

The University Senate of Michigan Technological University

Date: April 21, 2021

Subject: Minutes for University Senate Meeting #659

Video recording of the meeting can be found here:

<https://huskycast.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=b483c547-c65b-4131-b0b0-ad1200236b8f>

Format: Zoom

Senate Officers: Sam Sweitz (President), Jacob Gutter (Vice-President), Carlos Amador (Secretary)

Sam Sweitz called meeting 659 to order at 5:30pm.

Carlos Amador performed the roll call and recognized visitors. A quorum was reached.

Motion to approve the agenda for meeting 659.

Motion to add proposal 86-21 – The 2021-2022 University Senate Budget to new business. Approved.

Motion was made to strike proposal 85-21 from the agenda. AIPC recommends more time, as bringing it forward is procedurally improper. Concerns raised over whom the responsibility should go to, as it was never assigned to AIPC. Reminder that Executive Committee (ExCom) voted 8 to 5 to bring it to the Senate. Concerns raised that this is “too big to rush.” Corrections made about its assignment to AIPC. Suggestion that this proposal represents new business and not an emergency. Concerns raised that this is too much for the end of the term. Suggestion made that ExCom submit minutes to avoid confusion. Concerns raised over ExCom and the standing committees’ relationship. Call for vote on amending the agenda to strike 85-21 made. Motion made and approved for electronic ballot. Motion to amend is not approved.

Motion to approve the agenda was approved.

Minutes for meetings 656 and 657 were approved.

Minutes from meeting 658 struck because of missing links to candidate speeches/presentations.

President’s Report:

Calls for volunteer members for the ad hoc University Senate Handbook Committee.

Reads letter sent by the U South Florida professor. Letter addresses proposal 41-21 on race and inclusion and was distributed to all senators. Letter argues against the accusations of plagiarism and supports resolution 41-21.

Committee Reports:

Academic and Instructional Policy Committee: Defer.

Administrative Policy Committee: Received survey of president results and will share results, hopefully the following week.

Curricular Policy Committee: Defer.

Committee for Promoting and Facilitating Equity and Understanding (CPFEU): Thanks to the committee & constituents.

Elections Committee: apologizes to anyone who was inconvenienced by the special meeting time for speeches. Results of elections: Sam Sweitz is continuing president (reelected), Steve Knudstrup is Vice President, and Kette Thomas is Secretary.

Finance and Institutional Planning Committee: Defer.

Fringe Benefits Committee: Nothing.

Information Technology Committee: Nothing.

Professional Staff Policy Committee: Thanks the Senate.

Research Policy Committee: Nothing.

Ad hoc Committee on Textbook Affordability: Committee met regularly throughout the year, reviewed draft proposals and found they didn't meet student needs in an increasingly digital environment. Explored options. Funding does exist for certain defined projects in textbook affordability. Investigated inclusive/open access. No firm commitments made this year. "Covid has impacted people in a way that has limited resources and time for piloting alternate models of textbook affordability." Recommends that ad-hoc continue into next academic year. Thanks to the committee. (VPA minutes)

Unfinished Business:

43-21: Update Senate Procedure 504.1.1 Teaching Effectiveness Evaluations: Called to vote by digital ballot. Passed.

44-21: Reduction of courses at 3000-level from 9 credits to 6 credits in undergraduate minors. Concerns over whether a change in policy is necessary. An argument is made that the change would allow for flexibility in departments with diverse models. Motion is called to vote. Passed.

51-21: Shelve graduate certificate in Sustainability (by Sustainable Futures Institute) in favor of 9 credit stackable. Called to vote. Passed.

58-21: New graduate certificate in Natural Resource and Environmental Economics (by College of Business as part of MS in Applied Natural Resource Economics) because there is growing need for sustainability economists in the job market, as businesses work to achieve sustainability. Called to vote. Passed.

59-21: New BS in Environmental Science and Sustainability (tracks are now left out of the name) (by College of Forest Resources and Environmental Science) is designed to increase growth in the programs in Forestry, and to increase focus on the Sustainability portion of the mission. There will be tracks in Climate Science, Environmental Policy, and Geospatial Science. Approved by finance. Called to vote. Passed.

60-21: Procedure for Pilot Testing of Modifications to the General Education Program: CPC with IdeaHub, et al. Summary: a framework for allowing limited tests of changes to GEs as pilot studies since there is currently no mechanism to do so. See the following:

- 6 credits or less of change, GE council vet, Provost approves
- More than 6 credits of change, has to go through Senate CPC and Finance
- Curate current lists, GE council/provost
- Students are tapped for enrollment, but can decline, and can leave at any time
- 15% max of student body in a pilot.
- No max on how many pilots at once, this is up to the admin.

Concerns raised over resource allocations for this proposal. Clarification made that the onus is on proposers to address the resource questions. Called to vote. Passed.

63-66: All certs from Physics: Called to vote as a slate. Passed.

63-21: New grad cert Advanced Computational Physics (by Department of Physics and co-sponsored by Dept of Computer Science); computational physics is ubiquitous; we can offer grounding in it.

64-21: New grad cert Frontiers in Optics and Photonics (by Department of Physics with co-sponsors Department of Materials Science and Engineering and Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering; nano-scale study of optics and photonics with applications in telecommunications, optical computing, quantum sensing and computing, etc.

65-21: New grad cert Big Data Statistics in Astrophysics (by Department of Physics with co-sponsor Department of Computer Science); more data in greater size from telescopes and instruments every day, lots of growth.

66-21: New grad cert in Frontiers in Materials Physics (by Department of Physics with co-sponsor Department of Computer Science); applications in energy and electronics devices, quantum computing, etc.; experimental materials at the nanoscale.

67-21: New grad cert in Profit-Increasing Strategies in Chemical Processing (Department of Chemical Engineering); efficiency, based on economics of product characteristics and automation of processes; Call to vote: Passed.

68-21: New grad cert in Geospatial Data Science and Technology (from Department of Civil and Environmental): to serve 1) BS in Geospatial Engineering and Integrated Geospatial Technology masters students in getting data science skills/training/background; 2) students in forestry, civil, environmental, geological, computer engineering, forestry, and data science who want to wrestle with both big data and geospatial in particular; 3) working geospatial professionals; Vote: passed.

69-21: New grad cert in Advanced Photogrammetry and Mapping with UAS (from Department of Civil and Environmental); same as prior list, but focusing on the actual mapping rather than the big data style analysis. Called to vote. Passed

70-21: New grad cert in Medical Imaging (by Department of Biomedical Engineering); a fundamentals course on how imaging functions at the radiation level through device design and application. Called to vote. Passed.

71-21: New grad cert in Manufacturing Engineering (by Department of Manufacturing and Mechanical Engineering Technology); lots of job market for this. Called to vote. Passed.

72-21: New grad cert in Engineering Sustainability and Resilience (Department of Chemical Engineering and Initiative for Sustainability and Resilience); lots of job market for sustainability professionals, and need even on our campus. Called to vote. Passed.

73-21: New grad cert in Control Systems (Department of Mechanical Engineering/Engineering Mechanics); control systems are everywhere, there is a lot of need for control system engineers. Called to vote. Passed.

74-21: Non-tenure Track Sabbatical Leave: Point of clarification by the Provost over concerns that there are discrepancies between policy for TT and NTT. Provost says everything currently in the sabbatical leave policy for TT will apply to NTT via the main policy. Call to vote. Passed.

75-77: All Concentrations in Psychology Vote as slate. Passed.

75-21: Concentration in Social Psychology; how people interact with one another and their environments.

76-21: Concentration in Cognitive Psychology; brain, perception, memory, learning, etc..

77-21: Concentration in Clinical/Counseling Psychology; psychological problems and their treatment.

78-21: New BS degree in Human factors (by Department of Cognitive and Learning Science) Human factors being tied to ergonomics, interface design, etc. Human factors psychology that broadly covers how we work, use tech, and interact with large and small socio-technical systems. Lots of demand for these practitioners in the job market. Call to vote. Passed.

79-21: Extensions to probationary period: extends probationary period to two years for new faculty if their first year at Tech was derailed due to COVID. Allows second request for one year extension. Call to vote. Passed.

80-21: New grad cert in WASH engineering (water sanitation and hygiene) (by Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering); focused on how to translate existing skills into developing countries or disaster areas. Call to vote. Passed.

82-21: Academic calendar for 22-23: 22-23 is same as this year. For the years 23-24, they are considering start before labor day (currently written to start after labor day). If it's bumped earlier, this helps grading get completed prior to Christmas, moves up midyear commencement, and moves Spring start to before MLK day (current has it after). An amendment is proposed to alternate 23-24 calendar as shown in meeting (to go with the earlier calendar which starts before Labor Day, which strikes the listed 23-24 calendar which starts after labor day). Concerns over childcare linked to time choices, as starting too early gets in the way of schooling schedules. Amendment is called to a vote: Does not pass. Original proposal called to a vote: passed.

83-21: Academic calendar procedures update: wanting to update how we start term, so that if Labor day is on Sept 3-7, we start before Labor Day (now it says if Labor Day is 5-7th). Proposal to withdraw this proposal. Withdrawn.

84-21: Evaluation procedures for department chairs: term of appointment 6 years, reviews done every three years; concern over an inconsistency in how an external committee member will function (it lists two different parties as who will be the liaison between the committee and the college dean); clarification that these are two different people with two different functions: external member (from outside the college) is liaison between committee and dean; committee chair is acting as head of committee, so also communicates to department/dean, etc. They offer two different perspectives to the dean, inside the committee and outside.

An amendment is proposed: change last paragraph of section II, posts new text in chat; also shared on screen; new amendment would allow any suitable faculty to throw their hat in the ring during the first two weeks of the current chair's sixth year. Suggestion is made that mark's amendment being changed to be all eligible faculty need to opt out, rather than having to get letters from the candidates who are most interested. Suggestion is made to cap this so assistant professors and unpromoted faculty should be restricted from this. Concern over ending up in a department with a ton of faculty who leave their hat in the ring out of inertia. Clarification made that anyone tapped has to then affirm they are OK with being in the running. Suggestion that a nominating process should happen instead of letters of intent. Concern that a nomination models is still an obstacle to DEI. Amendment moves to a vote: passed.

Question asked about how three year appointments to 6 years squares with desire to increase diversity of candidates. Clarification made that current appointments are indefinite, so this is a mild curtailing of that. Concern that in the new amendment, the two week limit is arbitrarily short and disadvantages those already least likely to apply. Clarification made that everyone has six years to think about it, not just two weeks. Concerns raised that we are fostering a traditional mercenary atmosphere about leadership, rather than actually welcoming diversity, a good chair might not be "strong" in the traditional way. An amendment is proposed that only tenured faculty be eligible, but the Provost clarified that NTT faculty can be chairs. Motion to postpone discussion to the next meeting. Passed.

New business:

85-21: Proposal to Create University Teaching-Facilitators Group for Support of Teaching Effectiveness to Resolve Student. Proposal address biased complaints, student complaints, etc. Question asked about the number of student complaints that are unaddressed. Clarification made that this is private to the board at present. Concerns raised over voting on a subject which lacks the scope of the problem. Question asked about the number of faculty disciplined for poor teaching? Motion made to postpone this proposal to the fall. Postponement ruled out of order because it is new business.

86-21: Budget for next year (senate): introduced to be approved at start of next academic year.

Public Comments:

Nominations called for senate rep to form a campus master plan committee.

Comments on postponed proposal 84-21: regarding eligibility of faculty members to be chairs, emphasis made that NTT faculty ARE eligible to be chairs.

Adjournment:

Adjourned.