MINUTES OF MEETING NUMBER 147
OF THE
SENATE OF MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

11 December 1985

(Senate Minute pages: 2486 -2500)

President Brokaw called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. on December 11, 1985 in the Faculty Lounge of the Memorial Union.

Roll: Twenty six members/alternates were present. Absent were: Suzanne Beske-Diehl (GE), Angus Hellawell (MY), Bruce Haataja (IWR), David Carlson (IMR), Dale Stein (President). Because of the large number of visitors from the student body, visitors were not recognized individually.

Minutes of Meeting 146:

The minutes of Meeting No. 146 were approved as written.

President's Report

The President made a written report which he explained to the Senate and which is appended here as Appendix 1 (Available by Request from the Senate Office). He also circulated a list of Senate Committees (Appendix 2 - Available by Request from the Senate Office). He encouraged any Senators who observed any errors in the list to report those errors to him.

Vice President's Report:

A written report is appended here as Appendix 3 (Available by Request from the Senate Office). President Brokaw asked Senator Monson if he had a report on the Academic Council. Senator Monson made a brief verbal report and promised a written report later. The written report is appended as Appendix 4 (Available by Request from the Senate Office).

Committee Reports

A. Curricular Policy - No Report.

B. Instructional Policy

Instructional Policy planned to introduce two proposals as new business: (1) Proposal 4-86, Procedure for Dropping a Course, and (2) Proposal 5-86, Grading System Change. But even before the time for New Business, the Committee wanted to recommend that in substitution for the motion killed in the last Senate meeting relating to the practice of capriciously giving students a second final examination in order to change a grade, that Vice-President Whitten's instructions on the need to limit such examinations and the need to offer those that are given to all students in similar circumstances be included in the catalog and in the Faculty Handbook. Proposals 2-86 and 3-86 are discussed below under New Business.

C. Institutional Evaluation: No report.

D. Budget: No Report. The committee will report at the next meeting.

E. Faculty Fringe Benefits

The Chairman reported that the Committee was looking into a number of fringe benefits appropriate to Tech, but would not have enough information for a formal report for a few months.

F. Elections - No Report

G. Faculty Handbook - No Report

It was reported verbally that Bill Wahlstrom had agreed to serve on the committee, that the committee had been unable to solve some problems in connection with the section on research and was going to meet with research people to iron out those problems.

H. Teaching Effectiveness

Though Marty Janners, Chairman of the Committee was not there, she reported through President Brokaw that she had no report. She did indicate to President Brokaw, however, that she had heard some departments were having problems with the peer evaluation of teaching effectiveness. Janners offered to talk to those departments who wished to consult with her about the committee's intentions on peer review.

I. Planning: No Report.
J. General Education: No Report

Old Business

A. Proposal 2-86, Academic Distinction

Proposal 2-86 on Academic Distinction was tabled in order to give time to determine the costs to the university of the change from the Honors-High Honors designation of merit to the Latin distinctions of *Cum Laude*, etc. The report disclosed that the total cost would be a one time cost of $800 largely associated with document changes.

Ben Singer moved and Phyllis Boutilier seconded the motion that Proposal 2-86 be removed from the table. The President of the Senate asked if there was any discussion. None was forthcoming except for a statement of concern by Vice-President Whitten that decisions would have to be made about insignia on diplomas and tassel colors designating the honors, for there were now three honors instead of two. President Brokaw suggested, and the Senate tacitly accepted the suggestion, that these decisions need not concern the Senate now. The Senate voted unanimously for the proposal.

New Business

Proposal 4-86, Procedure for Dropping a Course.

Phyllis Boutilier gave a report which showed the bulk of all course drops are in the sixth week of the course. She noted that the committee had studied a number of schools comparable to Tech and found only one which allowed such a late and such a free drop. The consensus of the proponents of the proposal seemed to be that the late drop encouraged students to be careless in the drop process and casual about their treatment of courses generally.

Opponents, especially among students, claimed that teachers often do not give their first tests before the sixth week, and, therefore, they have no idea how they are doing in the course before that time.

A number of students who protested the drop policy contended that it presented them unfair alternatives: on the one hand they could not tell how they were doing before the sixth week and on the other hand their transcripts would cause prospective employers to draw negative conclusions if there were too many W's on the transcript. Some students contended that the W was an unfair punishment of students who were put in this difficult position by professors who gave no exams before the sixth week.

Proponents countered that the W was not a grade, that employers knew this, and that the student who wished to know how he or she was doing could certainly get a meaningful evaluation through a conversation with the instructor.

*Proposal 4-86 was passed* by a vote of 19 to 7.

Proposal 5-86, Grading System Change

The Instructional Policy Committee proposed a clarification of Proposal 5-86 that the grade change would begin in Fall of 1986, and that it would apply to undergraduates only. In the discussion Senator Mikkola expressed some concern that with the possibility of a B+ could be given instead of a B that many of the better students might see their grades dropped from A to B+. Senator Meese said that he had been in a school where the change had been made and no lowering of grades was in evidence.

*Proposal 5-86 passed* on a vote of 23 to 3.

The Senate adjourned at 8:42 p.m.