

# The University Senate of Michigan Technological University

Minutes of Meeting 525

7 November 2012

Synopsis: **Presentation: “Improving Undergraduate Student Success” by Provost Max Seel**

**1. Call to order and roll call.** President Bill Bulleit called the University Senate Meeting 525 to order at 5:30 pm on Wednesday, November 11, 2012. The Senate Secretary Brian Barkdoll called roll. Absent was a representative of the Cognitive and Learning Sciences, Materials Science and Engineering, and Student Affairs.

**Recognition of visitors.** Guests included Max Seel (Provost’s Office), Bonnie Gorman (Dean of Students’s Office), and Audrey Johnson (UAW 5000).

**2. Approval of agenda.** Bulleit pointed out the addition of Proposal 9-13 to New Business and asked if there were any other changes; the agenda was **approved** by a voice vote.

**3. Approval of minutes from Meeting 524.** Bulleit asked if there were any changes; Onder suggested mentioning that the tobacco-free campus discussion that was summarized from last meeting is available on the video since it was summarized and not fully detailed. There being no additional suggestions. The minutes were **approved** by a voice vote.

**4. Presentation: “[Improving Undergraduate Student Success](#)” by Provost Max Seel**

Seel showed slides that he presented to the Board of Control. He mentioned that we measure the quality of incoming students using GPA and ACT scores. Important metrics of student success are retention rates, job placement rates, and average starting salaries. These are nation-wide metrics that are used for comparison of universities. He pointed out that Michigan Tech has high retention rates, but could be higher if we had more programs for students to switch into. He also mentioned that we have a high placement rate to employers. Vable asked if only engineering is included in the salary figures? Seel gave details of how figures are reported and stated that they do include the science and arts in addition to engineering. Onder asked if we had all the numbers from the University of Michigan and Michigan State university, since they do well also. Seel said no. He went on to say that the Student Success Task Force looks at these issues as part of the AQIP assessment process and gave the task force charge and the benchmark universities used in the comparison. Vable mentioned ACT scores are low sometimes and that these students are at high risk and wondered if there are resources to help these students? Seel replied that we are a public university and have some low incoming scores. We could require higher ACT scores but would mean lower enrollment. We could add more learning centers and that these measures would require more resources, but that the Intervention Group will make recommendations. He discussed the lost income from losing students to which Gierke pointed out that if we improve 6-yr retention, and not just first-yr retention, we would have even more income. Onder said other universities use summer to help high-risk students. Seel said there was a similar program if they came early and that Math might use a placement test instead of ACT scores to appoint incoming students to the correct math class to start with. In addition, coming a summer before starting courses could also help international students to succeed.

## **5. Reports**

### **a. Senate President**

Bulleit informed the Senate that Senate Proposals 1-13 and 2-13 were passed by the administration and will be voted on at the December 14 Board of Control meeting.

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

No reports were given

## **6. Old Business:**

**a. Proposal 3-13:** “Proposal to Amend Senate Policy 312.1: Syllabus Requirement for all Courses at Michigan Technological University” (Voting Units: Academic) presented by Instructional Policy Committee

Vable voiced concern that there are many such statements that are being put in the syllabi of all courses and wondered if these all could be linked in the syllabus instead of fully elaborated to save space, to which Bulleit replied that he will talk to Mike Meyer, director of the Center for Teaching and Learning. The issue of removing student names for assessment was brought up and Mullins pointed out that this is required practice for ABET assessment evaluations in engineering already.

The proposal was **APPROVED**.

b. **Proposal 4-13:** “Proposal to Shelve Advanced Certificate in Modern Language and Area Study” (Voting Units: Academic) presented by Curricular Policy Committee

Gierke stated that the committee was in favor since this program was not well attended.

The proposal was **APPROVED**.

c. **Proposal 5-13:** “Proposal to Change Degree Title from M.S. in Environmental Policy to M.S. in Environmental and Energy Policy” (Voting Units: Academic) presented by Curricular Policy Committee

Riehl inquired as to the reason for the proposed change. Gierke stated that the program has moved in a new direction. Riehl expressed concern that the ‘energy’ portion is implicit and that the change may discount the ‘environment’ aspect, to which Scarlett replied that the Social Science Department is not concerned about this possible dilution of meaning. The purpose is that they are trying to harmonize the two degrees and that MS and PhD students are taking joint courses.

The proposal was **APPROVED** with one opposing vote.

## 7. New Business:

a. **Proposal 6-13:** “Proposal for an Undergraduate Certificate in Chinese Language and Area Study” (Voting Units: Academic) presented by Curricular Policy Committee

Gierke stated that the committee supports it. Mullins stated that the Finance Committee will forward questions to the Curricular Policy Committee. Seel added that one lecturer position has already been added and that this is motivated by a high demand for Mandarin Chinese from students and parents and corporate partners. Gierke said they already have about 12 students.

b. **Proposal 7-13:** “Tobacco-Free Campus” (Voting Units: Full Senate) presented by Administrative Policy Committee

Caneba introduced the proposal by saying that the committee will forward it to the Senate for discussion and possibly a vote. Bulleit stated that the USG is in favor of it.

Johnson from the AUW, to which clerical workers belong, expressed concern that they were not included in the initial decision, but that she went to the members with 5 questions. She proceeded to give results. The UAW members thought that the current system is adequate. Their concerns included that they were not included up until this point. They wondered if this needs to be negotiated with the UAW. It seemed to them that like this is someone’s personal agenda. In addition, time and productivity might be lost and rental possibilities for people who want to smoke (at catered weddings, for example). Enforcement of the current policy is better. She pointed out that smoking is not illegal and that smokers pay more taxes since they must also pay the ‘sin tax’. In addition, she said that this ban on tobacco might be better received if the university reduced health care costs to compensate. Onder supported this and added that the university distributes the drinking policy every year, but not the smoking policy. And that they should so we can educate tobacco users not to bother others.

Vable brought up that this top-down process of imposing the tobacco ban was also problematic. We were not asked and the over-riding of any other senate policy could happen in like manner. We need the administration’s response on the following issues: (1) Why did the university go directly to the Board of Control (BOC) and not to the Senate first? This gave the BOC a direct decision. (2) How can we make sure this does not happen again? He suggested that the Senate officers talk to the administration and the BOC to find out how this happened and how we can make sure that it doesn’t happen again. Bulleit replied that he was put on an implementation committee for the tobacco ban last summer but wanted to know why the senate wasn’t asked and that we should vote on this proposal and see how the senate votes. If it fails, then we must discuss it further with the administration. Hendrickson said, to put the timeline in perspective, that according to Les’ Senate presentation, a committee was formed and started working on this issue in spring 2010. According to the BOC policy, the policy was this issue was changed in July 2010, and now in Nov 2012 the issue is coming to the Senate.

Scarlett thought that it is hard to capture the complexity of all the issues in a yes-or-no vote. He said that he asked the graduate students in his department and that they are divided and that their voices are not heard. Mirchi from the GSG added that the GSG does not have an official stance, but is concerned why this is coming up after the fact. The USG representative added that their stance is for the ban but there is also division. Bulleit asked how to approach the issue?

Scarlett reiterated that the decision has already been made and that we were not asked for approval. He suggested that the whole campus be asked in a referendum. Onder made a motion to the effect that the Senate should seek a referendum of all constituents, primarily because of such controversy. Nooshebadi inserted that smokers are not respectful of others. Mullins concurred that a referendum is good, but that the phrasing is important. Barr stated that we should change 'smoke free' to 'tobacco free' in the current Senate policy since there is nothing to ban all tobacco now. Herbig said that this would be enforceable and wondered why we need to over-regulate. Barr mentioned that there is an ash tray outside the MEEM that is chained to a tree where it does not belong. Onder reiterated that he is in favor of hearing the current policy taught more to the campus community. Beck said that we don't enforce the current policy. Riehl pointed out that the policy does not state that there should be no smoking 50 ft from buildings so it's not enforceable. Beck said that we should put that in and enforce it. Caneba added that the task force on this issue says 'respectful enforcement' but that's all. Christianson said that Public Safety does not have an ordinance to allow enforcement. Nooshabadi thought that smoking 50 ft from a building won't work because 50 ft from one building may be next to an adjacent building and that this motion should not go forward. Smoking is not a good environment to work in.

Bulleit expressed that since there is so much disagreement, that a referendum is a good idea. Riehl thought that both proposals may end up without support if there's just a yes-or-no vote. He suggested that there be a list of 5 or 6 ideas and we decide which one to vote on. Bulleit thought that could also be confusing. Beck again brought up the idea of enforcement. He asked what we do for alcohol. Plummer thought that this is a good motion. The concern was expressed that the referendum would not affect the administration's actions. Scarlett said that this policy is like health benefit changes in that we have no role. He thought that the referendum could be to ask the constituents if we should bring senate policy in line with BOC policy. Charlesworth asked if smoking at social events would be permitted. Vable relayed a question from a constituent whether or not the university could stop a person from taking medicine and that some use marijuana as medicine.

Barr said that there are too many unanswered questions so we should bring back Les Cook for more questions. Caneba suggested that the proposal be postponed and Onder pulled his motion also and stated that he favors the referendum. Caneba will make suggestions for what is on the referendum. Onder said that nobody has seen the exact proposal from the administration. Caneba said that the committee does have a copy of the proposal.

Seel admitted that there is no good answer. He pointed out that other institutions are going this way. Since it's about a 50-50 split, why don't we go ahead and follow the lead of others. Onder stated again that this process started in the wrong way with a student survey for research. Seel said that the original task force went ahead because it was about 50-50. Onder said that the survey was biased and that we should enforce the existing policy. Riehl pointed out that in modern times there are more bans on smoking in general in our society.

Bulleit sent the proposal back to committee.

c. **Proposal 8-13:** "Proposal for Bachelor's Degree Title Change from Clinical Laboratory Science to Medical Laboratory Science" (Voting Units: Academic) presented by Curricular Policy Committee

Gierke stated that the change will reflect certification agency language. Seel confirmed that the name has changed to reflect the profession in the past so this change is consistent with that effort to stay current with the profession.

d. **Proposal 9-13:** "Mid Term Grade Proposal" (Voting Units: Academic) presented by Instructional Policy Committee

Seigel stated that this would delay the time for midterm evaluations to give time for more assignments to give grades on. Vable asked if midterm grades are a requirement to which Gierke replied that they are required for first year students.

## **8. Adjournment.**

President Bulleit adjourned the meeting at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted  
by Brian Barkdoll

