MINUTES OF MEETING NUMBER 108
OF THE
SENATE OF MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

6 November 1979

(Senate Minute pages: 1631-1653)

Meeting No. 108 was called to order on Wednesday, November 6, 1979 at 7:00 p.m. in the Faculty Lounge of the Memorial Union by President O. David Boutilier.

The roll was called by the Secretary. Twenty-nine members or alternates were present. Absent were Shetron (FFC) and Greuer (MG).


The Minutes of Meeting No. 107.

Corrections were made as follows: Johnson (IMR) was present; on page 1619, "Vice President Gale is a member of the committee" was corrected to be "he is the administrative contact person with this committee"; on page 1620, R.K. Miller's name was removed as a volunteer to do the poll; in line 5 of Appendix F, late was changed to early. The minutes were approved as amended.

President's Report

Boutilier presented the President's Report (Appendix A - Available by Request from the Senate Office). Among other items, he announced that Prof. David T. Halkola had been selected to act as liaison person between the faculty and Mr. Eilola on matters concerning the University budget and that President Stein had approved Senate Proposals 2-80 and 3-80.

Report on Meeting of the Academic Council.

Reynolds presented a report on the meeting of the Academic Council held October 9, 1979. The official minutes of that meeting were taken by Kuipers. The two reports are attached as Appendices B and C, respectively (Available by Request from the Senate Office). Reynolds gave a preliminary report on the meeting of November 6, 1979. At that meeting, Dean Meese noted that there have been several suicide attempts by students this year.

Reports on Meetings of the Board of Control.

Reynolds presented a report of the meeting of the Board of Control held on October 12, 1979. This is attached as Appendix D (Available by Request from the Senate Office).

Eleventh Annual Report to the Faculty - This report is still in progress.

At this point in the meeting, Pres. Boutilier asked that the Agenda be moved ahead to item IX on Old Business so that action could be taken on Proposal 1-80. This decision was made so that the large group of students who had gathered to hear the vote on the calendar change proposal would not have to sit through the entire meeting.

The minutes, however, shall proceed in the order as determined by the agenda.

Committee Reports

A. Curricular Policy

G Agin presented the report (Appendix B - Available by Request from the Senate Office. The committee recommended that BA 100 be offered on a Pass/Fail basis only. They also recommended approval of the Master of Science program in Computer Science.

B. Instructional Policy

Tampas spoke for the committee. He pointed out that the committee had previously recommended against a change in the calendar and that they were still of the same mind.
The meeting now shifted to the consideration of Proposal 1-80. After action on the proposal, Tampas continued his report. He asked, on behalf of the committee, that any questions on the academic calendar should not again be raised lightly. Consideration of such questions has caused much work and given minimal benefits.

The committee looked into the possibility of trading the current three one-half day holidays (K-day, Homecoming, Good Friday) for two full-day holidays. A representative of the student council took a dim view of this since he regarded the present half-day holidays as full-day holidays. The trade-off is still under consideration.

On the issue of a sustained dispute between an instructor and a student over the validity of an excused absence when an exam is missed, it was concluded that the existing system, in which there is recourse to negotiation through the Dean of Students' Office and the Office of the Ombudsman, has been working.

Pintar took issue with the suggestion that Proposal 1-80 had been introduced lightly and pointed out that the calendar change had been introduced in 1972 without Senate consideration but that now the calendar in place has been approved by the Senate. It was, he said, partly to settle this point that the proposal had been introduced. Hauge, who identified himself with Pintar's remarks with respect to the Instructional Policy Committee, said Senate members should not fail to bring issues before the Senate because they perceive that all or part of some committee does not conceive something to be a problem to be acted on and, furthermore, now that the later quarter system has been shunted aside, that those in favor of the early semester system as an option should feel free to bring this matter forward as a proposal and settle the calendar issue once and for all.

Heckel, in response, pointed out that the committee's recommendation came not merely from the sentiments of committee members, but had been a feeding back to the Senate of input they had received from faculty in all departments. He said the committee feels vindicated in its recommendations.

C. Institutional Evaluation - No Report. There is no chairperson at this time.

D. Elections Committee - No Report.

E. Joint Committee on Relations Between the Senate and Faculty Association

Pintar reported that Baltensberger, although unable to attend the meeting of the Association of Michigan Collegiate Faculty in late September, had sent along an institutional report for MTU.


G. Faculty Handbook - No Report.

H. Faculty Fringe Benefits

Reynolds commented on the results of a survey on faculty fringe benefits which is presented as Appendix F (Available by Request from the Senate Office). The major concerns are in the areas of dental insurance, improved retirement benefits and improved medical insurance. Many in favor of dental insurance made known that they did not wish this benefit at the cost of reduced salary or of having to pay for most of it themselves. It was pointed out that the TIAA-CREF benefit is affected not only by a rise in rate, but also by a rise in base. Next year the base will go to 30,000, there is a rate that applies to the total Social Security and TIAA-CREF package and thus many will not receive the extra TIAA-CREF contribution that previously would have followed at the termination of one's yearly Social Security commitment. Consequently, there is a loss of retirement benefits to those under the TIAA-CREF plan as the Social Security base rises.

Dissatisfaction with the operation of Blue Cross-Blue Shield drew the largest number of comments on the survey. There has been considerable difficulty in collection of benefits through the Major Medical plan. There is hope, but as yet nothing definite, that those who wish to opt out of BC-BS will receive a contribution from MTU to another plan.

Some, in responding to the survey, expressed concern with their lack of control over how benefit money is spent. A possibility, as exists at some institutions, is to have a cafeteria approach in which faculty members may have a choice from a number of benefits. There is a problem with such an approach, however, in maintaining sufficient numbers in the individual benefit plans to receive group rates. It was noted that group rates are applicable when a certain percentage of all the non-exempt personnel (i.e. not just faculty) are enrolled in a plan. That faculty benefits are tied to those of the total non-exempt staff has been a point of concern for many.

Alexander stated that there was information available which showed MTU relatively low among Michigan schools in its contributions to TIAA-CREF. Reynolds said that, while MTU is neither at the top nor at the bottom of the list, this is true.

Reynolds noted that the committee has now been in existence for one year, that progress is slow since changes must be weighted carefully, but that the committee has been very active. He commented in this respect on the summary of the committee's meeting with Koepel, Gooch, and Gale on October 11, 1979 (attached as Appendix H - Available by Request from the Senate Office) to discuss an agenda of six items (attached as Appendix G - Available by Request from the Senate Office) that had earlier been submitted to Acting Vice President Gale. Alexander, calling attention to the statement of Appendix H that expensive new fringe benefits could not be added since wage-price guidelines would be exceeded, listed a number of points which he said militated against the administration's interpretation of guidelines as applied to either fringe benefits or salary increments.
Old Business

As noted above, Senate action on Proposal 1-80 had been taken earlier in the meeting. The proposal was still on the floor as a result of the tabling motion of the previous meeting. The considerable discussion that ensued covered the same points as reported on in the minutes of meeting No. 107. Lide reported that a faculty poll showed 138 of the respondees favored semesters and 133 favored quarters. Harris presented a student petition against the proposed change that was signed by approximately one half of the student body. Pintar stated that this is, the petition results notwithstanding, an academic matter and that there are times when the Senate must make decisions that are unpopular with the student body. Heckel pointed out that the results of any faculty survey have been inconclusive and that there is consistent overwhelming opposition by the students to change. He asked for the defeat of the proposal. Hauge expressed his concern with the disruptions caused by the split winter quarter and asked that the students show greater responsibility in their attendance of classes immediately before and after the Christmas break.

Wise called a roll call vote (individual responses available by request from the Senate Office). The tally of No: 22, Yes: 4, Abstain: 3 was received with a round of applause by the large number of students gathered to hear the vote.

New Business

Boutilier reported that salary information by rank will continue to be available but was late this year because of the extra one percent increase. This information is now available and is attached as Appendix I (Available by request from the Senate Office).

The meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.