing.

Dr. Stebbins: The advisors of failing students should be informed.

Dr. Schnelle: The instructors should be visited by failing students, not the advisors.

Prof. V.W. Johnson: Failing students won't bother to visit either.

Dr. Bredekamp: Advisors overloaded now. The instructors should be seen by their failing students.

Dr. Yerg moved, Major Miller seconded, and it was passed by vote that a committee be appointed to handle the problem by recommendation of appropriate action.

A. Committee Reports
1. **Election Procedure Committee**: Prof. Barstow moved that pending the complete report, an election committee be appointed forthwith. This was seconded by Prof. Boutilier. Some discussion followed concerning membership of the committee and eligibility of present Senate members for election. Prof. Barstow suggested holding this discussion in abeyance until the complete report is presented but that the committee of four Senators whose term is not expiring this year be appointed so that work can be started. Vote of the Senate approved this. Appointed at once, the Election Committee is: V.W. Johnson, Chairman; D. Pollock; R. Keeling; R. Bayer.

2. **General Faculty Definition and Listing Committee**: Dr. Bredekamp, Chairman, stated no report ready as yet although committee meetings are being held.

3. **Academic Rank Committee**: Dr. Yerg reported for the committee because Dr. Stebbins had been away. The report originally presented to President Smith is reproduced here:

   MEMORANDUM
   
   TO: R.L. Smith, President
   FROM: Academic Rank Committee
   SUBJECT: Report of Academic Rank Committee
   DATE: January 17, 1966

   **I. Recommended Policy Concerning Academic Rank**

   1. **Statement of Problem**

   A number of policies concerning such matters as tenure, the general faculty, and faculty housing refer to those holding academic rank and frequently include others in positions equivalent to those holding academic rank. There is in existence no definition of academic rank and no statement describing what is intended by the term equivalent status.

   This committee has taken as its immediate task the formulation of a purpose and a definition of academic rank.

   2. **Purpose of Academic Rank**

   The possession of academic rank carries two exclusive privileges - tenure and prestige. These privileges are reserved for the professional group most directly concerned with carrying on the activities of advanced education. Members of this group are to be distinguished from those engaged in administrative services who serve primarily in support, and from those who participate in other functions of the university, even though such functions may at times involve both research and education.

   It is desirable that special privileges of tenure be extended to those directly concerned with the acquisition and dissemination of new knowledge. Such professional activity must be governed by rules of freedom and responsibility which do differ from similar rules which might be written for less individualistic endeavors by other professionals within the university system. The necessity for self-expression and communication by those holding academic rank does make them members of a unique group. Whatever prestige does accrue by virtue of academic rank should tend to promote an esprit de corps among those whose primary function is to advance and disseminate knowledge.

   The purpose of academic rank is to set apart a group of professional staff who have functions directly related to advanced education and whose activities are highly individualistic in nature, so that special personnel policies can be developed and administered for this group.

   3. **Definition of Academic Rank**

   Academic rank shall consist of the titles Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor. Academic titles should include a brief descriptive phrase related to current activity in teaching or research. Academic rank appointments are to be held only by those full-time staff members whose job function involves teaching at an academic level commensurate with that required to teach courses regularly listed for credit toward a baccalaureate degree or whose job function involves research activity which is comparable to the type which lends itself to the support of advanced degree programs.

   4. **Appointment to Academic Rank**
Appointments to positions with academic titles shall be made by the President with the advice of the President's Council.

II. Comments Concerning Problems of Implementation

Academic Rank is to be assigned to individuals on the basis of job function and the above definition without regard to the organizational division within the University. In this way, members of departments other than degree-granting departments are neither included nor excluded from academic rank by virtue of their organizational position, but are considered on the basis of job description.

1. Research Agencies

Professional staff members in research agencies may or may not hold academic rank. If the job function involves original and independent research, academic rank is not appropriate. This latter circumstance includes, for example, professional engineers who supervise the development and maintenance of complex installations, but who are not expected to originate research proposals.

2. Continuing Education

Administrative personnel whose regular duties require them to confront people enrolled in coursework comparable to that offered for degree credit are to be given an academic title. Staff hired specifically to teach courses comparable to those offered for degree-credit also should be assigned an academic title. Administrative personnel who are not expected to face a classroom situation or staff hired to teach courses not comparable to those offered for degree credit, are not to receive an academic title. Some other appropriate designation should be developed.

3. Library Staff

Only those staff members who can be expected to teach a regularly offered course or who can be expected to present seminars or otherwise confront students in a learning or research situation should be assigned an academic title.

4. Administration

Only those in the administration who continue in research and teaching activities should hold or retain an academic title.

5. Office of the Dean of Students

Only those staff members who are regularly involved in formal instruction or research should be assigned an academic title. In this respect, counseling is regarded as a significant professional activity in support of the educational activity associated with those carrying academic rank.

6. University Relations

Staff will only carry rank if involved in formal instruction or research.

7. Present Rank

Those who hold academic rank at present shall continue to hold such rank.

III. Comments Concerning Existing Policies

1. General

It must be emphasized that the only policy which is reserved exclusively to those holding academic rank is the Tenure Policy. All other policies involve the term equivalent status in one form or another. These policies should now be reviewed, either by those concerned with the administration of the policy or by appropriate ad hoc committees.

2. Tenure Policy

The policy on Academic Tenure was approved in principle by the General Faculty in
Houghton on March 12, 1957 and was adopted by the Board of Control on June 12, 1957. Reference is occasionally made to "General Faculty" and "faculty member," but these terms are not defined. However, in section IIB, Relation of Tenure to Rank and Prior Service, the regulations concerning appointments to tenure are classified by the academic titles instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. The regulations also state that "appointments to administrative posts do not carry tenure" and that "administrative officers holding an academic rank are subject to the provisions applicable to such rank, only insofar as their non-administrative faculty status is concerned."

This committee concludes that only personnel with academic titles hold tenure. This appears to be the only explicit privilege of academic rank.

Under the proposed definition of academic rank, administrative officers not engaged in teaching or research would not hold academic rank, and, therefore, would appear to be excluded from tenure. If the proposed definition of academic rank is adopted, the above statement concerning tenure should be reworded to carry out the original intent.

3. General Faculty

In a memo to the Administrative Council dated April 13, 1965, President Smith discussed the General Faculty Roster. The following statement concerns Membership in the General Faculty.

"Membership in the General Faculty is based on professional work (teaching, research, administration) and professional training and/or experience on a level at least equal to that of persons holding the rank of instructor. Temporary and part-time employees are usually excluded although exceptions may be made in the case of Lecturers or other persons on temporary appointment but with high professional qualifications."

This statement appears to be the only written account of the relation of academic title to appointments to the General Faculty. It might be noted that there are 19 members of the General Faculty who do not hold academic rank.

The University has many functions and activities other than teaching and research. It would seem appropriate that a representative body of the whole, such as the General Faculty, should include professional people other than those holding academic rank. A statement of purpose and a definition of General Faculty is needed.

IV. Final Comment

It is recognized that a precise definition of what constitutes teaching and research has not been provided. Does teaching a single one-credit course each year qualify a staff member for an academic title? Does a guest appearance in a seminar provide adequate justification for an academic title? Is a specified rate of publication to be the measure of research? What is the basis for evaluating the quality of research implied by the definition? These questions are not answered.

However, the purpose and definition of academic rank provide the framework for decision making by the President and the President's Council. Any individual or agency seeking academic titles is provided with the basis for developing a justification.

The Committee for Academic Rank now awaits further instructions concerning its termination or additional assignments.

Submitted by
Academic Rank Committee
B.L. Fryxell
H. Garland
G.R. Noble
D.G Yerg (Chairman)

Following distribution of the report, Dr. Yerg pointed out that Academic Rank is a problem at all universities. He invited criticism and suggestions from the Faculty.
Dr. Brown asked if the report disagreed with the Faculty Handbook.

Dr. Yerg stated that administrators can hold tenure if they have academic rank.

Dr. Schnelle asked if there are groups here involved in contest about academic rank.

Dr. Yerg stated that he had no knowledge of such although discussion of teaching as requirement for it was occurring in some offices.

Prof. Hamilton asked if academic rank needed for tenure or can administration use some other device to grant it.

Mr. Kennedy stated that members of our IMR have no academic rank and until this Senate adopted the new constitution, could not be members of it either.

Prof. Bahrman stated that the appointed committee will be charged to devise a policy on academic rank.

This terminated the discussion on this point and the published agenda.

Prof. Tidwell announced President Smith's arrangement for a meeting to discuss tax sheltered annuities.

Prof. Hennessy moved, Dr. Bredekamp seconded that action taken on item III-D be reconsidered at the next meeting.

Prof. Barstow, Senate parliamentarian, ruled the proposal had been passed.

Dr. Bredekamp moved consideration of amendments to By-Law #6 which he proposed and had provided copies for the Senate members. Dr. Stebbins seconded.

After considerable discussion, the Senate decided that the amendments were not such as to constitute emergency submission (By-Law #6) and that they be included in the next meeting (April 19, 1967) agenda.

The Senate adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G.W. Boyd, Senate Secretary