

**The University Senate
of Michigan Technological University**

Minutes of Meeting 481
21 October 2009

Synopsis:

The Senate:

- Heard a presentation from the 2008-09 Teaching Award Winner, Dean Johnson
- Heard an update from Alex Mayer on the Provost search

1. Call to order and roll call. President Rudy Luck called the University Senate Meeting 481 to order at 5:30 pm on Wednesday, October 21, 2009. The Senate Secretary Marilyn Cooper called roll. Absent were representatives of Army/Air Force ROTC, Geological Mining and Engineering Science, the Library, Academic Services A, Academic Services B, Academic Services C, Auxiliaries, and Research.

2. Recognition of visitors. Guests included Max Seel (Provost), Bill Kennedy (Center for Learning and Faculty Development), Dean Johnson (School of Business and Economics), and Alex Mayer (Civil and Environmental Engineering).

3. Approval of agenda. L. Davis **moved** approval of the agenda; Hamlin seconded the motion; and it **passed** on a voice vote with no dissent.

4. Presentation by the 2008-09 Michigan Tech Teaching Award Winner, Dean Johnson

Bill Kennedy introduced Dean Johnson, from the School of Business and Economics, who is the fourth faculty member to have won the teaching award in both the divisions, the others being Mary Ann Beckwith, Peck Cho, and Ashok Ambardar. Johnson's class offerings include derivative securities, principles of finance, and applied portfolio management, in which students get the practical experience of managing a real portfolio with money in it. Students in this course have excelled in managing a million dollar fund contributed by a pool of outside donors and have won the national RISE national stock investment competition in the value category three times in the past eight years. The course has given the University tremendous public relations benefit and has benefitted our students a great deal. Dean Radson says that we have had students come to Michigan Tech just to study in this program and that Johnson's unique teaching style has allowed him to convey difficult principles in an applied manner while giving students the experience of being successful financial analysts and investors.

Johnson said that he is teaching applied advanced courses in small sections so that what he does may not be applicable to every teacher's situation. He said he likes to spend some time in constructively thinking about his teaching philosophy. He said that what he finds important is to treat students as adults (especially if you teach upper level students), to express a genuine interest in each student as an individual (ask them individually about how things are going when you see them on campus), to gain their trust (make them realize you have their best interests at heart), to challenge them (push them with more advanced material), to connect to the "real world" (connect to current events, bring in outside speakers from the "real world"), to provide a variety of learning experiences (recognizing that students have diverse learning styles; Johnson gave an example of how to explain the concept of net present value [NPV] in different ways).

Johnson applauded the fact that Michigan Tech is unique in having a variety and number of experiential learning programs (Enterprise, Ford Center, Applied Portfolio Management, Senior Design, Performing Arts, and many more), especially given the small size of the student population.

He proposed questions about teaching from the perspective of the University and from the personal perspective that he believes faculty need to have honest and open discussions about. From the University perspective, why should we expect faculty to be good teachers? There are synergies between research and teaching, but they are very different skill sets. Most doctoral programs spend very little time training students to be good teachers. How can the University encourage and reward teaching? There are lots of good teachers across the University. What priority does the University place on teaching? The payoff for good teaching is hidden; the students have already paid their tuition. But the payoff is down the road. Nobility aside, is teaching a positive net present value project? Are teaching and research mutually exclusive projects? No, we should do both; there doesn't have to be a tension between the two.

From the personal perspective, he said that if teaching is just a job for you, learning will be a job for your students. If you are genuinely sincere, students will sense that and they will enjoy the class. Every class period is an hour to have a major influence in our students' lives. Faculty have an ethical responsibility to provide students with tools to be successful.

Moran asked whether Johnson considers high quality teaching at Michigan Tech a positive NPV project for a Michigan Tech faculty, and whether the reason Johnson is a high quality teacher is that it is a positive NPV

project for him. Johnson said he believes teaching is a noble profession and he would be willing to incur some cost if it wasn't a positive NPV project for him at a personal level. But, he said, as a faculty we need to make sure that teaching is a positive NPV project at the personal level and at the University level. Moran asked whether it is one now. Johnson replied that many people end up doing a marginal analysis about how to spend the next hour, in research or in teaching, but that ignores the fact that the benefits from teaching are longer term than the benefits of doing research. If we put all the incentives on the research side we're ignoring the positive long-term benefits on the teaching side.

Onder asked about using an alternative model to compare projects: if you have two projects and pursue them together, you have something larger than just the combined NPV of both; research and teaching should be considered this way, not as mutually exclusive. Johnson says that the point he was trying to make is that research and teaching are not mutually exclusive; there's a positive synergy between the two.

5. Approval of Minutes from Meetings 479 and 480. Moran **moved** to approve the minutes of meeting 479; Onder seconded the motion. Cooper supplied a missing word in Storer's report of the work of the Curricular Policy Committee: the last phrase of his report should read "discussing methods of requiring residency requirements for certificate programs." The motion to approve the minutes as amended **passed** on a voice vote with no dissent.

Allen **moved** to approve the minutes of meeting 480; Hamlin seconded the motion, and it **passed** on a voice vote with no dissent.

6. Report of the President and Senate Committees

President Luck reported that the administration approved Proposal 1-10 Revised Academic Policy. He also reported that the charters for Cognitive and Learning Sciences and for Exercise Science, Health, and Physical Education were both approved by President Mroz, Provost Max Seel, and Dean Bruce Seely at their meeting on February 19, 2009. He noted that the administration this year has indicated a pronounced willingness to investigate and move forward with the issue of charters.

Luck explained the process by which the survey of Senate constituents' response to the changes in health care and retirement benefits was constructed. The Senate Executive Committee discussed on email the questions to be included. Variations of seven questions were discussed; Luck removed three questions and sent the rest to Senator Smith for review; Smith produced five questions; the final survey, which consisted of four questions and an introductory sheet with instructions, was prepared. An email was sent to all those who suggested questions with a brief description of how the survey was constructed. Most, but not all, appeared pleased by the final survey questions. The survey was distributed earlier today (October 21) with instructions that it be mailed in by October 28, and the results will be discussed at the November 4 meeting. He thanked everyone for their hard work, in particular Judi Smigowski for preparing and distributing the survey, Smith for phrasing the questions, and the Senate Elections Committee who will help count the ballots. He explained the balloting process and the tabulating process. It is a paper ballot, to be marked and then enclosed first in an unmarked envelope and then within a larger envelope which is signed by the constituent. When ballots are received, names on the larger envelope will be checked off the list of constituents and the smaller envelopes will be extracted, to be opened and tabulated later. He noted that there has been some comment on question 3, which reads, "Do you SUPPORT the current communication process of the benefit plans: announcements, informational meetings, and then choose the available plans all within 2 weeks?" Some objected that the information and enrollment period (from October 19 to November 25) is not two weeks, but Luck noted that depending on when an employee goes to an informational forum they would have between six weeks and one day to choose. He said that the issue is not the exact time to choose but rather the communication process. He said that these four questions will allow us to arrive at some important conclusions about the response of Senate constituents to the changes in total compensation and the process of communicating the changes.

Mullins asked about the process of rejection of questions. Luck said the criterion he used was the purpose of the survey as stated in the proposal, which was to discover constituents' responses to the changes in health care and retirement benefits; other suggested questions might have been better asked by other organizations and distracted from the purpose of the survey.

Johnson asked what we will do with the results, especially if the response rate is overwhelming and the responses are largely in agreement. Luck reminded the Senate that Snyder, who proposed the survey, said that the results might be of interest to the Board of Control. Luck said that it will also help us draft more effective surveys in the future, and that we and the administration will find out what Senate constituents think about the total compensation changes. The results will be posted on the Senate website. Johnson asked what changes it could bring about. Luck said he cannot predict the results, but the survey will allow the Senate to be more active next year when more changes can be expected. He reminded the Senate of the current negotiations at Northern Michigan University on these issues. He said that if we have a reasonable response it would be reasonable to discuss that something should be done differently. We could possibly effect some change in the thinking of the administration.

Luck introduced Alex Mayer, chair of the Provost Search Committee, to report on the progress of the search. Luck commented that, as the previous Senate President Martha Sloan has pointed out, four of the past five upper administrators were hired without following the stipulated procedure, but he assured us that in this search the procedures are being followed.

Alex Mayer said that the search committee was formed in March 2009. The committee developed an advertisement and a position description from April to May, including distributing the position description to the University for comment and holding an open meeting to receive more comments. The description was finalized in early May. The President hired a consultant from Academic Search Incorporated, Robert Lawless, to assist in the search, and he has been working with the committee from the beginning. Over the summer, a prospectus was prepared for candidates and for those nominating candidates to describe the position and Michigan Tech in such a way as to attract high quality candidates. Advertisements were placed in 11 different venues in early September. Academic Search contacted 928 sitting provosts, vice presidents, and deans and asked them to apply. Academic Search also contacted 49 university presidents and asked them for nominations. The committee also invited nominations from the University community. As of October 15, the date advertised as the cut-off date for full consideration of applications, the committee received 40 applications, and this week they selected 7 of these candidates for neutral site interviews by committee members; 6 candidates are still interested in the position. The committee is checking the references of these candidates. Interviews will be held in early to mid November, and 3 finalists will be invited to campus to meet with the University community. Up until that point the names of the applicants will be held in confidence. The committee is hopeful they will be able to make a decision before the end of the calendar year. The advertisement for the position states that the new provost could start as early as January 2010.

Senator Scarlett reported that the Academic Policy Committee is collecting background information on departmental governance and doing comparisons on how these key issues are handled at peer institutions and hope to have something to the Senate for everyone to consider soon. The committee has also been charged to look at possible changes to the leave policy, which they will not do until their work on the governance issue is completed.

7. Old Business:

Proposal 16-09 Double Majors at Michigan Tech

Keen explained that this proposal was introduced by the Curricular Policy Committee last year and sent back to the committee to find a resolution to a problem raised about bullet 4, which states "Students may only earn an additional major if that major is offered under the same degree type (Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts) as the primary major. If the degree types for the majors are different then the student must pursue a second degree." The problem is with the way the second major is recorded; for example, a diploma might read "Bachelor of Science in Mathematical Sciences with an additional major in Liberal Arts," but Michigan Tech does not offer a BS in Liberal Arts. On that reading the University is awarding a degree that the state does not permit us to award. The principal counterargument is that the University is simply awarding one degree. The committee sought the advice of the Provost and of Rich Elenich of Institutional Analysis to see if by not distinguishing the different types, the University was running counter to state regulations; both said the University was in violation of state regulations, and Elenich added that the University could be fined for doing so. The committee is thus returning the proposal to the Senate unchanged. The committee recommends approval. Keen noted that it will affect only a very few students.

8. New Business:

Proposal 6-10 Graduate Certificate in Sustainable Water Resources Systems

Keen explained that the Curricular Policy Committee received this proposal last spring, too late to be considered. The committee considers this a superior graduate certificate proposal produced under direction of Alex Mayer. The committee unanimously and strongly recommends its approval.

Luck asked how the certificate compares to certificates at other universities. Mayer says Michigan Tech's certificate will cover both the biophysical and the social science aspects of water, while others don't.

9. Adjournment. Hamlin **moved** that the meeting be adjourned; Onder seconded the motion; and President Luck adjourned the meeting at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted
by Marilyn Cooper
Secretary of the University Senate