

# The University Senate Of Michigan Technological University

## Minutes of Meeting 300 28 October 1998

Synopsis: The Senate

- (1) learned that the University will be switching from Wausau to BCBS as their health care provider on 1 January 1999.
- (2) heard from Beth Flynn representing the concerns of the Humanities Department regarding the General Education proposal.
- (3) nominated Bernie Carr (School of Technology), Dave Karnosky (School of Forestry), Carol MacLennan (Social Sciences), David Mendenhall (Chemistry), and Tom Merz (School of Business and Economics) for the University Academic Tenure Committee.
- (4) nominated Phil Beckwith (Mathematical Sciences), Paul Charlesworth (Chemistry), Kurt Paterson (Civil and Environmental Engineering), and Craig Waddell (Humanities) for the General Education Committee.
- (5) elected Madhu Vable (ME-EM) to serve on the Conflict of Interest Committee, with Barry Kunz (Electrical Engineering) to serve as alternate.
- (6) nominated Gopal Jayaraman (ME-EM), Paul Nelson (School of Business and Economics), and Jim Wood (Geological Engineering and Sciences) for the Sabbatical Leave Committee.
- (7) heard reports from the Fringe Benefits Committee (Les Leifer) and the Finance Committee (Jim Pickens) regarding Proposal 11-98, Revision of Transition to Full Co-pay of Health Care Premiums for Retirees; an amended Proposal 11-98 was sent back to committee for re-wording.

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### 1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

President Seely called University Senate Meeting 300 to order at 5:31 p.m. on Wednesday, 28 October 1998, in Room B45 EERC.

Secretary Glime called roll. Absent were representatives from Fine Arts, Institute of Materials Processing, Human Resources and Facilities Management, and Research and Graduate School/ University Relations/ Administrative Offices. Liaisons in attendance were Anthony Moretti (USG) and Ted Soldan (Staff Council).

### 2. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Guests included Fred Dobney (Provost), Marcia Goodrich (*Tech Topics*), Les Leifer (Chemistry), Ellen Horsch (Human Resources), Ingrid Cheney (Human Resources), Bill Kennedy (CFTLFD), Shalini Rudak (Educational Opportunity), and Beth Flynn (Humanities)

### 3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

President Seely apologized for the confusion with the agenda of Meeting 299 and stated that he had adopted the practice of listing times for those items for which he and the officers anticipated sufficient time, listing other pending items as pending, but assigning no time to the latter. Those pending items would be addressed if sufficient time remained during the meeting.

Williams MOVED and Pollins seconded the motion to approve the agenda as presented. 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 299**

Drummer MOVED and B. Reed seconded the motion to approve the minutes of meeting 299. The motion PASSED on voice vote with no dissent.

#### **5. REPORT FROM SENATE PRESIDENT**

President Seely reminded the Senate that the Provost had stated he would look at Proposal 29-96 (Sabbatical Leave) with the Sabbatical Leave Committee and the Academic Forum. They, however, had kicked it back to the Provost. The Provost will work with the Academic Policy Committee to review the Policy in view of the change to semesters. **[Appendix B]**

Senator Nadgorny asked if the Sabbatical Leave Task Force still exists. Seely responded that it does not.

Senator Williams asked if the stipulation is in force now that the job or equivalent for the spouse is guaranteed upon return. Horsch (Human Resources) responded that one spouse returned to the same job, another started over, by her own choice.

Seely reported that the Calendar Issues Clarification Committee has begun meeting again. They will bring recommendations on calendar dates for the semester system.

Senator Suryanarayana asked how many weeks would be in the new calendar. Departments need to know this before they can proceed far with planning their new curriculum.

Seely responded that we now have 30 weeks in our calendar. However, we actually have only 146 days of instruction. The new calendar will probably have the same number of instruction days. This would most likely result in two semesters of 73 days each.

Seely clarified the faculty ballot on general education. Some faculty had commented that a vote of no on "don't support" was a double negative and meant that you do support. However, a vote of yes means support of the proposal, no means you do not support it.

Seely reported on the 4 p.m. meeting between the officers and the Provost. The Administration plans to take the "interim" stipulation off the Conflict of Interest procedures.

Proposal 8-98, Scientific Misconduct, providing minor wording changes, awaits approval by the Administration. The students have expressed concern about the new teacher evaluation policy because the results will not be released to the USG.

The web site policy (Proposal 6-99) has been posted on the web and the address has been sent to all Senators.

Leifer (Chemistry) asked if it is not the policy that the Administration must respond to a passed proposal within 90 days. Seely responded that they are expected to respond within one term (the summer usually has not been included in that). To his knowledge, this procedure has been followed; when the Administration is unable to respond, they have communicated with him and he has conveyed the reasons for non-compliance to the Senate. At present, the Administration has asked for more time to respond to the grievance procedures because no case has been processed and there is no basis upon which to evaluate.

#### **6. NEW BUSINESS**

President Seely introduced Proposal 6-99, University Web Page Policy. **[Appendix C]**

#### **7. COMMITTEE BUSINESS/REPORTS**

##### **A. University Health Benefits Plan--Ingrid Cheney**

Cheney presented the new BCBS health care plan. Three providers had been considered (no others responded): Wausau (now UPHP), Sigma, and BCBS. Sigma did not have enough physicians in their group and was eliminated.

The new BCBS plan would save MTU \$600,000 to \$1 million in the next year. Furthermore, MTU is the only school in Michigan that is not using BCBS as their health care provider.

In their 2-year contract, BCBS had provided a performance and implementation guarantee. They have a network throughout the U.S., providing more convenient health care during travel, and there is a discount with PPO's when they are used elsewhere.

Local Pharmacists are concerned that they will lose revenue because the BCBS has a higher discount, providing less income to the pharmacy. Pharmacy bills to MTU can be up to \$1 million per year.

Last year health care for MTU employees cost \$7.4 million. It is expected to exceed \$8 million this year.

BCBS does not have a 1-month restriction on prescriptions; you can get a 3-month supply. Only one card is required for everything.

Probably all dentists will join Dentamax, providing more options for dental care. There will be a 24-hour hotline for discussing claims and a representative in the MUB once a week. There are discounts for safety equipment and other health care items.

Secretary Glime asked if it would be necessary to submit bills again. Cheney responded that it would be the same as with Wausau; the PPO would bill BCBS.

Senator Nordberg asked if the optional additional coverage of dental and vision care would continue. Cheney responded that it would.

Cheney explained that claims would go to HR, since it is the University who pays for the claims. The new policy will go into effect on 1 January 1999.

Horsch (Human Resources) admonished faculty and staff to check to be sure the money charged to the University is the same they were told it would cost; MTU pays those costs and sometimes there are errors.

Senator Pegg asked what the limit is for stop loss insurance. Cheney responded that it is 130% of the expected cost. Provost Dobney asked if MTU got any back last year and Cheney responded that we got \$300,000 back last year.

Horsch also told Senators that physicians and hospitals often expressed discontent because reimbursement takes too long. They should contact BCBS to complain; that is not the patient's fault.

Seely stated that when MTU got the discount negotiated by Wausau, the physicians rates went up by more than the amount they lost through the discount.

Horsch stated again to be careful about unnecessary expenditures; our raises are going into their pockets.

Cheney reported that there would be a reduction in the long-term disability premium from 43-55 cents to 30-44 cents.

## **B. Humanities Report--Beth Flynn**

Flynn began by stating that she is wearing a different hat this week, representing the humanities faculty. She reported that the humanities faculty are not completely opposed to the general education plan; there are many exciting things about it. However, they have five concerns. **[Appendix D]**

Secretary Glime asked if their ideas regarding availability for time for foreign language study during the freshman year (item 1) were in conflict with the existing proposal.

President Seely responded that one suggestion was to expand from 128 graduation credits to 131-132. This idea has been pushed by the College of Engineering to provide one more completely free elective. This could

possibly free some room in the first year. Furthermore, most of the current students in the first year language sequence were not in their first year. Engineering hopes to foster languages for their students because language expertise makes a much more salable engineer.

Provost Dobney stated that he would not stand in the way if the College of Engineering wants to require 131-132 credits.

Senator Snyder stated that the task force tried hard not to put five courses in one semester in the first year.

Seely clarified that the extra credits could put the elective in at any point.

Senator Pennington asked if these problems could be addressed under the guidelines of the present proposal.

Snyder responded that most of the problems stated by humanities related to faculty involvement in the first year, and that the task force felt strongly about having faculty teach the perspectives course.

Flynn responded by asking why 70% of these sections would be taught by only three departments. Why was it not the shared responsibility of all departments.

Dobney responded by stating that interdepartmental did not mean omnidepartmental. Three departments constitute more interdisciplinary effort than we have now. Second, it would force the humanities faculty to teach first-year students, something he has been trying to convince them to do for a long time.

Snyder stated that the Humanities Department is reading the proposal more tightly (their item #4) than intended. While there would be a common syllabus on some topics in perspectives, it would not be the same on all. Seely added that the content issues would be addressed later by the faculty. Departments need to decide how they will allocate their resources. In talking to departments he has found that some of the objections to the general education proposal are really concerns about the change to semesters.

Senator Pegg asked where the General Education Council fits in; would they be expected to enforce the decisions of the task force?

Snyder responded that the task force will disappear when the General Education Council takes over.

Seely added that there is no intent for the General Education Council to police the program.

Senator D. Reed asked what can and what cannot be adjusted.

Kennedy (Director, Center for Teaching, Learning, and Faculty Development) stated that there would be no major modifications to the structure of the program. The adjustments would relate to implementation.

Seely stated that the perspectives and other courses would be required, if the proposal passes; the question is what will constitute them.

Secretary Glime asked if there is any option for senior Ph. D. students to teach perspectives. They may be better than some faculty who do not want to teach the course. How will these students get training in teaching? Seely responded that they would not be permitted to teach perspectives; the minimum education would be an ABD degree. There were opportunities for graduate students to get training in the writing courses.

### **C. University Committee Elections**

President Seely explained that there are three methods of placing members on university committees: the Senate approves the slate and nominees are either 1) selected by the University President or 2) selected by a faculty vote; 3) the Senate elects the members.

The University Academic Tenure Committee requires one member to be elected by the faculty. Nominees include Bernie Carr (School of Technology), Dave Karnosky (School of Forestry), Carol MacLennan (Social

Sciences), David Mendenhall (Chemistry), and Tom Merz (School of Business and Economics).

Gale MOVED and D. Reed seconded the motion to close nominations. The slate of nominees was accepted by consensus.

The General Education Committee will no longer be needed when we begin semesters in two years. The present committee needs nominees from which the President will select one. Nominees include Phil Beckwith (Mathematical Sciences), Paul Charlesworth (Chemistry), Kurt Paterson (Civil and Environmental Engineering), and Craig Waddell (Humanities).

Nordberg MOVED and Snyder seconded the motion to close nominations. The slate was accepted by consensus.

The Conflict of Interest Committee needs one member and one alternate selected by the Senate. Seely reported that the process seems to have worked well. He sought nominees among people who were active researchers who have some familiarity with the conflict of interest guidelines. Nominees included Vincent Chang (Institute of Wood Research), Christ Ftaclas (Physics), Barry Kunz (Electrical Engineering), and Madhu Vable (ME-EM).

Williams MOVED and Drummer seconded the motion to close nominations.

Senator Reed asked how the alternate was chosen and Seely responded that it would be the second highest vote-getter.

Madhu Vable was elected by secret ballot; Barry Kunz was second and would thus serve as alternate.

The Sabbatical Leave Committee requires three members nominated by the Senate. Nominees include Duane Abata (ME-EM), Gopal Jayaraman (ME-EM), Paul Nelson (School of Business and Economics), and Jim Wood (Geological Engineering and Sciences).

Snyder MOVED and Pegg seconded the motion to close nominations. [The meeting continued during counting of the ballots and results were not announced during the meeting. The three persons nominated by secret ballot were Gopal Jayaraman, Paul Nelson, and Jim Wood.]

## **8. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Proposal 11-98, Revision of Transition to Full Co-pay of Health Care Premiums for Retirees [See minutes, page 7590, for a copy of this proposal.]**

Leifer (Chemistry) stated that the function of the Fringe Benefits Committee is as an information source for distribution and as an advisory source on benefits. As such he wants the Senate to understand that the recommendation put forth now is not the committee's primary recommendation. They recommended in 1992 that people be allowed to retire at 80 points with 20% co-pay. That is still what they recommend, but it is not allowed.

Next they recommended a 15-year ramp with 12 years at 5% and the last 2 years at 10%. That plan was also not adopted by the Administration.

Their third recommendation is provided as Proposal 11A-98. They have provided a program whereby an individual can put in their own data and learn how much money is required. That is an informational item.

Pegg MOVED and Williams seconded the motion to accept Proposal 11A-98 to replace the language of 11-98, as an amendment. The motion to approve the amendment PASSED on voice vote with no opposition. [**Appendix E**]

Williams MOVED and Vanden Avond seconded the motion to approve Proposal 11-98 [i.e. the replacement provided by 11A-98].

Leifer explained that this proposal doesn't differentiate among groups. It is equal to approximately 6% salary raise for 5-6 years for eligible people. The Provost can implement the plan however he wishes. The financial

effect would be to reduce the salary pool by 0.2%.

Senator Pegg added that there are some people with low salaries who are adversely affected by the new 100% co-pay. Full co-pay would be reached in the year 2006.

Senator Pennington was concerned that earlier the Senate felt that it was those with the lowest pay who had been neglected by the change and that we weren't concerned about the higher paid ones.

Pegg stated that there were other factors besides salary. Faculty and staff had received less than the recommended 15% contribution to TIAA/CREF.

Leifer added that the method of infusion accounts for when the person would retire and the amount of infusion depends on that; not all will get the same.

President Seely stated that the cost was calculated for each person based on what is necessary for that person.

Senator Suryanarayana stated that often 2% won't cover the extra health care cost.

Provost Dobney stated that the 2+2 plan was not originally intended as a means of covering employee health care costs. It was added because the University should shoot for a 15% contribution. The health care plan payments would have gone away even if nothing had been added to the University TIAA/CREF contribution.

Senator Suryanarayana stated that he had understood the Administration to say that the 2% would compensate for the added cost of health care.

Senator Gale stated that his concern is with those people earning less than \$50,000.

Williams questioned the last sentence of the proposal because it implies that the Senate would pay the infusion costs; the Senate can't pay anything. Senator Snyder suggested that we cross out the word Senate. Seely explained that only the first paragraph of the document is the actual proposal and that everything else is background material.

Reed MOVED and Pegg seconded the motion to amend the first sentence of the proposal to read, "The Senate recommends the adoption..."

Seely explained that the Senate would see the supporting documents the next week.

Voting would include the entire Senate. The motion to amend the first sentence PASSED on voice vote with no dissent.

Leifer stated that the cost over six years could be varying amounts or it could be split equally - that is the province of the Provost. [One concern is that the amount given not exceed the 25% limit for tax-sheltered income.]

Snyder MOVED and Pennington seconded the motion to send the proposal back to the committee for rewording to avoid jargon and to include appropriate documentation.

Pennington stated that it is his interpretation that the wording as it is implies that there will be no ramp unless there is also an infusion of money for everyone who would not receive enough TIAA/CREF compensation to cover the added cost of health care.

Senator Pickens stated that the Finance Committee has a presentation and that it might be better to present that now before the proposal is reworded.

The motion to send Proposal 11-98 back to committee PASSED on voice vote with one dissent.

Pickens presented the financial report from the Finance Committee. **[Appendix F]** The committee found a serious equity issue. With an increase of only 2% per year to TIAA/CREF, many people would not receive enough to cover the added co-pay. This is especially important if the pay is low; these people are hit more. The Finance Committee has suggested that a stipend be given to those faculty and staff whose incomes are under \$50,000 and who would be hurt the most by the change. The Provost has indicated that this could be financed from the yearly realignment of funds and need not be taken from the salary budget.

Referring to the new Proposal 11-98, Pennington stated that he is "ashamed to sit in the same room" if the lower paid people are held hostage to equal compensation of the higher paid employees. Proposal 11-98, in its present form, does just that. He'd like to modify something he said earlier. It appears that the Fringe Benefits Committee meant to convey what he inferred from this poorly written document. They basically want to hold the poorly paid employees hostage for additional compensation for higher paid employees, that they would prefer to block the proposal that the Provost has put forward unless it includes money for higher paid employees. "Am I correct in that," he queried?

Senator Leifer responded "but not equal." "You can be ashamed all you want, but I can tell you this. If that's what you want to tell me. But these people who put out a helluva long time at Michigan Tech have gotten 10.55% contributed to their TIAA/CREF when it's well known all over the country that you need 15 to retire at age 65. And before they even cut the health benefits, I'll tell you this, somebody's going to look at their total amount in TIAA/CREF and if you have \$100k in TIAA/CREF and you get 7%, you're going to get \$7k a year, and a guy isn't going to go to health benefits, he's going to say that's not enough to live on, I'm not retiring. That's what he's gonna say."

Pennington responded, "My remark stands."

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

Gale MOVED and D. Reed seconded the motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

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