The University Senate Of Michigan Technological University

Minutes of Meeting 345

14 February 2001

Synopsis: The Senate

(1) heard a report on the Academic Dismissal Policy from Marty Janners.

(2) heard a report on Information Technology from Jim Cross.

(3) approved Proposal 9-01.

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1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL
President Keen called University Senate Meeting 345 to order at 5:37 p.m. on Wednesday, 14 February 2001, in Room B45 EERC.

Secretary Pickens called roll. Absent were At-Large Senator Adolphs and representatives from Chemical Engineering, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Computer Science, Humanities, Materials Science and Engineering, Mining and Materials Processing Engineering, Keweenaw Research Center, Finance and Advancement, and Student Affairs and Educational Opportunity. Liaisons in attendance were Anup Bandivadekar (GSC), Josh Bennett (USG), and Becky Christianson (Staff Council).

2. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS
Visitors included Kent Wray (Provost), Dave Reed (Research), Barry Solomon (Social Sciences), Bruce Mork (GFC), Jim Moore (SFWP), Joel Chitwood (student), Dan Roblee (*Daily Mining Gazette*), Andrew Hart (SMA), Mike Dolan (Systems Administrator), Dave Torrey (Center for Experimental Computation), Chris Williams (Systems Administrator), and Marcia Goodrich (*Tech Topics*).

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
President Keen presented the agenda. There were no objections to the agenda. **[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 344
President Keen asked for corrections to the minutes of Meeting 344. There were none and the minutes were declared approved.

5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT
President Keen requested a moment of silence in memory of Presidential Professor Barry Kunz.

Proposals 5-01, MS Program in Applied Science Education, and 8-01, Financial Reporting Standards, were transmitted to the administration for approval. **[Appendices B and C]**

Proposals 7-01, PhD Program in Computer Science, and 2-01, PhD Program in Forest Molecular Genetics and Biotechnology, have been approved by the Academic Affairs Officers Committee. **[Appendix D]**

Keen reminded the Senate that the Senate needs nominees to serve on the quadrennial evaluation of Dean Warrington. The Senate is to elect a representative to the evaluation committee, and volunteers are needed.

President Keen had an extended conversation with Graduate Faculty Council (GFC) President Bruce Mork. The GFC is recognized by Board of Control (BOC) policy, and thus can play a role in developing relevant policy.

The Budget Advisory Group (BAG) met on January 18 and February 8. The BAG is currently in an educational phase, and will shift to budget policy issues after this phase.

The Space Committee met on January 18.

The Vice President for Research Search Committee met on January 22 and 29 and February 5. The advertisement and a job description have been approved. A public forum was held on February 12 to consider job qualifications. Attendance was very low.

The Senate Executive Committee met on January 31. They discussed the status of committee work, with the focus being to avoid a year-end surge of Senate proposals. The Michigan Tech Enterprise Park (MTEP) was discussed at length, with topics covered including: conflict of interest policy for the MTEP Board; MTU funding for MTEP; faculty representation on the MTEP Board; and concerns about student employment by companies in MTEP. The relationship between MTU and MSX in distance education was also discussed.

The Strategic Planning Working Group met on January 19 and 26 and February 2 and 9. There will be a retreat with the BOC during spring break.

Keen met with Provost Wray on January 23 and 30 and February 8. Senator Snyder also attended the last two meetings. They discussed the Tenure, Promotion, and Reappointment Procedures, and hope to have a draft for Senate consideration soon.

Keen met with President Tompkins on February 6. Their discussion focused on MTEP.

The Senate had an informal meeting with Provost Wray and President Tompkins on February 12, where MTEP was the major topic of discussion.

6. COMMITTEE BUSINESS/REPORTS
A. Academic Dismissal Policy -- Marty Janners
Vice Provost for Student Affairs Janners presented a report concerning the implementation of the new Academic Dismissal Policy that the Senate passed in May of 1999 **[Appendix E]**. Janners reported that there were a large number of students dismissed after fall term for inadequate academic performance.

Dr. Janners proposed two rule changes to the Senate Instructional Policy Committee when they revisited the dismissal policy as part of semester conversion in 1999. The first change was to limit the number of times that a student could retake a class from four to three. The second change was to implement a rule that students must make some academic progress each term or they would be eligible for dismissal. She noted that a significant number of students were passing no or very few credits under the old policy, but could manipulate the rules to remain eligible.

An analysis to compare the dismissals under the prior policy and the new policy showed that 439 students were eligible for dismissal under the new standards, while only 135 would have been eligible for dismissal under the old policy. However, 292 of the 439 students eligible for dismissal had received prior warning of poor academic performance. Janners did note that academic performance deteriorated modestly overall fall semester, with spring 2000 grades averaging 2.89 and fall 2000 averaging 2.82.

A student can appeal the decision if they are dismissed for poor academic performance. 290 appeals were made, with 80 automatic appeals granted. The automatic appeals are generally applied to students making progress by improving their grades but who are still technically eligible for dismissal. 210 other students submitted letters appealing their dismissal. Of the 290 appeals, 214 were accepted and 76 appeals were

denied. 149 students did not appeal. The total number of students who did not enroll for spring semester because of the dismissal process was 225. 71 of the students were in their first term at MTU. These students earned below a GPA of one. Sixty-two of the students were first-time students, and 51 of the first-time students were expelled after the appeals process.

Janners discussed some possible reasons for dismissals. The length of the semesters did not seem to be a factor based on student appeal letters. Although there is concern about decreasing admission standards, students across the range of high school GPA and standardized test scores were dismissed. Janners emphasized that the most important issue was student attitudes. Some students practice external attribution, where they blame conditions outside themselves for their poor performance. Another issue is lack of executive skills, where students do not allocate their time to succeed in all of their responsibilities. Instead, they excel at some aspects of their responsibilities while ignoring others. A third cause of poor performance is substance abuse, primarily beer. Some students also manipulate the system to barely stay eligible. One technique is to ask instructors to change grades from unsatisfactory grades to incomplete or satisfactory grades.

B. Information Technology -- Jim Cross

Director Cross noted that, at MTU, we have a decentralized model for information technology, with systems administrators working for the individual units while Information Technology (IT) provides systems administration for the administrative units and centralized services such as network access. Related services provided by IT include teleconferencing, e-mail, telephone, and cable TV services. The total staff of IT for 1998-9 was 52.4 positions, with projections of 58 by 2004-5. The IT General Fund budget has decreased by $136,000 from 1993-4 until the present.

Cross presented data showing that the flow of data over the network has increased dramatically over time. He said that 40% of our Internet traffic is carried by Internet II. Viruses transmitted by e-mail have increased, and he asked for guidance on the role of IT in fighting viruses.

Senator Beck commented that the cost of network connections has caused significant strain on departmental budgets, and that the projected increase in network connections seem very high. MTU should not provide the capacity until the need is apparent. Physics is actually reducing network connections rather than increasing them. Cross responded that many of the connections will not be traditional workstations, but will be new technologies and equipment that use the Internet. He agreed that it is important to be careful when expanding capacity.

Cross identified several challenges, including expanding e-mail traffic, network security and hacker threats, legal and crime issues associated with the Internet, hardware and software maintenance cost increases, shifting skills needed by IT, and the growth in our distance education activity.

Senator Pickens commented that Internet II cost the General Fund $300,000 in new funds this year, and will increase to $500,000 next year. He asked how MTU got involved in Internet II, who asked for it, who approved it, and who was using it for true Internet II applications. Cross responded that Internet II was debated by the Academic Forum, and was discussed by Cross and the previous Provost. An NSF grant was funded that required President Tompkins to commit to fund Internet II after the grant funds were gone. He said that to be a national research university we need to be involved in Internet II. Pickens responded that we do need to do innovative things in information technology, but very few people are using Internet II and the money could have supported a lot more related research. Cross responded that we need Internet II to be competitive for NSF grants. Pickens responded that there are many NSF grants that do not require Internet II.

Senator Beck commented that MTU has given away a tremendous amount of free computer cycles, and questioned whether we actually have built excess capacity. Cross responded that the capability was, and should be, driven by the researchers.

Senator Snyder asked what actual cost is incurred when providing a phone connection in his lab. Cross responded that the phone system carries a tremendous volume of traffic, and noted that his unit does not turn a profit. He asserted that $13 per month was a good deal.

Senator Williams asked about the purchase of 15 thin-screened monitors costing $3,000 each. Cross responded that the order was probably to support a request from departments.

Chris Williams, the Systems Administrator for Mechanical Engineering, asked if the two fee structure for Internet connections with different speeds would continue, and Cross responded that it would. She also asked what the increase in fees would be for 2001-2. Cross responded that this issue was in the Provost's hands.

Mike Dolan asked what actions IT takes to protect the system from the constant hacker attacks and virus problems, and noted that they do not attempt to provide a fire wall against these intrusions. Cross responded that they attempt to identify activities that involve the entire network. Dolan responded that we should try to provide fire wall protection against outside attack.

C. Graduate Dean Search Committee
The draft procedures for the Graduate Dean Search have been developed by a joint task force composed of the Senate Administrative Policy Committee Chaired by Lee Oberto and a Graduate Faculty Council committee. **[Appendix F]** The search will be conducted with the draft procedures as outlined in section 6C of the minutes for Senate meeting 344, and the official procedures will be addressed by the Senate later. The committee will be composed of eight faculty, one dean, one department chair, one staff member, and one graduate student. Six of the faculty will be selected by the Graduate Faculty Council, with the remaining two selected by the Senate. President Keen asked if this procedure was acceptable to the Senate. There was no objection, and the Provost can initiate the search with these guidelines.

7. NEW BUSINESS
Proposal 9-01, Amendments to Interim Conflict of Interest Procedures [Appendix G]
The Research Policy Committee has forwarded this proposal with its support.

Barry Solomon (Research Policy Committee member) introduced the proposal and explained the rationale for the modifications. The changes were the results of experience with the earlier draft conflict of interest (COI) policy. Some changes were to make the policy less vague, some were made as a result of the transition from quarters to semesters, some were to reduce paperwork, and some were made to protect subordinates, either students or employees, from situations where they answer to the same supervisor both when working for MTU and in some other enterprise.

Beck MOVED and Blanning seconded the motion to approve Proposal 9-01.

Pickens asked about an apparent inconsistency. The background section said that the new procedures should become the COI Policy without the interim designation, but the title of the proposal retains the word interim. Solomon said that it was the intent of the Committee that it no longer be interim.

There was no further discussion.

The motion to approve Proposal 9-01 PASSED with no dissent.

8. ADJOURNMENT
Ftaclas MOVED and Beck seconded the motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

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