

**The University Senate
of Michigan Technological University**

Minutes of Meeting 485
25 January 2010

Synopsis:

The Senate

- Conversation with Provost candidate
- Discussion of Proposal 4-10

1. Conversation with Provost Candidate

President Luck introduced the candidate for Provost who then answered several questions from Senators. Following the presentation, President Luck thanked the candidate and reminded everyone that the candidate comment forms passed out prior to the meeting should be returned to Judi Smigowski.

2. Call to order and roll call. President Rudy Luck called the University Senate Meeting 485 to order at 6:24 pm on Monday, January 25, 2010. The Senate Secretary Marty Thompson called roll. Absent were Senators Barry Solomon, Marilyn Vogler, Nick Koszykowski and representatives of Chemical Engineering, Visual and Performing Arts, Academic Services B, Research, USG and the Graduate Student Council.

3. Recognition of visitors. Guests included Joe Herbig and Anita Quinn (Human Resources).

4. Approval of agenda. Snyder **moved** approval of the agenda; Onder seconded the motion; it **passed** unanimously on a voice vote.

5. Approval of minutes from Meeting 484. Scarlett **moved** approval of the minutes; Hyslop seconded the motion; it **passed** unanimously on a voice vote.

6. President's report.

Luck stated that the Senate Meeting schedule will be getting back to a regular schedule after the Senate meets with the final provost candidate, also noting the withdrawal of the candidate the Senate was to meet with later in the week. He thanked everyone for contributions to the provost search, noting the importance of the role of the University Senate in this process.

Luck declared that the faculty and staff handbooks are in need of updating. Luck stated that the handbooks are only available on the web, as far as he knew. He commented on the relative ease with which substantial changes to the electronic document could be made with little or no paper record of said changes being made. He also pointed out that references to rescinded material on the board of control website (<http://www.admin.mtu.edu/admin/boc/policy/index.htm>) will require correcting in the online faculty and perhaps staff handbooks. To address this, he charges the Senate with updating the handbooks for accuracy and generating hard copies for accountability. Luck stated that the Senate will investigate this upon completion of the provost search.

Luck introduced the blog he has integrated into the Senate website. He pontificates briefly on the potential corrupting influence of proximity to power. To ensure the present senate leadership is not corrupted and to improve communication, the blog permits an open forum for comments. As a caveat, Luck cited [Garcetti v. Ceballos](#), the essence of which was that professional duties are not covered by [academic freedom](#). The purpose of the blog is to improve the Senate, the efficiency of the Senate and impact the way in which Senate does business. The Senate is only as efficient as those working in it. He then proceeded to give a brief tutorial on use of blog.

Luck presented two platform documents from the Michigan State Senate Republicans website. The first regarding changes in healthcare and the second reductions in compensation for Michigan public employees. Luck forewarns that healthcare changes are progressively shifting costs from the employer to the employee at the same time as Republicans want to put forth a compensation reduction plan for the mid-term elections. Moran asked if these were proposals or if they were bills under consideration. Luck was unclear on the mechanism by which these proposals would be implemented or even if they were currently under discussion, but cited this as a Republican platform for the upcoming elections. Caneba asks if we are classified as public employees. Luck affirmed the fact. Christianson cites that it says 'universities' on the document Luck displayed. Hyslop comments that the state constitution needs to be amended to bring university employees into the two programs cited by Luck. Luck references the website for further information. Scarlett asked if this would erase university discretionary power of the universities in budget implementation. He distinguished a cut in state allocation versus the state controlling how the universities implement funding changes. Hyslop stated that this was the reason for the legislation to change the state constitution – to accomplish this increase in state power over budget allocation.

7. Report of Senate Committees

Luck, on behalf of the Benefits Committee, stated the committee is looking into the effect of sick leave and paid time off on grants, as well as, developing a wellness program.

Onder, Chair of the Elections Committee, reported that Conflict of Interest Committee and Misconduct in Research and Scholarly Inquiry Committee has vacancies. Send names of interested persons to Onder. Also there are two open senator-at-large positions, one for faculty and another for staff. This information will be sent to Tech-Topics. Christianson asks if this information can be sent to the senate mailing list. Onder confirmed that it could be.

8. Old business. There was no old business.

9. New business.

Scarlett, Chair of Academic Policy Committee, asked everyone to review Proposal 4-10, "Entrepreneurial Leave Proposal" in the aim of putting it up for a vote at the next meeting. He calls attention to two variations of the proposals for consideration. One is to create a new entrepreneurial leave policy, which is favored by administration, because it portrays the entrepreneurial spirit of our institution. The other option is to insert a small change into the text of the existing policy and re-title it the 'Professional and Entrepreneurial Leave Policy'. In the time since this proposal was initially brought up, its applicability to staff has come into question. This means changes would need to be made to the staff handbook, which introduces additional complexities. Scarlett noted that these issues are currently under discussion by the committee so all relevant issues are properly addressed.

Moran asks about the procedure that will be used to vote on the two options for this proposal. Scarlett stated that the Senate can discuss this during the next meeting to decide what changes to make and how to proceed. Wood inquired about language relating to the payment of benefits. Scarlett felt this issue would be addressed in committee or discussed during the next Senate meeting. Dewey asked whether conflict-of-interest issues were anticipated and if so how they were being addressed by his committee. Scarlett agreed there might be some conflicts-of-interest and felt that this too would be addressed upon further discussion in committee. Onder felt that the wording of the policy does not define what 'certain....activities' are, but that they should in some way benefit the university. He felt the language was vague. Scarlett anticipated that the administrative response to that comment would be whether said activities stimulate an economic response. He felt a more precise definition of what constitutes 'certain professional development, service, research, and entrepreneurial activities' could be addressed in the preamble. Moran commented that the validity of the activity requires departmental, dean and provost approval, thereby providing comprehensive and numerous checks. Luck suggested that the two options are quite different because the second option creates a separate category of entrepreneurial leave. Scarlett mentioned that flexibility needs to be present and how the policy is implemented should be left to individual departments. Luck asked about the voting timeline citing a 10 day review period prior to voting. Scarlett notes this is the case when considering extensive policy changes but is not necessary for modest changes. He says the committee will need to implement more changes prior to examination by academic units. Dewey asks if it will be voted on next session. Scarlett clarifies the text will be prepared for the next meeting and then be discussed/voted on at a later time.

Luck, on behalf of the Curricular Policy Committee, read over minor textual changes found in Proposal 10-10, "Additional Baccalaureate Degrees". He requested individual Senators bring the document to their respective departments and bring back any changes to the Curricular Policy.

10. Adjournment. Buche **moved** that the meeting be adjourned; Malette seconded the motion; it **passed** on a voice vote with no dissent, and President Luck adjourned the meeting at 6:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted
by Marty Thompson
Secretary of the University Senate