

**THE UNIVERSITY SENATE OF
MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY**

Minutes of Meeting 431
30 November 2005

Synopsis:

- (1) Nordberg presented proposal 6-06, request for change in board of control policy 6.4 on office of ombuds.
 - (2) Michele Miller was elected to the Distance Learning Implementation Committee.
 - (3) Beth Smock and Shalini Suryanarayana were selected as nominees from which President Mroz will select one to serve on the Faculty Distinguished Service Award Committee.
 - (4) David Flaspohler and Mahesh Gupta were selected as nominees from which President Mroz will select one to serve on the Academic Tenure Committee.
 - (5) President Sloan announced that members are urgently needed for the Faculty Review Committee.
 - (6) Hugh Gorman presented Proposal 7-06, Addition of Coursework Only (No Oral Exam) Master's Degree Plan (Plan D).
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1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

President Sloan called the University Senate Meeting 431 to order at 5:30 pm on Wednesday, 30 November 2005, in Room B45 EERC.

Secretary Glime called roll. Absent were representatives from Geological and Mining Engineering & Science, Materials Science & Engineering, and Academic Services A. Liaisons in attendance were Becky Christianson (Staff Council), Liz Van Heusden (USG), and Nick Nanninga (GSC). Army/Air Force ROTC and Academic Services C currently have no elected representatives.

2. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Guests included Bill Kennedy (Center for Teaching, Learning, & Faculty Development), Martyn Smith (Biomedical Engineering), Paul Nelson (School of Business; GFC alternate), Jackie Huntoon (Dean, Graduate School), T. Arron Kotlensky (GSC academic chair), Dan Adler (GSC president), Dennis Lynch (GFC president).

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

President Sloan requested that item 6B, Proposal 6-06, Request for Change in Board of Control Policy 6.4 on Office of Ombuds, be moved to follow approval of the agenda so that Bill Kennedy could leave to meet another obligation.

Waddell MOVED and Jambekar seconded the motion to approve the agenda as amended. The motion to approve PASSED on voice vote with no dissent. **[Appendix A. NOTE: Only Senate and library archival copies of minutes will have a full complement of appendices.]**

4. PROPOSAL 6-06, REQUEST FOR CHANGE IN BOARD OF CONTROL POLICY 6.4 ON OFFICE OF OMBUDS – ERIK NORDBERG

Nordberg reported that the committee had been charged with making changes to the Board of Control policy on the position of ombudsman. Peck Cho had held the position for many years. When he stepped down, Bill Kennedy was appointed. Bill has asked to be replaced.

The language of the current policy was used as the procedure for changing the current policy. **[Appendix B]** One major revision was to extend the policy to include students. Currently the procedure for students to use the ombuds office is different from that required of faculty and staff. The intent was to make the policy more robust and the language more succinct. The office of ombuds should be used to try to reach resolution without resorting to a formal grievance procedure.

One problem with the present procedure is that the ombuds has been involved to whatever completion of the resolution. However, if a formal procedure has been initiated, the involvement of the ombuds should be terminated.

For an ombuds appointment to be made, all five members of the appointing committee must find the candidate acceptable. A student will be added to the committee because of the greater involvement with students under the new description. The Senate can remove the ombuds by a 2/3 vote.

The university will provide release time and resources for the ombuds.

The position need not be filled with a tenured faculty member.

The new description and policy should be placed in the Board of Control policy manual.

Senator Beck stated that he is worried whether we can find one person to understand the problems of students, faculty, and staff.

Kennedy stated that it is not clear now when the function of the ombuds begins and ends. In the short term there should be some reduction in time spent because the end point of the responsibility is clearer. However, he feels there is some jeopardy in having a non-tenured person because sensitive issues can ruffle feathers.

Senator Gotschalk responded that the language is close to the language used at MIT. The position is held by a professional staff member there, but one who has been at the university for 20 years and achieved the respect of the campus community. The person in this position needs to realize what other avenues are available to the complainant.

Senator Vitton asked if opening the office to students means they can contest a grade.

Gotschalk stated that students already have the option to go to the ombuds. However, currently the procedure for students is different from that for faculty and staff.

Nordberg stated that the workload already exists. Flynn asked if it is full time. Kennedy responded that currently he is given release time from one course. That was not enough time for the follow through to the end as was done by Peck Cho. However, the role of the ombuds should terminate once resolution was on its way and not require continuation once a grievance

procedure begins. He estimated that he spends 8-28 hours each week on ombuds duties. It is not easy to work this position into a normal work schedule because of tight timelines and the on and off nature of its time requirements.

Senator Janners reported that one of her constituents wanted to know who is meant by "university" gives release time. Senator Miskioglu added that one of his constituents suggested that the wording should be changed to "University administrator."

Senator Jambekar found it strange that the ombuds is responsible to the administration but that the Senate can fire the person. Nordberg responded that the person needs to be able to share problems with the administration without a formal process. Kennedy added that normally the problem is communicated to the president informally and trickles down to the necessary level while protecting anonymity. Nordberg added that the 2/3 vote of the Senate is provided just in case, since the Senate represents both professional staff and faculty and provides an avenue for students and other staff to express their concerns.

Senator Flaspohler stated that it might be worth having the ombuds come to the Senate to report. Kennedy responded that confidentiality is of utmost importance, so it probably would not be appropriate. Flaspohler explained that his intent was more along the lines of the report from the Academic Tenure Committee. It would include numbers of cases, not specifics.

Nordberg responded that they are trying to keep the number of procedures down; the present language is cumbersome. Gotschalk reiterated that concern. The Senate can always invite someone to report to the Senate.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING 430

Waddell MOVED and Flaspohler seconded the motion to approve the minutes of Meeting 430 as presented. The motion PASSED on voice vote with no dissent.

6. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Sloan reported that Proposal 5-06, Bachelor of Science in Anthropology, is on the Board of Control agenda for its 9 December meeting.

The Provost will not be at the Senate meeting tonight because he is downstate with the victorious Houghton girls' basketball team, the Gremlins.

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. University Committees

Nominees for the Distance Learning Implementation Committee were Kedmon Hungwe and Michele Miller. Michele Miller was elected 25:7.

Nominees for the Faculty Distinguished Service Award Committee were Beth Smock and Shalini Suryanarayana. Two nominees are needed to present to President Mroz for his selection. Sutter MOVED and Clancy seconded the motion to accept the two nominees to present to the President. The motion PASSED on voice vote with no dissent.

Two nominees were needed to present to President Mroz for his selection of one for the Academic Tenure Committee. Nominees were David Flaspohler and Mahesh Gupta. Bruch MOVED and Nordberg seconded the motion to accept both nominees to forward to the President. The motion PASSED on voice vote with no dissent.

President Sloan announced that members are urgently needed for the Faculty Review Committee and emphasized the importance of that committee. Janners asked if the members needed to be faculty and if they needed to be tenured. Sloan stated that neither was a requirement.

B. Proposal 7-06, Addition of Coursework Only (No Oral Exam) Master's Degree Plan – Hugh Gorman [Appendix C]

Gorman pointed out that the second bullet item is not the one in their final version. Huntoon clarified that the item was meant to state that if plan D was offered, a plan C could not be offered for the same program and vice versa. This would prevent using the plan D as a consolation prize. Secretary Glime asked if the correct interpretation is that a program can't offer both, but a department can. Huntoon confirmed that.

Paul Nelson stated that business programs typically offer the equivalent of a plan D. Adding this option would allow us to be more competitive. Miskioglu added that the ME-EM Department would like the program for the same reasons.

Flaspohler reminded the Senate that the plan had been discussed about a year ago and failed. The concern raised then was that it could be used to lower the bar.

Gorman stated that the committee had originally thought that if the degree were an M.S. degree, it should include a thesis. This plan might make sense for business or other non-science field, but in fact those fields typically label their degrees M.S.

Senator Shene asked about bullet item 4 and the use of research credits. There is concern that some supported M.S. students take research credits and do research for a few years. Then when their funding becomes secure they become lazy about the research. Huntoon responded that students cannot count their research credits toward a plan D degree. There is a quality issue and the plan D program is probably not appropriate for all departments and programs.

Senator Flynn asked if the proposal says that a student who switches to plan D must take more courses. Huntoon responded that when a student switches from a research degree to plan D the student must replace any research credits earned toward the degree with course credits. Flynn felt that the additional credits should be stated, but Huntoon explained that the number of credits required does not increase, only the specific requirements for those credits. Some departments do require more credits for a plan D. The proposal needs to give departments flexibility.

Senator Boersma asked if the department has the option to set standards for changing degree programs. The answer was yes.

Senator Amato-Henderson stated that if the plan is offered, it must be available to all students. Nelson countered that an advisor must approve the course and degree plan, so an advisor might not agree to the change.

Vitton stated that students could go to a school where only a plan D was offered.

Huntoon stated that it is important for all students to have some integrated experience. The Dean's approval should help to assure quality control. The integrated experience must be demonstrated in the program proposal and can be built by courses building on prior courses. Vitton asked if the department needs to document that each student has done this. Huntoon

responded that the program needs to have the integration built into it. Vitton asked who would assure that it would happen. Others responded that ABET, external reviewers, and other review units would help to ensure suitable standards.

Flaspohler asked if there is something that convinces the proposers that this program is superior. Huntoon responded that it is practiced elsewhere in certain disciplines. Amato-Henderson added that when the previous proposal was presented there was no coordinated support for it. Now we have been provided with examples of programs where this works. Miskioglu added that this plan is useful for distance learning. Some students just want coursework.

Vice President Christianson asked if it was up to the department to choose to offer plan D. Several responded "yes."

Martyn Smith stated that one large population from which to draw graduate students is the working group. The company usually pays for their advanced education. When an oral exam is required, a person could be turned down by a committee after four years of high grades and high GRE's. This group of working professionals is the largest untapped source of graduate students.

Senator Johnson stated that he had completed a program of this type after 20 years of professional work. There are many professionals who want this type of program.

Senator Williams stated that it is difficult to get sufficient background in chemistry from four years of undergraduate coursework. A plan D is a good way to get the additional coursework. He suggested it would be easier to just strike the oral exam requirement in plan C.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:28 pm.

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