

# The University Senate Of Michigan Technological University

## Minutes of Meeting 308 17 February 1999

Synopsis: The Senate

- (1) heard a statement from President Tompkins stating that he would recommend the 15-week calendar choice that the Senate had drafted and defeated because it more closely fits the boundary conditions.
  - (2) passed Proposal 17-99 to hold professional staff and faculty advisory referenda on 14 versus 15-week semester options.
  - (3) passed an amended Proposal 15-99, Amendment to the 1999-2000 Academic Calendar. During the winter quarter of 1999, the Christmas break will begin at the end of classes on Wednesday, December 22. Classes will resume on Thursday, January 6, 2000.
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### 1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

President Seely called University Senate Meeting 308 to order at 5:32 p.m. on Wednesday, 17 February 1999, in Room B45 EERC.

Secretary Glime called roll. Absent were representatives from Army/Air Force ROTC, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Institute of Wood Research, Mining Engineering, Institute of Materials Processing, Keweenaw Research Center, Academic Services-Engineering, and Enrollment Management. Liaisons in attendance were Ted Soldan (Staff Council), Ginger Chateaufeuf (GSC), and Anthony Moretti (USG).

### 2. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Guests included Fred Dobney (Provost), Marcia Goodrich (*Tech Topics*), Marty Auer (Civil & Environmental Engineering), George Fox (Manager of Administrative Computing), Steve Seidel (Computer Science), and Mark Chateaufeuf (GSC).

### 3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Nesbitt MOVED and Ouellette 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 307

Senator Gopal pointed out that the word order had been inverted in the last sentence of Item 8B in the Minutes of Meeting 307. It should read, "Seely asked that Senators provide him with such statements and input on the summer calendar."

Lutzke MOVED and Pennington seconded the motion to approve the corrected minutes of Meeting 307. The motion PASSED on voice vote with no dissent.

### 5. REPORT FROM SENATE PRESIDENT

President Seely stated that Proposal 16-97, Minors in Degree Programs, and Proposal 11-99, 14-Week Academic Calendar, had been forwarded to the Administration. [**Appendices B and C**]

Seely announced that all Senators and Alternates will receive materials on threatening and violent behavior for comment. If no concerns are raised by the next meeting, Proposal 1-97 will go to the Administration for approval. He has been holding this Proposal because Senators had expressed the desire to see the procedures before forwarding the proposal.

Seely then reviewed recent discussions regarding Proposal 11-99. He had asked the Administration to act with dispatch on the proposal. He had met with the Provost and had a phone conversation with Board Chair Jim Mitchell. Mitchell had subsequently explored a compromise with the students to no avail.

Seely proceeded to read a letter to the Senate from President Tompkins. **[Appendix D]** Tompkins stated that there appears to be no mandate for the 14- vs. 15-week calendar. Therefore, he will recommend the 15-week calendar because it fits the boundary conditions more closely. He will forward the 14-week calendar (Proposal 11-99, passed by the Senate) to the Board with his rejection. Seely will then present arguments for the 14-week calendar to the Board of Control.

The calendar the President will recommend is the 15-week calendar that was drafted in response to Senate concerns (Proposal 10-99). It has no holiday for Good Friday, a 3 p.m. dismissal for Homecoming, and K-Day holiday on Friday.

Seely added that at Michigan State University any person can work with a supervisor or faculty member to be excused for any religious celebration and that such a policy should be considered.

Senator Pegg asked if it means that a person could be excused on Friday to go downstate for Easter Sunday.

Seely responded that it did not; it was similar to a complaint a student raised that he/she couldn't be held responsible for a lab that was not held due to K-Day. It needed to be worked out among individuals concerned.

## **6. NEW BUSINESS**

President Seely introduced the new Proposals 16-99, Development Leave for Professional Staff, and 18-99, Amendment to Academic Distinction Policy. **[Appendices E and F]**

Senator Barna spoke regarding Proposal 17-99, Advisory Referenda on 14 Versus 15-Week Semester Options. **[Appendix G]** He stated that he believes he has a legal and ethical obligation to represent his constituents to the best of his ability. He also has a legal and ethical obligation to protect the confidentiality of his constituents if they so desire it. There is some legal protection in carrying out the duties of our office as elected representative. Therefore we need the secret ballot to protect us and that is why the Senate Constitution calls for a secret ballot if **any Senator** requests it. As elected representatives we have the ability to carry out heated debate, yet maintain collegiality afterwards. He already has voted the wishes of his constituents and would not change that vote without new information, hence the call for a referendum. He believes that Proposal 17-99 must be treated as an emergency proposal in response to the President's statements on the radio suggesting that the Senate acted in self-interest and did not represent its constituents.

Provost Dobney stated that the President's concern is that there is no assurance that Senators voted the voice of their constituents. He pointed out that this was not a statement of the Administration, but was a statement by the President.

Senator Nordberg stated that he had no difficulty polling his constituents on this issue. The referendum may have the opposite effect because there would be no names or departments associated with the vote.

President Seely stated that votes would be a count only. We could also poll the staff.

Barna stated that there would be new information with a staff vote. Furthermore, the faculty vote would be proportional whereas the Senate vote is not. Therefore, the vote could go the opposite way or be more overpowering in proportion.

Senator Pegg asked if there is any way that anyone present could inform us why the President thought that the vote was not representative. He added that his department had been very busy with hiring and that comments began coming to him after the vote.

Senator D. Reed complimented Bruce Barna on his efforts and stated that his comments to the Senate regarding the status of the calendar situation were perfectly appropriate. There is the appearance of the risk of retribution in a vote such as this, so he feels that the decision for a secret ballot was the right choice. He questioned why a majority of six on a faculty referendum on the general education program was considered a clear mandate whereas a majority of four in the Senate was considered as no mandate.

Seely explained that the President had considered it a lack of mandate because the campus as a whole did not give clear direction, not because the Senate did not.

Senator Snyder stated that many students don't feel that the USG represents their views very well. His discussions with students suggest that they overwhelmingly are in favor of the 14-week semester. They don't want to start in mid-August.

Senator Suryanarayana stated that we need a referendum of the students to get their opinion of 14 vs. 15 weeks. He had suggested several weeks ago that we should have a referendum of the faculty and had been told there was no time.

Senator Shapton stated that the previous student referendum asked if it is good to honor all the holidays and everyone said yes. His students are concerned about starting before Labor Day or in mid August. He has also asked employers and those offering co-ops if it would bother them to lose students the last two weeks of August. Their response is that after spending the time to train the students, they want them to stay until Labor Day. Many of his constituents told him that he should study the situation and vote his conscience.

Senator Gale asked students and faculty about their preference for quarters or semesters. The students, of course, preferred quarters. The faculty said if this is what the calendar will look like, they prefer quarters.

Seely stated that there is no mechanism for a controlled referendum with the students. Therefore, the CICC saw no real value in a student referendum. The officers met and raised a concern that having any sort of referendum at this stage sets a precedent on how to handle Senate decisions that are close. Most Senate votes have not been close.

Barna stated that we have heard a lot about the need to support certain forms of the calendar because of the boundary conditions. He compared this to promising to take his family on a boat trip the following summer, but when the time arrived none of them wanted to go; nevertheless he would force them to go because that was what was promised.

Seely stated that if the referendum shows strong support for 14-week semesters, the President indicated he would seriously consider supporting it when he addresses the Board.

Nordberg stated that the issue goes beyond the question of right vs. wrong. It has become a political issue. If we vote down the proposal for a referendum, it suggests that the Senate wants to maintain control.

Dobney apologized if anything he said suggested that the Senate had acted in any way irresponsibly. That was not his intent. He stated that if there is a close vote for 14 weeks the Board is likely to go for a 15-week semester and create an even greater rift with the Board. If we really want the Board to change, we need a student referendum [supporting 14 weeks].

Suryanarayana stated that MSU passed the semester vote by one vote and the Administration accepted it. Can the Administration just throw out our proposal because they don't agree? The Senate has done the best of its ability. Therefore there is no further need for a referendum.

Blanning MOVED and Sutter seconded the motion to approve Proposal 17-99.

Pickens asked what the vote had been on the Calendar Committee. Seely stated that it had been unanimous among the faculty, but the students voted against it because they did not favor semesters.

Senator Blanning stated that many faculty are following the debate closely and are therefore well informed on the issues.

Senator Sutter stated that President Seely had originally stated to the Senate that any calendar has to be proposed by the Senate. Now the Administration seems to have the final say.

Seely explained that the Constitution states that "normally" the Senate proposal will go to the Board with Administrative support. However, the Board can do whatever it wants. In this case, the President can reject our proposal and send one, but the Senate will also send one. The President has chosen to support the Senate's alternate proposal and not the one proposed by the CICC.

Senator Tampas stated that he was confident some method can be developed to get a fair ballot from the students.

Anthony Moretti (USG) stated that the USG had held an email referendum and the majority of responses had come the first day; we can't be sure that the students were actually informed in making their responses.

Seely responded to Tampas that he doesn't feel we can order the students to conduct a referendum.

Barna stated that faculty had suggested his proposal include a student referendum but he had understood that the CICC was doing it and had dropped it from the proposal.

Seely responded that the CICC had dropped the student referendum due to lack of any mechanism to carry out a controlled ballot.

Nordberg requested that results of the referendum be reported by department.

Suryanarayana stated that it would muddy the picture by including the professional staff. Whose views do we represent and report?

Pennington MOVED and Nadgorny seconded the motion to consider Proposal 17-99 as an emergency proposal.

Dobney explained that the Administration usually supports the faculty views, but the structure of this process had made it more complex and difficult to do. He emphasized that President Seely has done a great deal to mitigate issues with the President.

D. Reed stated that he did not remember ever voting on the format of the calendar in the CICC.

Seely responded that there had been a show of hands vote at the end of the November meeting and the students stood unanimously against the proposed calendar because they opposed the move to semesters.

D. Reed stated that he has never understood why the promise to the students had to be honored but that those promises to the faculty were not.

Seely added that he had explained to the Board of Control that the Senate had asked at each presentation from the CICC if the presentation was the final outcome and each time had been told no. On every occasion the Senate had voiced concerns over issues that are now causing the calendar problems.

The motion to treat Proposal 17-99 as an emergency proposal PASSED by secret ballot with 18 yes votes, 13 no votes, and one abstention.

Senator Ouellette MOVED that the statement regarding the revote by Academic Senators only (last line of proposal) should be removed because it was redundant with the Constitution.

Seely explained that it was put there to clarify because the referendum called for both faculty and professional staff to vote. There was no second to Ouellette's motion.

Pickens stated that he was not sure what making this a staff issue would do.

Lutzke stated that the faculty are the most concerned with the issue.

Sutter MOVED and Gale seconded the motion to amend Proposal 17-99 to contain two questions: 1. Do you prefer quarters or semesters, and 2. If we have semesters, do you prefer they be 14 weeks or 15 weeks.

Senator Long stated that the vast majority of the professional staff are VERY concerned and involved in the academic calendar. Suggesting that there is no valid use to poll the professional staff is silly.

Barna stated that we have already resolved the question of semesters.

Seely stated that there had already been considerable time invested in the move to semesters.

Seely ruled that the full Senate should vote on the amendment. The amendment to pose two questions, including a choice for quarters vs. semesters, FAILED on voice vote with some assenting votes.

Pickens MOVED and Snyder seconded the motion to include only academic faculty in the referendum.

Barna stated that the calendar affects scheduling and lots of other areas related to professional staff.

Pennington added that there is no harm in getting all the information we can get.

Senator Chavis stated that the Professional staff often are made to feel like a nonentity; they have a great investment in what happens.

Pegg stated that he is not so happy about a referendum, especially if it separates the faculty and staff. He suggested we could assess our constituents and reconsider the issue at the next meeting.

Seely reminded the Senate that a yes vote is to remove the professional staff from the referendum. The motion FAILED on voice vote with some assenting votes. Therefore, the professional staff will be included in the referendum if 17-99 passes.

Secretary Glime stated that the most important piece of the puzzle is how the students feel about starting before Labor Day and we need to know the students' feelings before we [faculty and staff] can vote.

Dobney stated that the billing office has all the student addresses and we could mail a ballot.

D. Reed asked how the 15-week calendar affects facilities, since this was a consideration for the Y2K calendar. Seely explained that there would normally be a two-week break at the end of summer.

Suryanarayana stated that we can ask our constituents if they want a referendum.

The voice vote was unclear; the motion to approve the amended Proposal 17-99 PASSED by show of hands with 17 yes and 12 no votes.

Nordberg stated that we need a student referendum.

Glime suggested that we should not bill it as a referendum because it should not be considered a vote. We are gathering information only.

Seely stated that he would go with Anthony Moretti to the USG meeting after the Senate meeting.

## **7. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Proposal 15-99, Amendment of the 1999-2000 Academic Calendar [See minutes, page 7883, for a copy of this proposal.]**

Seely presented two possible alternatives to Proposal 15-99: 1. The Senate recommends the following changes in the 1999-2000 academic calendar. During the winter term of 1999, the Christmas break will begin at the end of classes on December 23. The last week of classes before that break will be structured as follows. Monday classes shall meet on Saturday, December 18; Tuesday classes on Monday, December 22, etc. Classes will resume on January 10, 2000. 2. The Senate recommends the following changes in the 1999-2000 academic calendar. During the winter term of 1999, the Christmas break will begin at the end of classes on Wednesday, December 22. Classes will resume on Thursday, January 6, 2000.

George Fox (Manager of Administrative Computing) stated that either options would be valid solutions to the Y2K potential problems. He stated that some other universities are starting classes on Wednesday instead of Monday to avoid the early Y2K changeover days.

Snyder MOVED and Nesbitt seconded the motion to bring Proposal 15-99 from the table.

Sloan MOVED and Pennington seconded the motion to amend Proposal 15-99 by replacing it with alternative 2.

Senator D. Reed asked why not have four extra days at Christmas and start on 10 January.

Senator Sloan stated that there is a lot of pressure with the late dismissal at Christmas by having Saturday classes and travel on 24 December. Most classes will have a test the last week before Christmas, adding to the pressure.

Senator Snyder stated that it is better for parents to bring students back on a weekend for classes on Monday (10 January). Students will probably take off both partial weeks.

Senator Ouellette stated that Senator Snyder has too low an opinion of the students. He is also ignoring the fact that Proposal 15-99 would have students going home right on top of Christmas when there are serious safety considerations like those considered in setting the Thanksgiving holiday.

Sloan stated that continuing classes until 23 December forces students to get back on 24 December and can have unfortunate results.

Provost Dobney asked Long and Glime what problems there are for labs.

Senator Long responded that they can live with this problem for one year. Secretary Glime agreed.

The voice vote was unclear. Senator D. Reed called for a secret ballot.

The motion to amend Proposal 15-99 by replacing it with alternative 2 PASSED by secret ballot with 13 yes, 11 no, and one abstention.

Seely presented a calendar showing that in the year 2000 the summer session would end 18 August and fall term would begin 28 August. He stated that Facilities has requested a minimum of one week between summer and fall when the dorms are closed so that they can clean and prepare the facilities for the next academic year. Because of fall orientation, this would require summer school ending two weeks before the start of classes.

Snyder MOVED and Vanden Avond seconded the motion to amend Proposal 15-99 regarding summer classes to read "Summer classes for the 1999-2000 academic year will begin on Tuesday, May 30, and run for ten weeks, with the last day of summer term falling on August 11."

D. Reed stated that this amendment is not appropriate unless we have a 15-week calendar.

Senator Barna stated that this would present a problem in all years under the 15-week calendar.

Seely responded that normally there would be three weeks of break available for summer and that facilities only needs two weeks at the end of the summer. The beginning of the summer does not present the same problem.

The motion to amend Proposal 15-99 to specify the dates of the summer term FAILED on voice vote with some assent, but with the understanding that the issue could be revisited after the configuration of the semester calendar is set.

Snyder called the question on the main motion to approve Proposal 15-99. There were no objections.

The motion to approve Proposal 15-99, Amendment of the 1999-2000 Academic Calendar, passed as amended [replacing the original motion with the text of alternative 2: The Senate recommends the following changes in the 1999-2000 academic calendar. During the winter term of 1999, the Christmas break will begin at the end of classes on Wednesday, December 22. Classes will resume on Thursday, January 6, 2000.].

**B. Proposal 9-98, M. S. in Engineering Science (Environmental). [See minutes, page 7849, for a copy of this proposal.]**

Senator Nesbitt presented Proposal 9-98, stating that the committee had discussed it and endorsed the proposal. There had been two concerns. There was a minor concern whether the library resources were sufficient and this concern had been passed on to the President. The other concern related to its name as an engineering degree. However, the committee has no reservations in passing forward the Proposal.

Nordberg MOVED and Blanning seconded the motion to approve Proposal 9-98.

Senator Leifer asked if the Finance Committee had reviewed it.

Senator Barna stated that he could report the analysis he had run in the spring, but the committee had not addressed it. Barna presented the costs per student and stated that the proposal suggests that students would be put in classes that are already undersubscribed, so there is no net cost. [Appendix H] These students would also take a large number of undergraduate courses. Therefore the best estimate is probably about half undergraduate and half graduate cost, resulting in about \$4-5000 per student.

Senator Nadgorny asked how many students were expected to enroll in this program.

Marty Auer (Civil and Environmental Engineering) stated that there are 40-50 graduate students in the department now. This group would constitute about 25%, or about 20 students. He added that it would be an excellent feeder into their Ph. D. program, which doesn't require a B.S. in Engineering.

Leifer stated that for 10 students the estimated cost would be about \$74,000, or \$7000 per student.

Barna stated that since these students pay more tuition than an undergraduate, the net cost is less than \$7000.

Auer stated that this program is more involved with people in the sciences, including already biology, chemistry, forestry, physics, geology, and social sciences. It probably would attract students who would not otherwise come to MTU.

Senator D. Reed asked which title was intended for the program, since the agenda listed it as M. S. in Engineering Science (Environmental) and the proposal itself was labeled M. S. in Environmental Engineering Science.

Auer stated that they had originally proposed the title of Environmental Engineering Science, but that Sung Lee had suggested the title Engineering Science (Environmental) because it could provide a path for others to follow, e.g. Engineering Science (Metallurgy) without requiring the more complex approval pathway at the state level.

Provost Dobney stated that MTU has never had a degree rejected at the state level, so that is not a compelling argument against the name of the program.

Barna stated that these students will never proceed to attain an engineering certificate and he is uncomfortable with calling it engineering.

Auer stated that the proposal doesn't say they will never get the certification, but that certification is just not the intent of that program.

Barna countered that students won't have the engineering background to pass the ABET standards.

Senator Snyder stated that the name of environmental science has a meaning and use that is usually very broad and interdisciplinary and this program has no relation to that sort of environmental science.

Auer agreed that that was the idea when they developed the proposal; they didn't want it that broad. They wanted to give students the opportunity to apply their science in an engineering context.

Nesbitt stated that the degree couldn't be under the umbrella of the engineering registry because the students wouldn't have the courses and couldn't take the exam.

Dobney asked if these students would be called engineers.

Auer responded they would not; they are looking for students with other skills who can work on engineering projects.

Nesbitt stated that he assumed that if the program is called engineering then students need the basic requirements of engineering to meet ABET requirements, but he can argue on both sides of this issue.

Seely stated that Engineering science has a specific meaning and that environmental science does also. Therefore, we are torn between the two titles. However, what is in the proposal is more important. It purports to combine scientists interested in the environment with some aspects of engineering.

Nesbitt added that ABET doesn't look at graduate programs. However, an engineer should have the things a B.S. requires in engineering. He has reservations, but he doesn't think we should hold up the proposal on this point.

Seely stated that the title of Engineering Science (Environment) is misleading.

Auer suggested that the name of Environmental Engineering Science is what was originally proposed. Table 2 in the proposal needs to be changed.

Secretary Glime asked if there are similar programs with names that could be used.

Auer responded that several are provided in Table 1, but none really fits the program here.

Gale MOVED and Nadgorny seconded the motion to table this proposal. The motion to table PASSED on voice vote with no opposition.

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

Gale MOVED to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

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