

# The University Senate of Michigan Technological University

Amended Minutes of Meeting 521  
12 September 2012

Synopsis:

- 1) Presentation on **“Welcome Back and Thoughts for the Upcoming Year”** by **Provost Max Seel**

**1. Call to order and roll call.** President Bill Bulleit called the University Senate Meeting 521 to order at 5:30 pm on Wednesday, September 12, 2012. The Senate Secretary Brian Barkdoll called roll. Absent were representatives of Army/Air Force ROTC and Materials Science and Engineering.

**Recognition of visitors.** Guests included Max Seel (Provost’s Office), Stacy Kukkonen (Daily Mining Gazette).

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

**3. Approval of minutes from Meetings 519 and 520.** Bulleit asked if there were any changes; there being none Bulleit declared the minutes stood **approved**.

## **4. Presentation on “Welcome Back and Thoughts for the Upcoming Year” by Provost Max Seel**

Seel welcomed everyone back and thanked the senators for their willingness to serve. He gave a summary of the four areas of budget, enrollment, programs, and marketing. In regards to the budget, there was a shortfall last year due to increased health care, retirement, and financial aid costs along with a reduction in the state budget and research overhead that needs to be gotten under control. Seel also gave an update on freshman enrollment, stating that it is up, but that graduate student enrollment is under the projected number. To help contain costs the administration will look at low enrollment programs and new programs must be analyzed for cost. Increased marketing of the university will also be performed to increase the number of applications. Financial aid costs will be kept under control but only after the current obligations are met since financial aid has been increased 15% for the last two years while tuition has been increase by only 7.5% and 3.5%. Vable asked if it is possible to separate these costs over the years to analyze them better and asked if we are losing students due to high tuition? He highlighted that student debt is rising. Seel agreed and reemphasized the need to get them under control. Seel also emphasized the need to communicate possibly contentious issues such as the proposed smoking policy, the upcoming parking charges, and the health benefits package clearly and early. He mentioned that the SFHI budget has been reduced by about half as well to contain costs. External research funding may be reduced due to difficulties in the federal budget situation. Mullins asked if that meant we should stop building buildings, especially if it means increased costs for the university in upkeep and staff. Seel stated that the state will not accept capital outlay requests for 2014 and that the university must submit 5-year plans. In addition, he stated that continuing issues will be the general education discussion and the CATPR recommendation regarding the early tenure policy. He stated that Mike Meyer has been appointed as the Director for the Center for Teaching and Learning and we may be going to online teaching evaluations. Also, the faculty handbook will be cleaned up and updated. Another thought being investigated is to have ‘plateau’ tuition for 12-16 credits. Also, there needs to be changes to the units’ charters to comply with the senate policy adopted last year, especially for tenure and promotion. In addition, a college Dean’s evaluation procedure is also being looked at.

In the question period after Seel’s talk Bulleit stated that the University President will be asked to come to the next Senate meeting and asked how the dollar amount was chosen for health care allocations in the university budget. Seel stated that the numbers for fringe benefits must be decided ahead of time,

thereby making it hard to plan so a number has to be chosen early. Onder stated that a smoking policy committee was previously formed and the issue was also discussed at the Senate Executive Committee meetings which concluded that there was no support for an additional smoking ban, so why are we going ahead. Seel answered that another committee was formed after that. Onder stated that he resigned due to questionable data being used. Seel stated that there was already a senate proposal regarding smoking to which Bulleit gave the official proposal number as Proposal 16-94 and that it was for buildings only. Onder stated that we don't have to follow other universities' leads for smoking or parking. Seel stated that the main reason was parking costs was cost containment. He also pointed out that students are currently charged, so now staff and faculty should be charged to get it off the general fund. Barr asked if off-campus parking will also be charged for to which Seel stated that they do pay a small fee for parking costs, as well as gas costs to come to campus. It may be that parking may be charged using hang tags in the future. He stated that he will give this feedback to the appropriate people, at least for better communication on the issue. Christianson stated that it would be nice if the BLG shared with campus what they are considering. Seel understands but it is difficult since the committee needs time for consideration and that some matters are confidential. Mullins brought up that the total faculty and staff compensation has fallen for the last 5 years. Seel stated that it was looked at and it hasn't fallen. Mullins disagreed stating that raises have not been up to inflation and that benefits have been cut. Seel reminded him that some benefits were transferred to salary. Mullins worried that not enough was transferred, citing severe cuts in TIAA-CREFF and health care benefits, especially difficult for staff. He asked if it was appropriate for the senate to discuss this issue. Seel stated that the external realities are beyond our control and that the university has increased faculty lines and other improvements. Mullins said that the revenue has increased for the university. Seel said that any increase has gone for financial aid and other worthy causes. Bulleit said that the reasons for these things can be discussed in the senate, and that, even though the senate has no say, it should be told why. Onder stated that since parking cost recovery was not enough to overcome the budget shortfall and since it will cause discontentment, it should not be charged. Nooshibadi thought that parking is not that important.

## **5. Reports**

### **a. Senate President**

Bulleit stated that he is on the Tobacco Committee and that the new policy is planned to be put in place without senate discussion. A Senate representative on the committee is needed to which Onder declined. Bulleit further stated that the Senate should be more vocal and ask for info before issues come up.

### **b. Senate Standing Committees**

**6. Old Business:** none.

### **7. New Business:**

**Approve meeting dates:** every two weeks. **Approved.**

**Standing committee membership:** **Approved.**

### **8. Adjournment.**

President Bulleit adjourned the meeting at 6:23pm.

Respectfully submitted

by Brian Barkdoll

Secretary of the University Senate