MINUTES OF MEETING NUMBER 141
OF THE
SENATE OF MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY
27 January 1985

(Senate Minute pages: 2390 -2392)

President Baltensperger called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. on January 27, 1985 in MEEM 302.

Roll: Twenty seven members/alternates were present. Absent were: Bruce A. Haataja (IWR), William Shapton (ME-EM); Ben Singer (Student Council), T. Apparao (Graduate Student Council), and Dale Stein. Visitors present were: Don Mikkola, Duane Ressler, Tom Ellis, Ted Kearly, Deborah Lockhart, Ted Lockhart, David Boutilier, George Meese, Diana George, Beth Flynn, Mike Gorman, Sandra Boschetto, Bud Glassner, Billie Wahlstrom, Cindy Selfe, Wayne Torgenson.

Old Business

A. Proposal 4-85: General Education Requirements

The discussion on Proposal 4-85 continued with the thematic studies requirement. Senator Hodek stated that the requirement exceeded ABET requirements and would result in the elimination of the Civil Engineering students' two free electives.

The question was raised as to what was meant by "cognate." No precise definition was given, but the discussion indicated that the thematic grouping taken by a student should be somewhat distant from the major.

Senator Predebon pointed out that some faculty were concerned about supporting the document without knowing what the thematic groupings would be. A major concern raised by these faculty is that the thematic groupings would have prerequisites which would increase the total number of courses that students would have to take. It was stated that presumably the prerequisites could be planned so that they would satisfy other requirements.

A lengthy discussion took place concerning the role of departments and the General Education Committee in determining the thematic groupings. Some of the point made follow. Both the departments interested in a particular thematic grouping being offered and the department or departments to offer that grouping should have some input into its formation. The role of the General Education Committee should not be to develop the thematic groupings, but should be to see that the intent of the general education policy is being followed. The groupings should not be stagnant, but should evolve as interests and demands change. Departments should not disallow reasonable options for their majors if this is to be a general education policy. Departments should indicate which courses or groupings are too closely related to their students' major area to be considered as general education. An attraction of the thematic group concept is that faculty from several departments can get together and develop groupings. There is the potential for tremendous administrative problems because of the difficulty of scheduling the thematic courses so that students can take these courses along with their major courses. A good reason for limiting the number of thematic groupings is that the demand would then be high and the courses could be offered frequently to minimize scheduling problems.

The final point raised concerned the objective in the 2005 report to lower graduation requirements to 192 hours.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:05. (Appendix A contains a proposed amendment which was distributed, but not discussed at this meeting - Available by Request from the Senate Office).

Linda M. Ottenstein
Senate Secretary