MINUTES OF MEETING NUMBER 174
OF THE
SENATE OF MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

2 May 1990

(Senate Minute pages: 3043-3097)

President Adler called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. on May 2, 1990 in rooms 105A and B of the Memorial Union Building.

Roll: Twenty seven members/alternates were present. Absent were Peter Laks, Dave Poplawski and Terry Monson. Continuing member President Stein was not present.


Minutes of Meeting No. 173 (March 14, 1990) were accepted with a correction on page 3024. The second sentence of item VIII-E should read "There has been input from several individuals and departments." – not "department."

President's Report

President Adler provided a written report (Appendix A - Available by Request from the Senate Office). As noted in the written report Vice President Stucky has responded to requests concerning information on ESI and Ventures transactions, etc. in Appendix B - Available by Request from the Senate Office). In addition President Adler provided copies of President Stein's open letter and communications with Dean Dresch which were distributed at the April 19 and 20 forums to the Senate (Appendix C - Available by Request from the Senate Office).

President Adler received a memo pertaining to faculty fringe benefits which has been forwarded to the Senate Fringe Benefits Committee.

As a point of information the Coopers and Lybrand Report of the Audit of Financial Statements of ESI is on file at the Reserve Desk in the library.

Dean Janners presented further information about proposals for policies on class attendance and class absences (Appendix D - Available by Request from the Senate Office) and scholastic standards (Appendix E - Available by Request from the Senate Office). Dean Janners demonstrated several of the difficulties with grade point deficiencies as a measure of academic problems. The proposed use of grade point averages and unusual course drop patterns are much more likely to identify those students who have academic difficulties so that help can be provided in a more timely manner. Probation cause 4 "the student completes fewer than half the credits carried on the tenth day of instruction in the most recent quarter" generated considerable discussion. Dean Janners emphasized that this proposed standard would only apply to full-time students who carry 12 or more credits on the tenth day of the quarter. Furthermore, it is proposed that the word probation would not appear in the transcript. These proposals have been well received by Academic Council, Provost Powers, the Dean of Students Advisory Committee, and the Undergraduate Student Government.

Vice President's Report

Vice President Tampas submitted a written report (Appendix C - Available by Request from the Senate Office) of the March 23, 1990 Board of Control meeting. Attention was called to the approved wording change in Section 19.3 Teaching and Research in the Board of Control Policy Manual. This item was presented to the Board as "This small change is for further clarification." Vice President Tampas did not challenge this assertion that such a change was minor because of the instructions he received as the Senate observer to the Board of Control (and also to the Academic Council) not to say anything at the meetings. Vice President Tampas apologized to the Senate for keeping quiet about this issue at the meeting and requested the sense of the Senate as to whether the Senate observer should continue to be gagged. (Taken up in New Business).

Senator Shapton provided a report of the April 4, 1990 Academic Council meeting (Appendix G - Available by Request from the Senate Office) where he acted as the Senate observer in place of Vice President Tampas.

Presentation by Provost Powers on the Shape of the Academic Program

Provost Powers stated that it would be a useful practice that as a regular part of the Senate annual agenda there was a report by the Provost to the Senate on the academic programs.

The Provost began with a description of Michigan Tech as a balanced university - a symbiotic relationship between recognition as a research institution and excellence in teaching. The broad aim is a balanced university of 6,000-6,500 students with a strong research emphasis and distinguished by the teaching roles of the faculty and by the relationship of undergraduate to graduate research programs. Balance includes success in minority program development and in diversity, and also includes the aim of global awareness and international studies.
Traditional measures of strength in undergraduate education (Appendix H, page 1 - Available by Request from the Senate Office) and non-traditional measures (Appendix H, page 2) have improved dramatically over the last 15 years. The undergraduate program is easily the strongest it has been in 20 years and is probably at its best in the history of Michigan Tech. As we become a stronger research university we are also becoming a stronger teaching university.

Goals and objectives for academic programs were set forth in January (Appendix H, page 3). Further details on the objectives are provided on pages 4 and 5 in Appendix H. The name for a new college is as yet undetermined but is listed tentatively as the College of Forest and Natural Resources. A draft proposal is in the Provost's office and may be presented to the Board of Control at either the July or September meetings. In addition to the first year's program for next fall, there are proposals in development for a joint Humanities/Social Science Center and a core program for Humanities and Social Sciences.

Review of programs in the School of Technology is nearly complete. These programs should be recognized for providing excellence in regional service and for providing entry into four-year programs. There is a need to strengthen the connections between the two-year and four-year programs so that the School of Technology becomes a strong entry program to the campus. There is a commitment to supporting the faculty by expanding and strengthening the teaching role they are assuming. There are some explorations into having the School of Technology take on an adjunct role in conjunction with community colleges in the Upper Peninsula. There is further review to be completed in Land Surveying and Forest Technology.

The charge to the Dean of the School of Business and Engineering Administration will be as outlined in page 5 of Appendix H.

In conclusion, the undergraduate program is at its best right now. Balance in the university will improve both undergraduate education and the research programs. There will be no substantial amounts of new money. Therefore, priorities must be set for the programs to be supported, and budgets must be balanced in that process. A better way must be found for defining the relationships with the research institutes. Needed are clear lines for mutual support beginning with a) the deans sharing of promotion and tenure information, b) simplification of planning documents to see that they set priorities and objectives and sharing of these documents so that everybody knows what these are, and c) the integration of what is being developed now with the strategic marketing plan. Finally, there must be a greater commitment to cultural diversity and global awareness.

Committee Reports

A. Budget Liaison Officer

Senator Hubbard (replacing Terry Monson who is in Saudi Arabia) provided a written report (Appendix I - Available by Request from the Senate Office).

B. Curricular Policy

Senator Bulleit reported the Committee is in the process of reviewing proposals for four Ph.D. programs, Electrical Engineering, Mining Engineering, Civil Engineering and a combination of Chemical and Chemical Engineering. A report should be forthcoming at the first Senate meeting of next year.

C. Elections

Vice President Tampas conducted an election to select three nominees each for the Athletic Council, Sabbatical Leave Committee, and General Education Committee to be forwarded to President Stein who will select one person to serve on each committee. The nominees elected were Jim Gale, Larry Langton, and John Lowther for the Athletic Council; Ralph Horvath, Robert Filer, and William Shapton for the Sabbatical Leave Committee; and Josiah Heyman, Vernon Dorweiler, and Randall Freisinger for the General Education Committee.

The motion to destroy the ballots was approved without opposition.

Vice President Tampas also provided each Senator representing a department or institute with a list of constituents.

The results of the Senator at Large (term expiring August, 1993) and Committee on Academic Tenure (term expiring August 1993) elections were John Lukowski and Madhukar Vable as Senators At Large and Walter McCoy as a member of the Committee on Academic Tenure.

The motion to destroy the ballots was approved without opposition.

D. Faculty Handbook - No report.

E. Fringe Benefits - No report.

F. Institutional Evaluation
Senator Hubbard provided a written report (Appendix J - Available by Request from the Senate Office). The motion to send the report along with the recommendations contained therein to the Vice President of Operations and Finance was passed without opposition.

G. Instructional Policy

Senator Suryanarayana provided a written report (Appendix K - Available by Request from the Senate Office). The motion to forward to the Provost the report and recommendations contained therein, as amended to specify "tenured faculty member" as an entry qualification for the Director, Center for Teaching Excellence, was passed without opposition.

Reports from Affiliated and/or Ad Hoc Committees

A. University Planning Committee - No report.

B. University Computer Executive Committee - No report.

C. Quality of University Life Task Force - No report.

D. Teaching Award Procedure Committee

Professor Julien provided a written report (Appendix L - Available by Request from the Senate Office). The motion to accept the report and forward the recommendations was passed without opposition.

E. Academic Calendar Task Force

Senator Martin provided a written report (Appendix M - Available by Request from the Senate Office). The motion to accept the report and forward the recommendations contained therein as amended to read in part "The conversion should . . . first be carefully considered by a committee to be named by the University Senate President and the Provost" was passed unopposed.

Old Business - None.

New Business

A. Resolution on Senate Observers

After some discussion about instructions to the Senate observer to the Board of Control and Academic Council meetings, the following resolution was passed unopposed:

The Senate resolves that the observer representing the Senate be allowed to speak for the Senate at Board of Control and Academic Council meetings.

Provost Powers stated that he did not believe that the Senate observer should be not allowed to participate in discussions as the Senate representative at Academic Council meetings, and should receive the agenda and all distributed materials. He could not speak for the Board of Control.

B. Student Vote of Confidence in President Stein

John Caron, Chair of the ESI/Ventures Committee of the Undergraduate Student Government, presented the background for the USG perspective leading up to the student vote of confidence for President Stein. The controversy from the USG perspective started with a request for information about a) the investment in Great Lakes Capital Investment I, and b) an estimated loss of $17 million (resulting from an accounting change) at the Board of Control meeting February 2, 1990. Undergraduate Student Government representatives did not understand the answers they received in response to their inquiries. This committee was formed to study ESI and provide information to USG. Public information was so scattered and/or not available that freedom on information act requests were filed with MTU, ESI and Ventures Group Inc. MTU and ESI have responded; Ventures Group has not responded beyond providing articles of incorporation. The basis of filing the freedom on information requests with Ventures Group, Inc. was that if a group is created by, or is primarily funded by, a public authority then that group can be considered to be treated as a public authority under the Freedom of Information Act.

Ultimately a petition signed by over 10% of the student body was presented to the USG calling for a vote of confidence for President Stein and the Administration. The USG constitution requires that the petitions signed by at least 10% of the student body be acted upon. A vote is currently being conducted. The Administration includes President Stein and the four vice presidents. The results will be presented to the press, President Stein, Dean Janners, Vice President Whitten, and the Board of Control.

C. Committee to Investigation Questions Surrounding ESI/Ventures

President Adler initiated a discussion on a request by President Stein that a committee be formed to investigate questions surrounding ESI/Ventures operations to provide a more open exchange of information. The committee might oversee operations on a continuing basis. It was suggested that the Institutional Evaluation Committee might be the logical group to investigate, evaluate and open communications concerning ESI and Ventures Group operations. Professor Julien stated that the original charge to the Institutional Evaluations Committee was to perform an evaluation of
the institution from the faulty level up through the administration. An evaluation of the administration has never been performed. There was some discussion about periodic evaluation of the performance of the administration. It was suggested that undergraduate and graduate student representatives be included in any evaluation process.

A statement was made that there is dissatisfaction on the part of the faculty with the mode in which administration is operating. The ESI/Ventures controversy has only brought this dissatisfaction into the open. What is required are measures to prevent any recurrence of this kind and level of dissatisfaction among the faculty and university community. The Senate and Board of Control should act now to institute a procedure whereby faculty can express their concerns about the administration and their policies.

Senator Plichta introduced some background material from Carnegie-Mellon University about evaluation of their president and a proposal to institute a similar process at Michigan Tech (Appendix N - Available by Request from the Senate Office). The summary "Commission to Evaluate the President" was condensed from the first ten pages of the report by that Commission which was formed at the request of Carnegie-Mellon's president. This proposal and background material generated substantial discussion. The chief points of the discussion were the current lack of faculty input or evaluation of administration policies and performance, and the timeliness and frequency of any evaluation procedure.

The motion was made to forward this study (Commission to Evaluate the President at Carnegie-Mellon University) to the Institutional Evaluation Committee for study and that the Committee report back to the Senate at the next meeting with a mechanism for an evaluation of the administration. During the discussion it was suggested that a) the procedure be expedited, b) the Board of Control be informed that study of administration evaluation was underway, c) the Board of Control be involved in the process of developing an administration evaluation procedure, d) the administration be informed of this study, and e) that deans and department heads be included in the evaluation.

The motion as passed in the first sentence of the preceding paragraph was passed unopposed. Further discussion recommended that student representatives work with the Institutional Evaluation Committee to develop a proposed evaluation mechanism.

D. Vote of Confidence in President Stein

The resolution "The MTU Senate shall conduct a vote of confidence in President Stein among MTU faculty with results to be circulated no later than May 11, 1990," was brought to the floor.

The resolution generated considerable discussion. Arguments in opposition of the resolution include:

1. A vote of confidence will further damage the reputation of MTU.
2. A vote of confidence does not identify issues or problems which have been festering among the faculty. It is informationless.
3. A vote of confidence is not constructive. The university would be much better off if a regular evaluation of the administration was put in place to open communications and resolve problems before they reach the current state of affairs.

Arguments in favor of the resolution include:

1. A vote of confidence would put the controversy to rest regardless of the outcome of the vote.
2. A vote of confidence is a formal mechanism through which faculty can express their dissatisfaction with the current situation. There is now no other formal mechanism in place.
3. A vote of confidence is necessary to communicate faculty sentiment to President Stein who has admitted a lack of communication with the faculty in the past.
4. By not sponsoring a vote of confidence the Senate may be accused of not listening to the wishes of the Senate constituency.

It was moved that "The MTU Senate shall conduct a vote of confidence in President Dale F. Stein among the MTU Senate constituents, with results to be circulated no later than May 11, 1990."

Statements were made to the effect that ESI/Ventures is not the only or even the main problem: the problem is communications from the faculty to the President or Vice Presidents of the University.

Provost Powers stated that each year President Stein and others in the administration visit different departments around campus, and part of those visits is an open forum where faculty and staff can ask questions. The kinds of questions that are now being asked were never once brought up at those meetings.

One senator indicated that a great deal of what this vote is about is a president who met every year with the faculty and never picked up on the fact that there was a problem.

Professor Predebon indicated that while he was Budget Liaison for the Senate that he asked questions about Ventures and received answers. However, it is apparent that the right questions were not asked.

One Senator recalled that when Ed Koepel addressed a faculty Senate luncheon while he was still Vice President of Operations and Finance, he was asked point blank how the Ventures Group was managing the endowment of the university. His reply was that it was a great year in that they grossed over $30 million. When the attempt was made to ask
what was the net, no answer was provided. As it turned out, that was the year that Ventures lost $4 million. Even when you ask the right questions about ESI and Ventures, the answers are not forthcoming.

Dean Dresch stated that people were not prepared to come in an open and forthright manner to the administration with their concerns about Ventures. A faulty member in SBEA raised certain questions about accountability for this branch of university related activity, and used the mode of raising them in the newspaper. Approximately five days before that letter to the editor was published in January 1988, and before a commitment to publish it, the publisher notified the President of the existence of the letter. The President then notified the Provost of the existence of the letter. The Provost at that time said he was aware of the existence of the letter because Dresch had brought it to him a month ago (December 23, 1987).

In January Dean Dresch was called into the President's Office along with the Provost. The agenda was Dean Dresch's position with reference to Board of Control enunciated university policy regarding ESI and Ventures. At one point in that discussion the Provost asked how many members of SBEA faculty would agree with the sentiments expressed in the letter to the editor; and further stated that if even one or two should agree, then get rid of the entire School. That is why a faculty member would wisely not have gone forth to the administration with his or her concerns.

Dean Dresch tried to bring his concerns to the Chair of the Board of Control, and the only response has been the question of whether any crimes have been committed.

President Adler summarized that the discussion focused on issues relate to input, governance, policies of the university, and ways in which personnel are handled within that structure.

Further discussion included:

1. The opinion of having the Senate take a strong position with regard to the Administration's handling of ESI/Ventures controversy and issues related to communications in place of a vote of confidence.
2. The possibility of amending the motion to focus on issues rather than having a simple vote of confidence.
3. The efficacy of Senators returning to their constituents to poll them about how to vote on the motion in light of any actions the Senate might take.

Provost Powers stated that this body [The Senate] cannot believe that calling for a vote of confidence does not damage the reputation of this institution.

A motion was made for a roll call vote of the Senate on the motion for a vote of confidence. (The tape record of Senate meeting 174 was terminated at this point due to the length of the session. Three 90 minute cassettes had been filled, and no more were on hand). The motion for a roll call vote was defeated 7 in favor, 15 opposed.

A motion for a secret ballot vote of the Senate on the motion for a vote of confidence was approved by a vote of 15 in favor, 6 opposed.

The Senate recessed for 5 minutes while the secret ballot was conducted. The motion to hold a vote of confidence was defeated 12 in favor, 14 opposed.

A motion to destroy the ballots was approved without opposition.

There was a motion to adopt the following resolution: "The Senate expresses a strong concern regarding communications, handling of the Ventures matters by the Administration and the Board of Control, and University governance. The Senate offers constructive input through the development of an evaluation procedure of the Administration, to be brought forward from the Institutional Evaluation Committee of the Senate, to be recommended to the Administration and Board of Control."

The motion was approved 22 in favor, 0 opposed, 4 abstained or did not vote.

President Adler adjourned the meeting at 12:00 midnight.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Lyon, Secretary