

**The University Senate
of Michigan Technological University**

Minutes of Meeting 560
4 March 2015

Synopsis:

The Senate

- Proposal 4-15: "Access to Student Records, Learning Management Systems and Permanent Record Systems" **passed**
- Motion on the Senate President **failed**

1. Call to order and roll call. [00:00 – 02:00]

President Craig Waddell called the University Senate Meeting 560 to order at 5:30 pm on Wednesday, March 4, 2015. The Senate Secretary Marty Thompson called roll. Absent were Senators Oliveira, Caneba, Stancher and Cadwell and representatives of Army/Air Force ROTC, Biological Sciences, Geological and Mining Engineering and Sciences, Materials Science & Engineering, Mechanical Engineering – Engineering Mechanics, Academic Services A, Finance, Student Affairs & Advancement A, Technology and Graduate Faculty Council.

2. Recognition of visitors. Guests included Max Seel (Provost's Office), Anita Quinn (Administration), Ann Kitalong-Will (Business Operations), Marco La Manna (GSG), Nate Peterson (USG), Dan LaForest (USG), Kyle Yarusso (USG), Bonnie Gorman (Dean of Students Office), Jacqueline Huntoon (Graduate School) and Cayce Will (IT).

3. Approval of agenda. [02:01 – 02:50]

Scarlett **moved** to approve the agenda. Hamlin **seconded**. The agenda **passed** unanimously on a voice vote.

4. Approval of minutes from Meeting 559. [02:51 – 03:24]

Plummer **moved** to approve the minutes. Scarlett **seconded**. The minutes **passed** unanimously on a voice vote.

5. Guest Presentation: Undergraduate Student Government (USG) Member Dan LaForest: "USG proposals for changes in the academic calendar" [03:25 – 31:00]

LaForest presented results of student feedback on the academic calendar and offered some suggestions to modify the calendar to address such concerns arising from the survey.

6. President's Report [31:01 – 32:19]

- a. Dennis Hext, manager, of Houghton County Memorial Airport, will discuss travel issues on March 18th.
- b. April 1st, Karen Hext will discuss benefits.
- c. Senate elections must be completed by April 1st.

7. Reports from Senate Standing Committees [32:20 – 42:44]

Academic and Instructional Policy Committee. None.

Administrative Policy Committee. Olson said a proposal to evaluate the senate president will be discussed at the next senate meeting.

Curricular Policy Committee. None.

Elections Committee. None.

Finance & Institutional Planning Committee. Mullins said the committee is working with the Fringe Benefits Committee (FBC) to discuss the impact of current retirement plans and changes to employee retirement contributions. Completed retirement benefits analysis of state, regional and peer group retirement plans to understand how Michigan

Tech compares. Proposal on retirement benefits is forthcoming. Contact Mike if want a copy of the summary comparing retirement plans.

Fringe Benefits Committee. None.

General Education and Assessment Committee. Scarlett said he and Steven Walton attended AACU general education and assessment conference and will provide a report of the experience to the senate.

Information Technology Committee. Velat said the committee is reviewing the administrative response to Proposal 20-15 to decide how to proceed. There has been discussion whether the IT committee belongs on the A-list or B-list.

Professional Staff Policy Committee. None.

Research Policy Committee. None.

Ad hoc library committee. Lucchesi said the committee has developed a three-tier system to rank journal usage with the goal of facilitating decision-making on journal selection. Information about this process and the results will be publicly accessible via Canvas site. They are requesting lists of journals from departments by March 25th.

7. Unfinished Business [42:45 – 43:34]

a. Proposal 4-15: "Access to Student Records, Learning Management Systems and Permanent Record Systems"

Mullins **moved** to approve the minutes. Scarlett **seconded**. The minutes **passed** by a majority vote.

b. Motion on the Senate President by Saeid Nooshabadi [43:35 – 46:20]

Scarlett **moved** to close the session. Hamlin **seconded**. No Discussion. The motion **passed** unanimously.

Nooshabadi presented his motion. He **moved** to approve the motion. Scarlett **seconded**.

Mullins **moved** to close debate. Hamlin **seconded**. The motion **passed** unanimously.
The motion was **rejected** by a majority vote.

Hamlin **moved** to come out of closed session. Mullins **seconded**. The motion to come out of closed session **passed** unanimously.

8. New Business [46:21 – 1:27:25]

a. Proposal 28-15: "Proposal on Opt-out Pension Design" [46:21 – 57:40]

Beck discussed the transition from an opt-in retirement contribution plan to an opt-out plan. An analysis of current participation patterns reveals that some employees either neglect or choose not to participate in this program by failing to "opt-in." In 2014, the Michigan Legislature passed a law that enables employers to automatically enroll employees in a defined contribution plan unless they choose to specifically "opt-out" of such participation. The rationale is to enhance the opportunity to save enough for a reasonable retirement. The proposed change includes an automatic 3% contribution from MTU.

b. Proposal 29-15: "Proposal to Reduce Cost of Medical Care to Michigan Tech Employees" [57:41 – 1:22:40]

Beck discussed the request that the university providing some medical cost relief to its employees. The rationale is that the excessive cost shifting onto the employees has directly resulted in a purported \$2.3 million surplus in the budget. Waddell suggested a benefits forum in April. Based on the 2013 Senate Fringe Benefit Committee Employee Survey results, 54% of the respondents (64% response rate) delayed needed medical care due to out-of-pocket cost. One might reasonably assume that employees in lower salary ranges may be disproportionately delaying accessing necessary care because of the associated out-of-pocket costs. Current AON-Hewitt reports show that total health care costs to Michigan Tech employees has increased by as much as \$3 million since 2012. Michigan Tech health care costs are about 9.3% of an employee's total compensation. This percentage is the lowest of any university surveyed.

Page nineteen of the February 2015 AON-Hewitt report suggests that, based on favorable cost experience, some relief could be given to Michigan Tech employees.

c. Proposal 30-15: "Graduate Certificate in Post-Secondary STEM Education" [1:22:41 – 1:27:25]

Barkdoll said the goal is to develop high-level skills in STEM content areas to improve access to advanced educational opportunities and workplace success. Improvements in undergraduate teaching practices will contribute to the goal of encouraging and enabling more students to persist and earn degrees in STEM fields. This certificate program is aligned with similar graduate certificate (and Ph.D.) programs at other universities that aim to improve STEM teaching and research. Developing such a program at Michigan Tech has the potential to both attract new graduate students who have an interest in STEM education and to better prepare our current graduate students for careers in STEM education.

9. Public Comments

None.

10. Adjournment.

Wanless **moved** to adjourn. Hamlin **seconded**. President Waddell adjourned the meeting at 7:16 pm.

Respectfully submitted
by Marty Thompson
Secretary of the University Senate