

The University Senate of Michigan Technological University

Minutes of Meeting 467
15 October 2008

Synopsis:

The Senate

- Heard a presentation from Walt Milligan on Information Technology
- Heard a presentation from Lesley Lovett-Doust on the Strategic Faculty Hiring Initiatives
- Elected Pat Gotschalk to fill out the term on the Faculty Review Committee that ends in Fall 2009
- Discussed Proposal 1-09 to allow the reuse of some Michigan Tech credits in the pursuit of multiple graduate degrees.

1. Call to order and roll call. President Sloan called the University Senate Meeting 467 to order at 5:30 pm on Wednesday, October 15, 2008 in room B45 EERC. Vice President Pierce called roll. Absent were at-large Senators Madhu and Cooper and representatives from Army/AirForce ROTC, Chemical Engineering, Civil and Environmental Engineering, the Library, Mathematical Sciences, and Admissions. Liaison Anna Pereira (GSC) was in attendance. Mechanical Engineering–Engineering Mechanics, Academic Services A, and Auxiliaries and Cultural Enrichment currently have no elected representatives.

2. Recognition of visitors. Guests included Lesley Lovett-Doust (Provost), Walt Milligan (Office of Information Technology), and Jackie Huntoon (Dean of the Graduate School).

3. Approval of agenda. Hamlin **moved** approval of the agenda and Hoagland seconded. The motion to approve **passed** on a voice vote with no dissent.

4. Update on Information Technology presented by Walt Milligan.

IT Reorganization. The new current structure is similar to many peer institutions and now consists of four core areas (ETS/Online/Summer, IT Services/Security, AIS/SAS/Auxiliary Tech, and Telecommunications) that report to Milligan. The reorganization eliminated two middle management positions allowing salary savings to be redistributed to IT staff. Patty Lins (ETS/Online/Summer) reports on academic matters to the Provost and on technology matters to Milligan. The computing groups have been reduced from 16 to 9. Hamlin asked whom the directors of the groups report to. Milligan said to the department heads and deans. Hamlin asked if they have multiple supervisors. Milligan said they usually have one supervisor for several departments. Milligan said that the reorganization has resulted in better internal communication and planning, better efficiency and customer service, additional service of IT needs to the Library and Educational Opportunity. He added that challenges still exist; more attention needs to be paid to interactions between central IT groups and academic IT groups; communication, collaboration, uniform campus standards; equity in levels of technology support for students and faculty in different departments; funding models, chargebacks, support for faculty and research. The problem of better communication is being addressed by an IT strategic planning group formed in June 2008 and meeting weekly: it consists of Milligan, the directors of the four core IT areas, and the directors of the 9 computing groups. The goal is to create a campus-wide strategic plan for IT.

Electronic grade submission. Milligan argued that Michigan Tech should have moved to electronic grade submission 20 years ago. The current system is based on WebCT/Blackboard Grade Book, which has the advantage of upgrading class rosters daily. IT trained “grade facilitators” in every department to help faculty with the new electronic process and to submit grades if necessary. The system was piloted by a small group in Spring 2007, then piloted by all who volunteered in Fall 2007, and finally was required for all instructors in Spring 2008. In Spring 2008, 1,595 sections (of 1,610) successfully submitted grades. There were fewer missing sections

than there were with bubble sheet submission (15 instead of four or five times that number) and reduced grade submission errors. Milligan credited the success to good communication with and efforts of grade facilitators. A survey of instructors (to which 199 — about one-third — of instructors responded) showed that about 75 percent thought the process was good or better (outstanding, 14.6 percent; very good, 39.2 percent; good, 21.1 percent) and 25 percent were not satisfied (fair, 13.1 percent; poor, 12.1 percent). When asked how they felt about the process looking toward next Fall, 28.1 percent responded that they looking forward to it; 47.2 percent said not too bad; 11.1 percent said it was too complex; and 10.6 percent said give me back my bubble sheets. Milligan reported that those who were not satisfied were extremely unhappy and complained that the process too cumbersome and not intuitive. He said most problems were due to unfamiliarity with Blackboard Grade Book. In response, he is forming a committee to investigate alternatives to our current version of Blackboard and welcomes faculty volunteers. Also, he reported that IT last week purchased the “Faculty Self Serve” module of Banner, allowing instructors to enter grades on a website (which is good for small sections). This will not be available until Spring. The current process on Blackboard will have to be used this Fall and it will remain available in Spring (as it is better for larger sections). He said that bubble sheets are not coming back.

Luck asked whether the unsatisfied users were localized in certain departments. Milligan replied that they were not, and that a couple of them he knows are tech savvy users. Klooster asked which alternatives will be available to whom. Milligan replied that both alternatives are available for everyone. Drelich asked whether IT got any feedback from students. Milligan replied that students don't care as long as they get their grades, but that some faculty were upset that students found out their grades so quickly.

E-mail and calendar. IT decided to move to a new system because the Huskymail web client was dated, because students have been lobbying for a calendar, because MeetingMaker and other commercial solutions did not serve our needs and were expensive, because e-mail quotas were too low and raising them would require further investment in high availability storage, which is expensive, and because e-mail is very expensive and painful to maintain in-house. A survey of students in Spring 2007, with 1147 students participating, showed that 43.2 percent found email quotas unsatisfactory and 57.4 percent felt access to a scheduling/calendaring utility was critical or important. Milligan reported that most universities are considering outsourcing e-mail and some have done so already. IT chose to “near source” e-mail and calendar to Merit Network, based on Zimbra (Yahoo) technology. Advantages include: Merit is nonprofit; Michigan Tech has a seat on Merit's Board of Directors; they provide internet connectivity to us and most Michigan universities and K-12 systems; the data is secure because we own it and we know where it is (in Ann Arbor); there is no advertising or data mining; e-mail quotas are unlimited. Central Michigan outsourced student e-mail to Merit about 18 months ago (not on Zimbra), Eastern Michigan and Wayne State signed up with Merit after we did, and Western Michigan is currently testing it and will sign up soon. It saves some money but not that much. Merit is Zimbra's largest customer, so we have leverage for upgrades. Milligan said that IT is very satisfied with the e-mail system and pointed out that people can still use Thunderbird, Outlook, and Mac Mail. He said the “briefcase” document sharing tool is functional, but not stellar, so IT is investigating bona fide document collaboration tools that integrate seamlessly with Zimbra. Students are enthusiastic about the calendar, and if faculty are willing to use it there should be educational benefits from faculty, staff, academic advisors, and students sharing a scheduling product. The calendar also facilitates publishing and distributing multiple Michigan Tech calendars (including Banner course schedules). It is an open-source product that complies with the iCal standard so it interacts well with other calendars. He reported some drawbacks of the Zimbra calendar, too. It is less functional in some areas than MeetingMaker, and IT is working on fixing that. Calendar data is not available unless the user is online or has installed a program that saves the data (which is possible with Thunderbird, Outlook, and iCal). Smart phone synching has been problematic, and IT is hoping to get that fixed in the near future.

Other issues. The IT strategic planning group has identified approximately 30 high-level strategic issues which need to be prioritized and acted on. All the easy ones (and some of the hard

ones) have been solved. The rest of the issues are complex and challenging. Input and buy-in from many constituents and customers will be needed. Milligan said the principle they use in making decisions is: What's in the best interest of Michigan Tech?

Klooster asked whether any upgrades to Blackboard are planned. Milligan replied that the Blackboard version we have is really WebCT and hard to customize, but the grading system will be better in the next version. He also said that IT expects to change to a new program in the near future but assured instructors that IT will ensure that content will be able to be imported into any new system IT chooses. Hamlin observed that the color scheme on the new mail system is very hard to read and impossible for those who are colorblind. Milligan replied that he changed colors on his own computer but that he would pass the comment on to Marketing Communications, who made the choice. Luck asked how IT will ensure that content can be imported to a new class management system. Milligan replied that IT will test the heck out of it. Onder asked about the compatibility of Zimbra and other programs and operating systems. Milligan replied that it should work if you have the right versions.

Keen asked how IT rationalized violating the Senate policy that I grades require a signature by the department chair. Milligan replied that IT talked to deans and department heads who said electronic grade submission was important enough not to let this policy hold it back. He promised that soon there will be an electronic process for approving I grades. Keen commented that the reason for the policy was to protect the students so that if somebody left there would be a record of what they needed to do to remove the I grade and argued that it would have been wise to officially revise the policy; otherwise you have administration arbitrarily revising policy that has been approved by the faculty. Kern explained that one solution that was considered was including a box on the electronic form where instructors would sign. Milligan added that in Spring, IT will ask for more information in a box, and that IT will be adding an electronic approval process, so the process will be in compliance by Spring. Keen asked about computing fees for courses no longer being submitted in the white binder process. Milligan answered that the only change in the process is that instead of the fees going into the binder and then to him, the fees are now going directly to him.

5. Strategic Faculty Hiring Initiatives presented by Lesley Lovett-Doust.

For the first round of hiring last year, a website was developed including a description of research themes, how to apply, what research and education and outreach was already here, and information about the community. Information about the materials needed for application was very explicit, asking applicants specifically about how they would be involved in teaching sustainability and research on sustainability. The pool of 230 applicants was diverse, judging from the 23 applicants who self-disclosed information about their identity. Ten of the 23 were women and 9 were minority group members. Many people were involved in the review process, and online processing of evaluations made the process efficient. The 230 applicants were first screened to 80, then 35, from whom the final 10 offered positions were chosen. The first screening was done on the basis of the detailed applications; the second screening was conducted by three faculty for each faculty who were chosen because they were working in cognate fields with the applicant. Criteria included: demonstrated work in sustainability, interdisciplinary work, and other valued attributes, such as working in industry or government labs. The 10 finalists were chosen for their ability to supervise doctoral work, to teach at the graduate and undergraduate levels, and to collaborate with and complement colleagues already at Michigan Tech.

The three endowed chairs went to John Sutherland, MEEM (Robbins Chair in Sustainable Manufacturing), David Karnosky, SFRES (Robbins Chair in Sustainable Management of the Environment), and David Shonnard, Chem Eng (Robbins Chair in Sustainable Materials). In the search process, the committee discovered that there were relatively few people at the senior level with a lot of work on sustainability who were not already at Michigan Tech, which is why all three chairs came from current faculty. The seven faculty positions went to Rupali Datta (Bio), Paul Doskey (Civil and Env), Wenshen Li (Chem Eng and Chem), Audrey Meyer (SS and SFRES), Claudio Mazzolini (Physics), Shiliang Wu (Geo and Civil and Env Eng), and a faculty member who cannot yet be identified who is currently working with a White House committee on climate change

(MEEM and Civil and Env Eng). Of the seven new hires, 2 are women and 3 members of minority groups.

SFHI II. Themes are chosen with an eye to areas that are interdisciplinary and support the strategic plan and to areas that can attract endowed funds to help finance the program. Next year's research theme is advancing computational frontiers. David House has contributed \$10 million for support of computational sciences and engineering and its applications, some of which will be used toward the hiring of 3 endowed professorships and 7 faculty positions. Desired candidates may work both in core areas of computer engineering and science and systems analysis and in areas of application of advanced computation. Two people have been asked to co-chair the search committee, and departments, institutes, and centers have been asked to suggest members for the committee.

Future SFHIs. Preproposals are posted on a website for comments; so far topics include advanced materials for biological systems; alleviating global poverty; arts advancement; computing; health-related science services, and technologies; human-centered technology; energy; and transportation. The URL is http://www.admin.mtu.edu/admin/prov/mtu_only/SFHI.html The next 4-5 themes will be decided on by Spring 2009 to facilitate searching for endowed funding.

Lovett-Doust emphasized that the success of the SFHI program depends on colleagues thinking about colleagues elsewhere who might be a good fit for these positions and making recommendations. There were no questions from the senators.

6. Approval of minutes from meeting 466. Approval was deferred to the next meeting of the Senate as there were questions and the Secretary was absent.

7. President's report. There was no president's report.

8. Old business.

a. Elections for University standing committees.

There are two nominees for the **Academic Tenure Committee**: Bob Keen and Steve Carr. Sloan asked for further nominees, and Fick? nominated Mark Johnson from the School of Technology. Sloan asked whether the Senate wished to vote this week, or wait. Klooster suggested that she would like to know more about the candidates before voting. Sloan decided to ask each candidate for a short statement to help the Senate in the process of electing members of the committee, and to defer the election to a later meeting. Sloan asked if there were any nominees for the **Faculty Distinguished Service Award Committee**, and there were none. On the **Faculty Review Committee**, Kern reported that Pat Gotschalk, who is currently serving on the committee and is involved with two ongoing cases, is willing to continue on the committee. Sloan added that Pat is an attorney and thus has a particularly valuable perspective on the cases, and she suggested that, unless anyone objected or had further nominees, Gotschalk be elected to another term. Hamlin **moved** that Pat Gotschalk be elected to the committee. Johnson seconded. Kern pointed out that the idea was that Gotschalk be elected to a single-year term ending in Fall 2009. Hamlin and Johnson agreed to amend the motion to elect Gotschalk to a term ending in Fall 2009. **Passed** on a voice vote with no dissent.

9. New business.

a. Proposal 1-09: A Proposal To Allow the Reuse of Some Michigan Tech Credits in the Pursuit of Multiple Graduate Degrees

Sloan explained that in this meeting the proposal would only be discussed and that the vote would take place at the next Senate meeting so that senators could consult their constituencies before voting. The discussion was led by Senator Gregg, representing the Curricular Policy Committee. The proposal is a simple one, allowing students to double count a small amount of credits (1/3 of coursework credits) for a second masters degree for while they are completing a masters or a doctoral degree It will not apply to second doctoral degrees. Only Michigan Tech credits can be double counted. 3000- and 4000-level courses taken under senior rules can also be double

counted. Gregg stated that the policy would probably also apply to returning students and to students who wish to complete a third masters.

Drelich asked if the credits must be approved by the student's advisor. Huntoon said that yes, credits would be approved by the advisor in the primary degree, but students should talk to advisors in both programs to make sure there are no conflicts about funding. Boschetto-Sandoval asked whether the title of the proposal was misleading. Huntoon agreed that the Graduate School wrestled with this. Gregg stated that the policy, however, is very clear. Provost Lesley-Doust suggested that the word "multiple" be replaced with "additional," and Huntoon agreed that would be a good change. Gregg suggested that the proposal should make clear that practicum credits as well as research credits cannot be double counted. Luck asked why students cannot transfer in credits from other institutions. Huntoon replied that common practice is that if credits have been used toward a degree they can't be used toward another degree. This is a proposal for current students in our university and we need to follow standard best practices. Luck asked about undergraduate students who have gotten bachelors degrees and are moving on to a masters degree. Huntoon replied that if the credits counted toward their bachelors degree, they couldn't count them, but if they took the courses under senior rule, they could count them. She explained that there is interest in BS/MS programs in the future, however, and the rules for those will have to be worked out. Sloan reminded senators that this proposal will be up for a vote in two weeks, and senators will want to get feedback from their departments.

10. Adjournment.

Sloan adjourned the meeting at 6:39pm.

Respectfully submitted by Marilyn Cooper
Secretary of the University Senate