

**THE UNIVERSITY SENATE OF  
MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY**

Minutes of Meeting 286

21 January 1998

**Synopsis:** The Senate

- (1) requested suggestions for faculty members to serve on a Review Committee on the Substance Abuse Policy.
  - (2) heard from Vice Provost Bowen on the plan to involve the Senate and university community in development of the General Education Program.
  - (3) heard a report from Christa Walck on the preliminary report from the NCA team, indicating that the team expects us to be re-accredited for 10 years.
  - (4) passed the amended Proposal 30-95, Academic Freedom, based on the AAUP statement and interpretations, with a change of the wording indicating that faculty must at all time be accurate to state that they must at all times strive to be accurate.
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**1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

President Seely called University Senate Meeting 286 to order at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, 21 January 1998, in Room U113 of the Minerals and Materials Building.

Secretary Glime called roll. Absent were at-large Senator David Reed, and representatives from Army/Air Force ROTC, Chemical Engineering, IWR, Mechanical Engineering-Engineering Mechanics, Metallurgical and Materials Engineering, School of Technology, Research and Graduate School/University Relations/Administrative Offices, and Student Affairs and Educational Opportunities. Liaisons in attendance were Geoff Roelant (USG) and Ted Soldan (Staff Council).

**2. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

Guests included Barbara Lide (Humanities), Les Leifer (Chemistry), Marcia Goodrich (*Tech Topics*), and Steve Bowen (Vice Provost for Instruction).

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Leifer (Chemistry) requested 2 minutes to talk to the Senate. President Seely suggested that he be given time to speak at the end of the meeting and Leifer agreed.

Nordberg MOVED and Prince seconded the motion to approve the agenda as amended. The motion to approve PASSED on voice vote with no dissent. [Appendix A. NOTE: Only official Senate and Library archival copies of the minutes will contain a full complement of appendices.]

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING 285**

Senator Haapala pointed out that several names mentioned by Leifer on page 7227 had been reported incorrectly. Reference to Glen Hendrix should be Mike Hendricks; Anderson and Anderson in the same sentence and also in column 2 should be Alexander and Alexander. Senator Sloan pointed out that reference to "President" Leifer on page 7224, column 2, should be "Senator" Leifer.

Senator Leifer asked that definitions of the letters in the formula on page 7226, item 9, column 2, be corrected. F = a fixed number, the "Fred" number = the money you need. A = annuitization; r = spread (difference in percent between what your investment earns and what the health care inflation costs are).

Senator Nordberg suggested the clarification that "our" health benefits, at the bottom of page 7228 be changed to "retiree" health benefits.

Snyder MOVED and Pickens seconded the motion to approve the minutes of meeting 285 as corrected. The motion PASSED on voice vote with no dissent.

## 5. REPORT FROM SENATE PRESIDENT

Memos sent: President Seely forwarded Proposal 6-98, English Education Option to the B.A. in Liberal Arts Degree, to the Curricular Policy and Finance Committee for review. He forwarded Proposal 1-98, Student Academic Grievances, to the Administration for approval. [Appendices B-D]

**Senate handbook:** Seely thanked Jeanne Meyers for her efforts in completing the Senate Handbook, which was delivered to Senators this week.

**Meeting with Jim Mitchell:** Seely met with Jim Mitchell, Chair of the Board of Control, and discussed the "at will" clause in the employment contract. Seely argued that the Administration, faculty, and staff all support the change and that the Administration currently operates as if the clause does not exist. Mitchell acknowledged that he couldn't hire staff in his own office if he used that language.

Seely stated that we need to remind the Board that we are in the knowledge enterprise, not the production enterprise. Seely will be invited to meet with the Board's finance committee. The Human Relations group will assemble information to demonstrate that there is no cost to the university if the wording is changed, but that the change will have benefits.

Senator Williams asked what the head count would be if the Board voted now. Seely responded that it was not certain, but that we would like something better than a 5:4 vote to make a clear commitment.

The Officers met with the Provost and Vice Provosts and discussed the involvement of the Senate in the development of the general education program, as will be discussed later by Dr. Bowen.

Seely reminded the Senate committee chairs that the Senate had cleared its agenda of pending proposals and that committees need to move to bring proposals forward to the Senate.

Seely requested suggestions for a faculty member to serve on a Review Committee on the Substance Abuse Policy.

**Report on General Education Task Force -- Steve Bowen [Appendix E].** Vice Provost Bowen reported on the parameters that define the task of the General Education Task Force and the involvement of the Senate. Although European and other nationalities generally do not have a general education core, it has been a traditional part of American education, and the NCA requires that general education be a part of the curriculum.

Bowen distinguished between general education, which encompasses knowledge, skills, and intellectual habits, and core courses, which are those courses required of all students to support that education.

In their evaluation, the 1998 NCA team stated that our general education program was a Chinese menu approach that lacked cohesiveness; since it is in flux due to the change to semesters, NCA asked the University to report back in 2003.

Bowen reported that the 33 member task force is now complete, including the curricular reform committee chairs from the colleges and schools, the Senate President and Chair of the Curricular Policy Committee, one faculty representative from each academic department, two undergraduates, one graduate student, a representative from the first year program, and a representative from the University General Education Committee.

General Education needs to reflect the fact that the work place is more dynamic than it has ever been and that students need to be prepared for careers that will change. The committee will form working groups, then bring their suggestions back to the task force to mesh into a whole.

The task force will ultimately build a proposal to bring to the Senate for a faculty referendum. During the process there will be open meetings. A web site will provide task force meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes. There will be frequent written reports to faculty, staff, and alumni. Communication with students will be important, and the task force will have visits with the USG.

Bowen reminded the Senate that no one will have veto power. The Provost has precluded his need for a veto power by setting parameters at the onset. He has set a range of 120-128 credits for graduation, 48-57 credits required for a major, and a minimum of 9 credits of free electives.

Senator Snyder asked if 48 hours was a fixed minimum for a major. At present, the largest number of credits required for a biological sciences degree in major Michigan universities is 43 hours; most require fewer. Bowen responded that they may need to reconsider that number.

Senator Sandberg asked if this means that all students will take a core of 30 credits in addition to 14 credits in science and math. Bowen responded "yes."

Senator Nordberg asked if the task force will define the courses required or if there will be choices. Bowen responded that it was still to be worked out.

Bowen presented a time line, pointing out a need to set the architecture of general education in 8 months so that departments could work out their own curricula.

The Administration hopes to get outside funding to pilot a common advising program for first year students.

Goodrich (Tech Topics) asked when the faculty referendum would be. Bowen responded that it depends... Seely added that the target is to complete committee work by 1 August. The Senate needs to be in the loop for approval, with the faculty referendum near the end of September. Bowen anticipates involving people so thoroughly during the process that there will be no surprises when it is time for the referendum.

Goodrich asked if the targeted implementation was for fall 2000. Bowen confirmed that.

Senator Sandberg asked if the 30 credits of general education core, 14 of math and science, and 9 free electives was sacred, expressing concern about having enough room for requirements by the discipline. Bowen responded that those numbers are set.

Snyder stated that 57 semester hours is equivalent to 85 hours in the quarter system, and that should be enough for any major to prescribe.

Bowen stated that no course would be sacred in structuring the general education core. The intent is to avoid having students take only introductory courses, with no depth; the new program should build a structure.

## **6. COMMITTEE/BUSINESS REPORTS**

### **A. Ombudsperson Search Committee -- Jim Carstens**

Senator Carstens was unable to attend the Senate meeting, so his report was distributed to the Senators [**Appendix F**]. It outlined responsibilities of the ombudsperson and criteria for the replacement.

### **B. NCA Update -- Christa Walck**

Senator Walck stated that the preliminary report from the NCA team indicated that MTU would be re-accredited for 10 years. She thanked Vice President Soldan for his help in supporting the team members' computers.

The preliminary report is available on the NCA web page under the evaluation team button.

The report had four sections. First were commendations, in which the NCA team complimented numerous individuals and groups on their efforts and contributions toward making this a better university. The team provided a number of items of advice, which the university can choose to "take or leave." The only surprise was their advice to continue the newly-established schedule of periodic reviews of the academic programs, including research institutes.

They listed six concerns, which need to be addressed as part of the next NCA review. These include inadequacy of the library, changes in the general education program, lack of understanding of the implications of being a Carnegie Research University II and the needed infrastructure, inadequacy of the MUB in both size and scope of programs, lack of a detailed plan to cover costs of existing and projected programs, and need for the Board of Control to be responsive in a more timely manner in implementing University policy and procedure.

Finally, the NCA team made several recommendations which must be addressed. To the university's credit is the NCA recommendation that MTU should not be required to get Commission approval for any distance education programs developed and approved by the faculty for use within the state or with regional companies and their subsidiaries at remote sites. On the other hand, three reports will be required to address areas of concern: In 2001, academic program review; in 2003, report on the revised general education program and its assessment; in 2001, a report on development of undergraduate and graduate distance education degree programs. The next comprehensive NCA review will be in 2007-2008.

The first written report should come from the NCA team in three weeks.

Seely added that the Senate Executive Committee had had a good meeting with the chair of the NCA team.

## 7. OLD BUSINESS

### Senate Proposal 30-95, Revision of Proposal 17-94 [Appendix G]

Senator Gale stated that the original proposal defined academic freedom, whereas this proposal [using the language of the AAUP statement on academic freedom] does not.

Senator Snyder countered that if we define academic freedom, then the statement will include the entire scope; if we don't define it, the statement leaves room for a broader interpretation.

Secretary Glime stated that the references 1-4 within the statement on academic freedom refer to those numbers in the 1970 interpretation, but the 1940 interpretation also has numbers 1-3, making the reference ambiguous.

Senator Williams pointed out that the last sentence of paragraph 3, page 1 of 2, should read "It carries with *it* duties correlative with rights."

Senator Walck expressed concern over the statement in part c, page 1 of 2, "they should at all times be accurate." She conceded, however, that it seemed cleaner to adopt the entire AAUP statement as it is.

Snyder MOVED and Sandberg seconded the motion to accept Proposal 30-95 as a wholesale amendment to replace all previous versions of the proposal, following the procedure used in modifying the Conflict of Interest Proposal when the Administration wanted changes.

Williams MOVED and Pickens seconded the motion to make editorial changes to replace "its" with "it" in paragraph 3, page 1 of 2 and to replace "these interpretive comments" on page 2 of 2 with "the 1970 interpretive comments."

Seely stated that voting would be limited to Academic Departments. There were no objections to the voting units. Discussion ended. The motion to amend the wording PASSED on voice vote with no opposition.

Seely ruled the changes to be editorial. There were no objections.

Walck MOVED and Williams seconded the motion to amend part c, last sentence, to replace "should at all times be accurate" with "should at all times *strive to* be accurate."

Snyder stated that he prefers that if someone sues the University that the policy would have the language of the AAUP policy when the AAUP has to defend that person. There is no absolute accuracy - we don't know the absolute truth.

Senators Williams and Pegg agreed that the statement proposed by Walck is a more accurate reflection of intent and should be adopted.

Vice President Soldan was concerned that changing the wording might weaken the statement and that the Provost might again refuse to accept it. Glime countered that she had discussed this possible change with the Provost during an officers' meeting and that he had indicated that the change would be acceptable. Discussion ended.

The motion to amend the wording to "should at all times *strive to* be accurate" PASSED on voice vote with dissent.

Senator Gale again stated that he preferred having a statement to define academic freedom, as provided in Proposal 17-94.

Snyder responded that this statement has a long history and therefore it doesn't need a preamble.

Walck concurred, stating that the statement of definition seems to have redundancy with the language of the AAUP policy statement.

The motion to replace all previous versions of Proposal 30-95 with the amended AAUP statement PASSED on voice vote with dissent.

**Leifer statement:** Senator Leifer stated first that the discussion presented in *Tech Topics* seemed to be the opposite of the sense that was put forth in the Senate. Second, he wanted to answer Dave Reed who said wait to see what the government does; Harry Truman, in 1951, said that we should have national health care - if we had waited for that, we would still be waiting, nearly 47 years. On that basis, we should be proactive rather than re-active.

Leifer added that the equation he presented is not his equation, but a general equation. In his opinion, we get 0 from the University and 2 from us now; next year we will contribute 4%. However, I am not putting in my opinion. Therefore if we take 1+1 this year and 2+2 for succeeding years, then 2% is still our money. Therefore, the only people for whom the University is paying this benefit are those earning \$130,850 or more.

Senator Pennington responded that he also had read *Tech Topics* and found it to be very accurate, and that he stood by what he had said at the previous meeting.

Seely stated that the officers indicated we are pursuing with the Provost setting up a meeting among the representatives of the Fringe Benefits Committee, members of the Administrative who are concerned with establishing the policy for fringe benefits, and others among the Administration and Senators.

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

Pennington MOVED and Sandberg seconded the motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Janice M. Glime  
Secretary of the University Senate