

# The University Senate Of Michigan Technological University

## Minutes of Meeting 343

13 December 2000

### Synopsis: The Senate

- (1) heard that Proposal 13-00 will not be supported by the administration.
  - (2) heard that President Tompkins approved Proposal 2-01.
  - (3) heard a report from the Benefits Liaison Group.
  - (4) heard a report from the Fringe Benefit Cost Recovery Planning Committee.
  - (5) approved Proposals 6-01 and 7-01.
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### 1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

President Keen called University Senate Meeting 343 to order at 5:33 p.m. on Wednesday, 13 December 2000, in Room B45 EERC.

Secretary Pickens called roll. Absent were At-Large Senator Beck and representatives from Chemical Engineering, Education, Fine Arts, Materials Science and Engineering, Physics, Keweenaw Research Center, Finance and Advancement, Human Resources and Facilities Management, Research and Graduate School/University Relations/Administrative Offices, and Student Affairs and Educational Opportunity. Liaisons in attendance were Anup Bandivadekar (GSC), and Josh Bennett (USG).

### 2. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Visitors included Kent Wray (Provost), Steve Bowen (Vice Provost for Instruction), Steve Carr (Computer Science), Linda Ott (Computer Science), and Marcia Goodrich (*Tech Topics*).

### 3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

President Keen proposed a new item **6. Committee Business/Reports** A. Benefits Liaison Group, B. Fringe Benefit Cost Recovery Planning Committee, C. Curricular Policy Committee. Reed MOVED and Ftaclas seconded the motion to approve the agenda as amended. Motion to approve PASSED 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 342

President Keen asked for corrections to the minutes of Meeting 342. Senator Fox noted that he was recorded as absent but was in fact in attendance. Senator Pegg stated that he was not fully quoted in the discussion concerning proposal 3-01, Revision of Senate Bylaws, on page 8776. This proposal deals with the expiration of Senate proposals that are not approved within a specified time frame. He asked that his reason for opposing the proposal be included. His opposition to the proposal was because he believed that proposals which have neither been approved nor rejected by the Senate should remain as reminders of unfinished business. There were no objections to the minutes as corrected.

### 5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Keen reported that the Vice President for Research Search Committee met on December 13 and elected Walt Milligan as the chair and Sue Bagley as the associate chair.

The Space Committee met on December 11. The movement of the Senate office was discussed, but no decision was made.

Keen reported that Peck Cho is planning a sabbatical and questioned the status of his role as Ombudsperson. Keen is working on a response.

The Board of Control (BOC) will meet on December 15. The Senate Officers will meet with Bronce Henderson, Vice Chair of the BOC, prior to the Board meeting. Keen will present an update on Senate activities and issues during the meeting.

Keen met with President Tompkins on December 8. They discussed the Strategic Plan at length. The subject of the discussion was a draft Senate proposal asking for a delay of the plan to allow more faculty and staff participation. They concluded that the request for the delay should come from the 9-person Strategic Planning Working Group.

Keen met with Provost Wray on December 8. They discussed the work of the Strategic Planning Working Group and Keen's discussion with President Tompkins.

The Senate Officers met with Provost Wray on December 8. They discussed the process for tracking Senate proposals. The Senate office is working on updating that information and posting it on the web. Conflict of interest policies must be updated because of modifications to the conflict of interest regulations of the federal government. The Research Policy Committee is working on the issue. The separation proposals were discussed. They have been with the University attorney, Andrea Dixon of Butzel-Long, for an extended period, and her opinion is expected as soon as possible.

Keen, Ellen Horsch, and Debbie Lassila met with Andrea Dixon of Butzel-Long on December 8 to discuss Proposal 7-00, Tenure, Promotion, and Reappointment Procedures. They identified several areas where there might be difficulties. The proposal is currently being evaluated by Andrea Dixon.

Keen reported that Proposal 13-00, Supplemental TIAA-CREF Contribution for Eligible Employees to Assist with Post-Retirement Health Insurance Costs, will not be supported by the administration. **[Appendix B]** There are not funds available to cover employees earning more than \$50,000.

Keen reported that the administration has implemented/approved 4 of the 5 points of Proposal 22-00, Recommendations on Medical and Health Insurance Benefits. The Fringe Benefit Committee is working with the Benefits Office on the fifth point.

The Provost has indicated that he intends to create the Budget Advisory Group (BAG) to provide input from the Senate on budgetary issues. This group replaces the Budget Liaison Group, which served the same function last year.

Proposal 2-01, PhD Program in Forest Molecular Genetics and Biotechnology, has been approved by President Tompkins. **[Appendix C]**

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

### **A. Benefits Liaison Group**

Senator Pickens updated the Senate on the activities of the Benefit Liaison Group (BLG).

The BLG is starting the process of identifying the reasons why our payments for facility (mostly hospital) and professional (mostly payments to doctors) was much higher per capita than the average of other Michigan public universities last year. Possible reasons include: MTU may pay a larger part of the bills than others; MTU may pay more for the same services; or covered individuals at MTU may buy more health care services. Blue Cross/Blue Shield is helping us to identify the causes, and the BLG will work on this problem in 2001.

Senator Pegg asked several questions about the increased cost of health care. He asked which of the three possible reasons for higher cost at MTU seemed most likely, and suggested that it was probably that we buy more health care services. Pickens responded that the biggest single reason is probably that our health insurance covers more of our medical expenses than the other universities. Pickens did agree that it is likely that a part of the difference is that we buy more health care than employees at the other universities.

Pegg then asked if there was any consideration of buying insurance rather than being self insured, and if money could be saved by purchasing insurance. Pickens responded that he had no specific information on the topic. However, economic theory would suggest that it would cost slightly more than we now pay, but that being insured would smooth out the fluctuations in health care cost.

The BLG was notified by our life insurance provider that costs would go up by \$.03 per \$1,000 of coverage. We were very displeased with this information both because we did not like to see costs increase and because the notification was too late to be included on the Tech Select form. Ingrid Cheney contacted our health insurance consultant, AON, and they agreed to pay the difference. This saved the employees and MTU a total of \$42,000.

### **B. Fringe Benefit Cost Recovery Planning Committee**

Senator Pickens notified the Senate that the administration had decided to implement the preferred option by the Fringe Benefit Cost Recovery Planning Committee for fringe benefit cost recovery. This option has the fringe benefit rate for summer faculty set at 25% and the rate for all other employees set at 39.9%. This option includes having soft-dollar employees take holidays on their research accounts, but vacation and sick leave are paid from a separate account of the R&I Fund. Complete details of the committee's activities and their final report are on their web page (<http://www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/fringe/index.html>).

Pickens thanked President Tompkins, Provost Wray, Vice President for Finance and Administration McGarry, and Vice Provost for Instruction Bowen for their support of the committee's recommendation. Choosing this set of rates for fringe benefit cost recovery will not recover the full cost of benefits for soft-dollar employees, but this payment by the general fund recognizes the many contributions that employees funded by grants and contracts provide to MTU. It also enhances MTU's competitive position when applying for grants and contracts.

### **C. Curricular Policy Committee**

The administration has asked the Curricular Policy Committee to consider the residence requirement, and to suggest changes to MTU's policy if appropriate.

Senator Snyder reported on the residence requirement at MTU. Currently, MTU only requires that a student be a resident for the last two semesters of academic work. The policy does not specify the course load during this period, so students could take a very small number of credits at MTU and receive a degree. For distance learning, there must be at least 30 credits of 3000 or 4000 classes to receive a degree. For a second degree at MTU there is a 32 credit requirement if the first degree was at another institution.

Snyder conducted a survey of other institutions and found that their residence requirements fall into two groups, those who have a requirement of a certain number of years and those who require a certain number of credits. Generally, the surveyed programs required at least one and at most two years of full-time registration.

We need to decide if we want a credit hour policy or a time in residence policy, and we also need to select the minimum requirements for whichever approach is selected. Senator Snyder asked for input from the Senate to the Committee.

Senator Hodek asked if there had been cases where the current residence requirement had caused problems. Snyder responded that several advisors from the College of Engineering had expressed concern to the Registrar's Office about the residence requirement. Both Linda Ott and Kent Wray related recent experiences where having a more stringent residence requirement would have been useful in addressing

student requests. The distance learning staff has also expressed support to Senator Snyder for an updated residence standard.

## 7. NEW BUSINESS

### A. Proposal 6-01, Recommendations on Distance Learning [Appendix D]

Hodek MOVED and Kunz seconded the motion to approve Proposal 6-01.

Seidel MOVED and Pennington seconded the motion to amend item 2 by striking "establish or." There was no further discussion. The motion to amend PASSED with no dissent. Keen ruled the amendment as editorial. There were no objections.

Senator Pegg asked if intellectual properties were protected by this proposal. Keen responded that it was not included in the proposal, but noted that the proposal does specify that this issue will be dealt with in campus-wide discussions at a later date. Furthermore, Pauline Moore, who chaired the committee, has volunteered to facilitate this process. Pegg responded that, until intellectual properties are addressed, the proposal is incomplete in his opinion. Senator Snyder noted that we are each free to copyright our intellectual properties. Senator Pennington clarified that this proposal is not to specify how distance learning is managed, but rather sets up a structure to oversee the growth of distance learning. Senator Pegg reaffirmed his discomfort with the lack of inclusion of intellectual properties in the proposal.

Senator Williams expressed concern with the structure of the Distance Learning Implementation Committee and its lack of faculty representation. Williams MOVED and Pegg seconded the motion to amend item 3 as follows.

*"...and three faculty members engaged in delivering distance learning. The latter three will be chosen by the University Senate and the service terms shall be staggered."*

Pennington noted that he would prefer to see the makeup of the committee evolve with the maturation of distance learning programs.

The motion to amend PASSED by a show of hands 11 to 8.

Senator Fox asked how many people were currently involved with distance learning at MTU. Vice Provost for Instruction Bowen provided enrollment figures. 1999-2000 enrollment was 504 courses, 2000-1 enrollment is 888, and projected 2001-2 enrollment is 2,347. Bowen commented that the development of the distance learning program was being motivated by the faculty offering the classes rather than because of administrative leadership. Senator Fox noted the explosive growth of distance learning nationally, especially in the military.

Pennington MOVED and Strong seconded the motion to amend item 4 as follows.

*"4. Campus-wide discussions concerning DL at Michigan Tech*

*The campus-wide discussions will be facilitated by the DLIC, which will report regularly to the University Senate."*

The motion to amend PASSED with no dissent.

Senator Long asked for a ruling concerning whether the amendments to item 4 and item 3 were editorial or substantive.

Keen ruled the amendment to item 4 as editorial. There were no objections. He ruled the amendment to item 3 as substantive.

An extensive discussion concerning the merits of treating the proposal as an emergency proposal followed. Vice Provost Bowen noted that a \$500,000 gift from a client to construct studios to deliver

distance learning is waiting for an administrative contact, which would be created by this proposal. In response to a question by Senator Snyder, Provost Wray informed the Senate that a proposal to create a Dean of Distance Learning is on the Board of Control agenda for next week, but that he would remove the agenda item from the BOC agenda if the Senate did not act on this proposal at this meeting.

Senator Pegg noted that the proposal allows an appropriate administrator other than a Dean of Distance Education, and that this approach could be used to secure the grant. Senator Snyder responded that he believed that the Provost has acted in good faith, and that he does not need our support to appoint a new dean. Senator Pickens expressed discomfort with the Provost acting on his own to appoint a new Dean, and supported the treatment of the proposal as an emergency proposal. Senator Strong expressed significant discomfort with treating the proposal as an emergency proposal, and noted that the person to fill the Dean of Distance Learning must be known. Why not appoint that person as acting until the next Senate meeting rather than rushing the proposal through?

Vice Provost Bowen commented that the NCA Accreditation report requires a progress report on creating an administrative structure to support distance learning at MTU by February 1, 2001. Provost Bowen is to write the response to NCA, and he hopes to use the Senate report as the basis for the report to NCA.

Snyder MOVED and Kunz seconded the motion to treat Proposal 6-01 as an emergency proposal. The motion PASSED on a secret ballot vote 21 to 6.

Vice Provost Bowen shared historical and projected enrollment by department in distance learning programs. Senator Martin asked what departments other than those offering distance learning programs would be involved in delivering instruction in the distance learning programs. Bowen responded that the Math Department would provide a substantial portion of these programs. For the Tech 2000 curriculum, General Motors has asked us if we could provide the general education classes.

Senator Pegg asked for clarification about the membership of the DLIC under item 3. The wording of concern was:

The DLIC would be comprised of the following members: the Director of Extended University Programs; the Director of Distance Learning-College of Engineering, and comparable future positions; .....

Pegg's question concerned which members the "and comparable future positions" referred to. President Keen ruled that the comparable future positions applied only to the position Director of Distance Learning-College of Engineering, and not other similar positions in other colleges, departments, or administrative units.

Snyder MOVED and Fox seconded the motion to call the question. Motion carried with no dissent.

The motion to approve Proposal 6-01 PASSED with dissent.

## **B. Proposal 7-01, PhD Program in Computer Science [Appendix E]**

Kunz MOVED and Seidel seconded the motion to approve Proposal 7-01.

Senator Strong asked what the implications for the existing Computational Science and Engineering PhD program were if this program is approved. Department Chair Ott responded that the existing program would still be available. Some students would fit better into the new program, but there would still be sufficient enrollment in the Computational Science and Engineering program to maintain its viability.

The motion to approve PASSED with no dissent.

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

Pennington MOVED and Kulkarni seconded the motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by James B. Pickens  
Secretary of the University Senate