

**The University Senate
of Michigan Technological University**

Minutes of Meeting 513
16 November 2011

Synopsis:

The Senate

- Report by Associate Provost Christa Walck
- Presentation on changes to benefits by Renee Hiller
- Presentation on graduate students fees by Dr. David Reed
- Proposal 8-12 passed

1. Call to order and roll call. President Rudy Luck called the University Senate Meeting 513 to order at 5:30 pm on Wednesday, November 16, 2011. The Senate Secretary Marty Thompson called roll. Absent were representatives of Biomedical Engineering, Library, Mathematical Sciences, Admissions, IT, Advancement, USG, GFC and Staff Council and Senators Sha and Koszykowski.

2. Recognition of visitors. Guests included Max Seel (Provost Office), Christa Walck (Provost Office), Renee Hiller (Benefits Office), Hasan Sapci (School of Technology), Guy Hembroff (School of Technology), Anita Quinn (Human Resources), Dave Reed (Vice-President for Research Office), Chad Arney (Library), Erin Smith (Humanities), Mike Meyer (Physics), Bruce Seely (College of Sciences and Arts), Karen Hext (Human Resources), Jim Frendeway (School of Technology), Ellen Horsch (Administration), Darrell Radson (School of Business and Economics) and Jeff Toorongian (eLearning).

3. Approval of agenda. Luck asked if there were any changes; there being none Luck declared the agenda stood **approved**.

4. Approval of minutes from Meetings 512. Luck asked if there were any changes; there being none Luck declared the minutes stood **approved**.

5. Presentation: “Report by Technology-Rich Teaching/Learning Environment and Campus Support Systems Task Force” by Associate Provost Christa Walck

Walck introduced members of the Teaching/Learning Environment and Support Systems task force Radson started by describing the charges to the task force. Arney discussed the trends in teaching and learning environments and expectations of global collaboration. He noted that all changes result in increased demands on faculty time. Meyers and Toorongian discussed benchmarks and noted that there is no clear definition of blended learning. Toorongian said that coordination efforts from the support systems need to be maximized. Meyer noted there are a number of websites for faculty to discuss and develop ideas and topics. Toorongian said that no central entity organizes the e-learning efforts as most of this is done through the department or unit. Radson read a draft vision statement. Smith defined the key goals of the task force as student centered with centralized coordination. Radson identified the immediate challenges to implementing such a system, referring everyone to a blog ([WEBSITE](#)) the task force is using to share information and reports. Mullins asked what infrastructure is needed and the associated costs. Radson said that is not being done at this stage of the process. Mullins noted benchmarking can be amorphous. Radson said the benchmarking is more based on finding institutions that have good programs. Meyer said that right now the focus is to make it work more than to establish benchmarks. Vable asked how learning assessment is taking place. Radson said learning assessment is done through the Provost's Office. Smith said several private foundations have similar initiatives. Barkdoll asked how blended learning relates to distance learning. Radson said blended is for resident students. Meyer provided an example from another institution which has replaced a physics course with an online vehicle. Radson said there is still some discussion as to how to develop resources. Onder asked about the increased demand on faculty time, which is immensely underestimated. Radson agreed on the increased demands on faculty and described how faculty should be supported to maximize efforts. Onder felt technology, like email, will take up more faculty time as it integrates into mainstream usage. Caneba was concerned about the quality of learning and problem-solving skills developed using such e-learning systems. Smith encouraged people to look up current research in the area of blended learning. Luck asked if this is part of AQIP. Walck said no, but it isn't completely independent.

6. Presentation: “2012 Health Benefit Changes” by Renee Hiller

Hiller discussed the healthcare changes for 2012, wellness initiatives and changes to the medical leave policy. She listed the members of the Benefits Liaison Group (BLG). Hiller projected an \$833,000 net increase (corresponding to a 5.8% increase) in healthcare costs for 2012. Mullins said it should be noted that the BLG recommended a \$250,000 overage and the executive team decided to go with a \$750,000 cost overage. Hiller discussed the reduced benefit to employees and increased costs to employees for the 2012 healthcare for both PPO and HSA plans. She listed several wellness initiatives implemented for 2011 and 2012. Mullins noted the regressive nature of the cost increases to benefits relative to the compensation increases. Hiller provided the rationale and discussed the changes to Medical Leave for 2012. Barkdoll asked who pays for family medical leave. Hiller said no one because it is an unpaid leave. She defined the current sick leave policy and discussed university statistics to illustrate the lack of employee leave protection. Hiller defined the new three tier system for sick leave. Barkdoll asked about the maximum of currently accrued sick days. Hiller said up to 60 days can be carried over. Barkdoll asked if the 70% salary benefit could be raised for short or long-term leave. Hiller said there might be an 80% buy-up available in future years. She discussed the rationale for the Short-Term Disability and Maternity Leave policy changes, and concluded by listing the benefits forums occurring over the next few weeks. Mullins asked what the recommendations from the BLG were. Barr recommended the 80%

salary benefit and that if there were greater than 60 days of sick leave it would be kept. Reid asked if an employee could opt out of STD and use sick leave for family members. Hiller said that STD cannot be used for family members. Scarlett asked about the projected healthcare cost increases and the nature of the decision made by the executive team. Horsch affirmed the decision is based on increasing costs. Luck thanked Hiller.

7. Presentation: “Graduate Student Fee Differential” by Dr. David Reed

Luck introduced Reed, Vice-President for Research, who provided information about graduate student fees. Reed raised the question as to why the grad rate is \$702/SCH. He compared the percentage of unsupported graduate students for masters and doctoral degrees. Mullins asked what percent of the tuition for graduate students comes from the university. Reed said the numbers do not make much sense. He commented on the dramatic increase in unsupported master's students over the past four years. Reed defined unsupported students as those not getting any money from Tech. He discussed the findings from a report on undergraduate and graduate costs and revenues. Mullins stated that on the graduate side indirect cost return was considered 100% positive in the report. Reed said a question is; for how much longer are we going to charge in/out of state tuition. He then discussed the changes in revenue sources for Tech, nothing state appropriations have gone down as a percentage of total revenue. Barkdoll expressed a concern about raising graduate student tuition as it will impact proposals and the number of graduate students in our labs. Reed said it was complex interplay and not a simple decision. Mullins said our graduate tuition is in the lowest 1% in the USA. Barr asked if there are universities that charge different graduate credit rates depending on which program you are in. Reed affirmed this and cited several examples of such phenomenon. Vable said the University of Michigan's graduate tuition varies between schools. Onder noted many research universities offer support for graduate students. Reed agreed that tuition changes are complicated and impact several areas. Barkdoll asked how our overhead rate compares to other universities. Reed said some universities are higher and some are lower. He noted that overhead rates are negotiated with Health and Human Services or Office of Naval Research (ONR). Barr asked which schools are included in the ONR group. Reed gave multiple examples. Luck thanked Reed.

8. Report from the Senate President

Luck discussed the status of Proposals 6-12 and 7-12, the recent charter submissions from Biomedical Engineering and the School of Forest Resources and Environmental Science and where reports from senate committees can be found. He then announced the senate's esteemed secretary will be going on sabbatical in the spring and requested we nominate and vote on his replacement at the next senate meeting.

9. Report from Senate Standing Committees

Barkdoll, Research Committee, requested everyone fill out a survey focused on enhancing research productivity.

10. Old Business

Proposal 8-12: “Master of Science in Medical Informatics”

Luck said the Curricular Policy Committee (CPC), recommended we move forward with the proposal. Mullins, Finance Committee (FC), said that all questions asked by the FC have been answered and only minor questions remain. Luck asked if the FC wanted to review the financials further. Members of the FC replied no. Onder noted some problems related his constituents concerns, including; backgrounds of the students being accepted not mentioned, no prerequisites listed for courses and course overlaps. Barkdoll asked if we should table the proposal. Seel said that the authors of the proposal are present and can answer these questions. Hembroff read a section that addressed student background requirements. Onder asked how students with such diverse backgrounds will be adequately prepared for the graduate program. Luck said anyone that meets these requirements should be prepared. Sapci cited his background and described the diverse background of students he expects to apply to the program. ~~Onder said the program contains course overlaps.~~ **Onder said that for such diverse backgrounds there should be separate tracks. Sapci said backgrounds of students will be taken into account. Onder said these tracks should be part of the proposal and added that the program contains course overlaps.** Hembroff said this issue was addressed in the Graduate Faculty Council. Onder said the program has an undergraduate course that can be taken in place of a graduate course, which raises the question of the merits of the graduate course requirements. Friendway said a lot of discussion occurred between departments to determine which courses that already exist could be applied to this program and the result is the development of new courses. Luck asked the FC about the faculty needed to support the new courses. Mullins said the proposal indicates that all necessary people are already in place. Luck asked if the listed courses are all new courses being offered. Friendway said no but they are being developed. Luck noted that new courses have to go through the binder process and the Computer Science Department can address any issues during the binder process. Onder said the proposal is a good idea, but these issues should be addressed upon passage rather than later, ensuring a well-written and well-organized proposal. Mullins said the FC supports the proposal, although it was initially confusing. Friendway detailed where the faculty have come from to fill the needed positions. Mullins said this is a big new program that requests substantial resources, which have already been approved by the Provost. Friendway said he too makes decisions on resource allocation. Caneba said the issue of topic overlap from courses offered in different departments is an ongoing one that should be examined for such proposals. Seely detailed the conversations he had with the departments involved regarding topic and course overlaps and it was determined, after significant effort, that these issues were addressed in the best possible manner. Luck asked if there were any additional comments on the proposal; there being none he called for a vote; ~~the proposal passed unanimously on a voice vote.~~ **the proposal passed on a majority voice vote with Onder abstaining.**

Proposal 9-12: “Bachelor of Arts in Physics” and Proposal 10-12: “Bachelor of Arts in Physics with a Concentration in Secondary Education”

Luck noted that Proposals 9-12 and 10-12 will be deliberated further and voted on at the next senate meeting. Mullins stated this program is a repackaging of courses currently offered, but the proposers did not follow the approved proposal format. He said the FC has several questions. Riehl expressed a concern that an arts degree would dilute the quality of high school science

teachers. He added that student unable to complete the rigor of science degrees may shift to arts degrees and there is concern other departments will start to offer arts degrees. Luck said that one or two people have graduated with the current physics based secondary-education degree in the past decade and consequently there is a great deficiency in the physics knowledge of high school teachers. Stockero said that this program meets all the state criteria for secondary education degree. Luck said the Department of Chemistry has no plans to develop an arts degree. Seely said there was no expectation by the proposers that certain courses would determine students getting arts versus science degrees. He added that the proposers felt it was very important that more qualified people be put into secondary education, increase the numbers of females in physics and provide more career paths in this field. Seel said some of the language was derived from the American Physics Society but it was removed from the final version of the proposal. Luck was surprised there were no biology courses in the program. Cantrell said there are two proposals and additional courses, like a biology course, may be required by the state but should not be dictate by the physics department. Stockero said for the secondary education degrees, the state guidelines are what needs to be followed. She added that students need a second subject area to be certified to teach. Cantrell said the rationale for the arts degree was also to build in more flexibility into the degree. Luck reminded everyone that the vote on this proposal will occur at the next senate meeting.

Sense of the Senate Resolution

Luck asked if there was any discussion about the resolution. Madhu read a statement from one of his constituents declaring his disapproval of the resolution. He noted that of five constituents the majority were in support. Luck referenced the statement that all men are created equal. Barkdoll asked if it is our job to make political statements. Luck said this was just a sense of the senate constituents and made comparisons to the still unseen climate at Tech survey. He also said that the state proposal is in conflict with Tech's strategic plan. Scarlett said his constituents were in favor of the resolution. Huckins asked for a reorganization of existing wording. Luck said the paragraph could be moved. Onder said his constituency was mixed. Scarlett called the question. Luck called for a vote; the proposal **passed** unanimously on a voice vote. Madhu recommended the resolution be disseminated.

11. New Business

No new business.

12. Adjournment. President Luck adjourned the meeting at 7:29pm

Respectfully submitted
by Marty Thompson
Secretary of the University Senate