

THE SENATE OF MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

Minutes of Meeting No. 219
21 Sept 1994

Synopsis: The Senate

- (1) Elected or sent forward to the Administration a long series of nominations for various committees.
- (2) Asked the Instructional Policy Committee for a recommendation on the next step in the continuing debate over a change in academic calendar.
- (3) Tabled a discussion on Proposal 17-94: Policy on Academic Freedom
- (4) Began deliberations but did not vote on Proposal 1-95: Sabbatical Leave Policy.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

President Bornhorst called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm on Wednesday, September 21 in Room B37 of the Electrical Energy Resources Center.

Secretary Jobst called the roll. Twenty-nine senators or alternates plus three liaison were in attendance. Absent was a Senator or alternate from Chem Eng; from KRC; At-Large Senators Tom Grimm and Dave Reed; Liaisons : Dean of Engineering; Dean of Sciences and Arts; and a representative from Staff Council.

2. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Recognized visitors included L. Ott from Computer Science, F. Dobney (Provost and Executive Vice President), and M. Goodrich (Tech Topics).

3. AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

President Bornhorst made several agenda adjustments: Under "Old Business," make Proposal 17-94 "A" and for "B" insert "24-94: University Grievance Policy.

Under "New Business, make Proposal 1-95 "A" and insert "B" as "2-95: Closure Guidelines."

Carstens MOVED and McKimpson seconded to accept the amended agenda (Appendix A). Motion CARRIES.

4. REPORT FROM SENATE PRESIDENT

Bornhorst's comments:

A. Met with Staff Council and will meet again for we need more interaction. Topics we covered included Professional Staff Handbook, Wellness, etc.

B. Lunched with University President Tompkins. These are useful for the opportunity to discuss with the administration the feelings of the Senate.

Senator Leifer asked if the President's cabinet was still in operation. Bornhorst replied that it was, although irregularly. Senator Leifer requested the reinstatement of lunches between the Board of Control and faculty. Bornhorst replied that he has already made this request.

5. COMMITTEE BUSINESS / REPORTS

A. UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE NOMINEES / APPOINTMENTS.

(1.) RETENTION: Bornhorst has yet to locate a nominee for this committee.

(2.) TQE CLASSROOM SCHEDULING. The Senate needs a nominee. Bornhorst asked the Senate to help him search for someone interested in a committee designed to prevent placing classes in rooms too small or too large for enrollment.

(3.) GRADUATE COUNCIL: Craig Hughes has been nominated.

(4.) PARKING TASKFORCE: A problem to be dealt with by this committee is how in the future to handle parking between Dillman Hall and the EERC building. The current parking lot will be unavailable for several years during the construction of the new environmental studies building. Bernie Alkire has agreed to be nominated.

On a voice vote the Senate accepted the above two nominations.

(5.) SABBATICAL LEAVE: Bornhorst read the names of three nominees: W. Shapton, R. Horvath, and G. T. Caneba.

Miner MOVED and Bulleit seconded to close the nominations. Heyman and Arici MOVED and seconded to send the names forward to the President for committee selection.

Senator Heyman asked that nominees selected last year for committee positions be added to the list of current nominees. A Senator then revealed that the Senate may forward only a limited number of names to the President, and thus the names from last year were withdrawn.

(6.) GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE: Bornhorst identified two nominees: C. Nelson and M. Roberts. He asked for further nominees from the floor. Senator Irish nominated R. Blanning. Beck MOVED and Mroz seconded that the nominations be closed.

Mroz MOVED and Huang seconded that the nominees names be sent forward to the President for committee selection. Motion CARRIED on a voice vote.

(7.) PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN: Senator Whitt MOVED that the Senate advertise in the Michigan Tech Lode for people interested in being on the committee; such individuals could then write a paragraph or two indicating their interest. Bulleit seconded. Jobst asked if this extra hoop to jump through would not deter nominees in light of the traditional difficulty in locating people. Ott replied that this system has worked for finding student members on the committee. Whitt said this is a special committee needing specially motivated people.

Diebel asked if this committee was not a Presidential Committee, and thus the Senate should not have the task of locating nominees. Bornhorst said the Senate has two representatives on the committee. Other senators asked why we should change our selection policy for one committee; others don't use paragraph writing and ads in the Lode. Discussion ended, and by a voice vote the motion FAILED.

Bornhorst read a list of nominees: J. Diehl, C. Waddell, R. Selfe. Heyman MOVED and Arici seconded that the nominations be closed. The Senate assistant distributed blank ballots for voting. The chair of the Election Committee collected the ballots. The Senate selected R. Selfe as its representative on the committee. Keen MOVED and Roblee seconded that the ballots be destroyed. Motion CARRIES.

B. AD HOC COMMITTEE ON TEACHING. Bornhorst reported that he met with Dobney and the two agreed on committee members: Predebon, Bulleit (chair), Ott, Tampas, Mikkola, C. Selfe, and Dean Klippel of the Business School.

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This committee will deal with issues of Teacher Evaluations, the Center for Teaching Excellence, and Teaching Awards.

C. STANDING COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS. The Senate assistant distributed the finalized list of Senators and Alternates on standing committees.

D. FACULTY HANDBOOK STEERING COMMITTEE. L. Ott presented the current status of handbook revisions. She said a draft would soon be on-line. "Ten policies will be coming to the Senate in the months ahead." Senator Whitt asked about the appendixes in the old handbook, which she says was confusing. Ott said the revision would be clearer. Jobst asked if the new handbook would have an index, and Ott said the on-line version offers a "search" function having the same effect.

E. CALENDAR SUBCOMMITTEE. Glime presented a report as a member of last year's Instructional Policy Committee's Subcommittee on the University Calendar, which researched a possible change to the semester system. The task of preparing a report has become too big for the two person subcommittee, especially when both are now Senate officers.

Glime listed the major advantages of the semester system: Easier student group work, less test pileups, closer relationships with faculty, more time to develop research projects. Glime also listed disadvantages of the semester system, such as less course offerings, less flexible course drop system, ease of making up dropped courses, and major student opposition.

Glime asked the Senate: "What is the problem we wish to solve here?" A calendar change could offer a better education, but are there alternatives?

The senate then began a long discussion on the two calendars: When asked if any proof exists that the semester is better, one Senator said the effects may be long rather than short term.

Glime said the Senate has several choices: drop the calendar change entirely, change the calendar and let department's discuss the advantages with students.

Heyman argued that the staccato-structured winter quarter was the main reason to change the calendar. A senator asked why the calendar could not be revised so that the fall quarter ends at Christmas. Jobst replied that this would move the end of the AY to June. Leifer recalled when Tech changed from a "late quarter" to an "early quarter" term many years ago, and that everyone accepted the awkward winter quarter in lieu of ending in June. Mroz asked if the winter quarter was impossible to live with.

A senator argued that the pressures of the ten week quarter system are too high; Bulleit said the pressures were good for his students because these pressures mimicked life after graduation.

A senator pointed out that Tech has no basis to argue that it should be on a calendar different from nearly everyone else, as most schools are changing to semesters. Carstens suggested sending a fact-finding group to MSU or another school which has recently changed. Brokaw suggested we bring such people here, including students to discuss the change and whether it has been good. Several student visitors to the Senate suggested finding a non-partisan MSU group from whom we could hear. Anyone, they argued, can find people who agree with a particular view and allow them to talk.

Mroz said he heard MSU has not saved money in moving to semesters. A student added that newly-designed semester courses often consist of several "quarter" topics crammed together.

Keen suggested a referendum indicating the various calendars. Roblee said to include "no change" as an option. No system is perfect, a senator argued, and the resistance to semesters might be due to inertia.

Fynewever suggested a more creative academic calendar, with multiple five week tracks that would accommodate both those who like quarters, and those who like semesters.

The Senate decided to return the issue to the Instructional Policy Committee for suggestions on how to proceed. This issue will be on the agenda at the next meeting.

6. OLD BUSINESS

A. PROPOSAL 17-94: POLICY ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM. Bulleit MOVED and Heyman seconded to approve 17-94. Patricia Moore suggested adding "Other Course Offering Units" as voting members on this issue. Heyman MOVED and Mroz seconded to accept other course offering units in the vote. The motion CARRIED.

Bulleit MOVED and Sloan seconded a motion to change the wording in the last paragraph to "The system of tenure should be designed to be compatible with the concept of academic freedom for faculty." After discussion ended, the motion CARRIED on a voice vote. To Bornhorst's query, the Senate agreed that the change was not merely editorial but substantial, and a revised proposal will be distributed to senators for a vote at the next Senate meeting.

Whitt suggested another change to the proposal wording: add to the end of paragraph 1 "When faculty exercise their rights as citizens they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline. Bulleit MOVED and Heyman seconded the motion. The motion CARRIED.

After some discussion on whether employees might not identify themselves with the University when they discuss controversial issues off campus, Whitt suggested another change: to the fourth paragraph, state "And they should make every effort to indicate they are not speaking for the University. " Whitt MOVED and Bulleit seconded the change. After a discussion of whether the fourth paragraph was the appropriate location, the motion FAILED on a voice vote. Beck MOVED and Roblee seconded a motion to attach the wording immediately after the recently agreed change to the first paragraph. In the interests of time, Bornhorst asked for a motion to table.

Leifer MOVED and Mroz seconded a motion to TABLE 17-94. Motion CARRIED on a voice vote.

B. PROPOSAL 24-94: UNIVERSITY GRIEVANCE POLICY. Bornhorst said the Dean of Engineering was forming his own committee to deal with faculty grievance issues, assuming the Senate proposal would fail. Bornhorst said it was premature to move ahead on this issue until the Senate finished its discussion.

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. 1-95: SABBATICAL LEAVE POLICY. Leifer argued that this version of the Sabbatical Leave policy contains few changes. He suggested the Administration encourage more sabbaticals by giving one quarter off every two years; two quarters every four years; and three quarters every six years with full pay.

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"As an added incentive for the Provost to agree with my amendment," Leifer argued, the new sabbatical plan should be cumulative, so that people like me who haven't taken sabbaticals recently would be allowed to take a five year sabbatical and thus "be out of his hair for five years."

Brokaw spoke in favor of the new version, saying it was a polishing of the old plan, not a complete revision. He called attention to the changes as summarized at the end of the proposal.

Brokaw answered questions from the floor: the Sabbatical Leave Committee recommends to the University President whether to approve or disapprove a sabbatical; the President makes the final decision. Beck asked if the Senate had any figures that would show how many people take sabbaticals; he knew of only one in Physics in the past 13 yrs. Bornhorst said he would locate figures.

Whitt asked for the purpose of submitting a report at the end of a sabbatical. Brokaw listed two: Show what was done during the sabbatical; and Provide historical information on the various types of sabbatical. Arici asked why someone should be forced to return after a sabbatical. Brokaw said the person's newly-obtained expertise should be made available to the University which has paid for the time to gather it. To Arici's follow-up question, Brokaw said that if someone did not return after a sabbatical, then probably nothing would happen.

Time ran out before the Senate could complete the discussion of this proposal.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Brokaw MOVED and Miner seconded to adjourn. Motion PASSED. Bornhorst declared the meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.