

The University Senate of Michigan Technological University

Date: May 5, 2021

Subject: Minutes for University Senate Meeting #660

Video recording of the meeting can be found here:

<https://huskycast.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=dfc0e499-51de-4f63-ab8a-ad2000208dfa>

Format: Zoom

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

Sam Sweitz called meeting 660 to order at 5:30pm.

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

Motion was made for an emergency proposal: Add resolution 87-21, encouraging COVID-19 vaccination for safe return to in-person classroom formats in Fall 2021.

Resolution passed.

Motion to approve the minutes from 558 passed.

There were no minutes from meeting 559 to pass.

Motion to approve the agenda was passed.

President's Report:

Considered 87 proposal and resolutions this year. Thanked everyone for the hard work.

Recognized the parting Vice-President and Secretary.

Committee Reports:

Elections Committee: Addressing questions concerning election fairness and bias was put to the committee. This year there was an "uptick" in the number of faculty seats that were filled. A number of tools were also invented to improve the process. Vacancies for University committees were reduced by a significant number, especially staff vacancies. Electronic balloting has improved voter participation. Recognition of Ashley Buchanan's efforts to advance the voting procedures. Recognition of Paige Short for helping to fill staff vacancies.

Ad hoc Committee to draft the Senate Handbook: Committee has met twice and has elected a chair.

Committee for Promoting and Facilitating Equity and Understanding: Working on a proposal to establish a Senate ad hoc committee to review institutional policies on non-academic and non-research misconduct and abuse. Review and develop policies related to professional climate, collegiality, harassment, and bullying, as well as procedures for addressing accusations in non-academic/non-research settings. Addressed concerns related to the previous year.

Unfinished Business:

Proposal 84-21 – Evaluation Procedures for Chairs

APC Committee prozed a new amendment to the current proposal. Add that the Dean will solicit nominations and intent to apply for Chair positions upon the sixth year. Concerns raised that a single faculty member can override the wishes of the majority. Points of clarification made. Amendment was approved.

Another amendment was proposed for 84-21 asking that the Dean conduct a survey of all faculty and staff deemed eligible to be considered for chair following the sixth year of the current chair's service.

An amendment centered on language to clarify eligibility and nominations for the chair position was proposed and discussed. Amendment to revise the language on proposal 84-21 was approved.

A proposal to amend the language in 84-21 to reflect a vote whether to retain the current chair or proceed with a new search was discussed. Central concern was the ability one person may have to override the wishes of the majority of the department by voting to proceed with a search for a new chair. Clarification made (by the APC Chair) that, in the event there are qualified internal candidates, those individuals are expected to genuinely apply for the chair position. Individuals are not expected to falsely submit nominations to intentionally force a search. Point of concern was made that the wording ought to reflect the department's wishes to reappoint a sitting chair rather than conduct a search. Further clarification was made that the internal chair is at liberty to reapply for the position and get reelected by the majority in the event of a search. Point of clarification made by senate member involved the difference between voting for a new chair and voting for an acceptable candidate, with the understanding that it is ultimately the decision of the Dean and Provost. A recommendation was made and accepted to adjust the language on the proposal to reflect a department vote on whether to proceed with a search *after* nominations have been solicited, submitted and vetted for eligibility. Concern was raised about nominees having to campaign for the department to vote to hold a search. This was a particular concern in light of DEI efforts. Proposal to amend was not approved. Motion moved to table 84-21 for further discussion.

Proposal 85-21 – Proposal to Create a University Teaching-Facilitators Group for Support of Teaching Effectiveness to Resolve Student Concerns.

Motion made to table discussion of 85-21. Motion approved.

Emergency Resolution 87-21 – Encouraging COVID-19 Vaccinations in our Community for a Safe Return to In-Person Classes in Fall 2021

Reminder submitted that this requires 2/3 vote to pass because it is an emergency resolution. Distinction was made between 'encouraging' and 'mandating' that people take the COVID-19 vaccine. Concerns raised over privacy and medical records being breached or violated. Clarification by committee member was made that there is no "enforcement" in the resolution that would necessitate access to people's records. More concerns over "overreach" and breach of privacy. Concern raised over alternative to mandatory vaccination, whereas social distancing guidelines would not be enforced for the coming semester. Clarification made by the Provost was that masks would be required but social distancing would not be enforced. Points made that requiring vaccinations was common and not deemed intrusive in other contexts.

Motion made to amend the final line in the proposal which reads, "The University Senate of Michigan Technological University strongly supports mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations..." to "The University Senate of Michigan Technological University strongly encourages COVID-19 vaccinations.... A recommendation was made and accepted to remove the word "mandatory" as well as any reference to personal preference or health.

A call to vote was proposed and passed. Motion was approved.

A motion was made to add language to 87-21 that supports mandatory COVID-19 vaccination for those living in on-campus housing, as per state and federal guidelines. Motion was approved

A call to vote on the larger resolution was made. A motion was made to close the discussion on the proposal, which passed. Emergency Resolution Proposal 87-21 was approved by electronic ballot.

(Tabled) Proposal 84-21 - Evaluation Procedures for Chairs

Motion made to untable proposal 84-21 which was not approved.

(Tabled) Proposal 85-21 - Proposal to Create a University Teaching-Facilitators Group for Support of Teaching Effectiveness to Resolve Student Concerns.

Motion made to untable proposal 85-21 which was not approved.

Public Comments:

Recommendation to amend the constitution to assure there are alternates for faculty senate-at-large for equity. Recommendation on the chair search proposal, stating if the “review is conducted early, that the director of institutional equity and the Dean are asked to support a report to the Provost substantiating the reasons for an early review and ruling out bias.” Recommendation regarding, in the event a chair has been found guilty of misconduct (discrimination, Title IX, etc), this information is to be disclosed at the time of nomination.

Announcement:

Dean of Students Search – three candidates were recommended to the President.

Adjournment:

Move to adjourn was approved.