

**MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY**  
**University Senate**

Minutes of Meeting 736 — April 16, 2026

**Date:** April 16, 2026  
**Time:** 12:30 PM  
**Location:** ChemSci 102  
**Presiding:** Robert Hutchinson, Senate President, ceded to Patty Cobin, Vice President

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 PM. Prior to the formal agenda, the President offered congratulations to incoming officers and shared remarks reflecting on his tenure with the Senate, emphasizing the Senate's academic and policy mission and the importance of trust between the Senate and its administrative partners. Election results for officers were circulated electronically and results are as follows:

- President: Holly Hassel
- Vice President: Patrice Cobin
- Secretary: Stephen Morse

**Roll Call of Senators and Recognition of Visitors**

Roll was called. Visitors were recognized.

**Approval of Agenda**

A motion to approve the agenda was made. A motion to amend the agenda to add previously tabled 16-26 to unfinished business was made, seconded, and approved. The amended agenda was approved.

**Approval of Minutes from Meeting 735**

Motion to approve the minutes from Meeting 735. Motion carried.

**President's Report**

The President ceded time to the Provost, who presented a provisional academic calendar for 2026–2027.

The primary change in the provisional calendar is a shift to Thursday start dates for the beginning of instruction in certain semesters. The rationale for this change is twofold: to account for the addition of summer orientation for new students which places pre-semester orientation across three days (Monday through Wednesday) rather than the full week.

It was reported that in Spring semesters where an early start date falls on a Thursday, this approach yields two additional instructional days. The calendar does not change the overall structure of the academic year. Some semesters in the provisional calendar retain a Monday start where a Thursday start would fall on an unreasonable date.

The Provost noted the calendar would take effect in approximately 16 months and invited questions. Links to the calendars were provided: [2027-2028](#), [2028-2029](#), [2029-2030](#).

## **Committee Reports**

### **Global Campus Working Group — Chair Paul Bergstrom**

Senator Bergstrom reported on behalf of the Global Campus Working Group. The group has begun framing the scope of its work and plans to meet over the summer with the Provost and Vice President for Global Campus. The group is not yet ready to deliver a formal report. A final report outlining fact-finding efforts and recommendations for Senate policy changes is expected to be delivered to the full Senate in Fall 2026.

### **Academic and Instructional Policy Committee (AIPC) Follow-Up on ITF Survey**

The AIPC presented findings from its survey of Instructor-Track Faculty (ITF) regarding promotion charter standards. Links to full survey findings were provided and it is anticipated further discussions will take place at the academic unit level.

## **Unfinished Business**

### **25-26: “Interdisciplinary Minor in Robotics”** (Voting Units: Academic)

Establishes a new interdisciplinary minor in robotics.

*Motion to approve. Seconded. No discussion. Motion carried.*

### **26-26: “Proposal to Establish a Graduate Certificate in Applied Physics”** (Voting Units: Academic)

Establishes a new graduate certificate in applied physics.

*Motion carried.*

### **27-26: “Graduate Certificate in Data Science-Enabled Environmental Sensing”** (Voting Units: Academic)

Establishes a new graduate certificate.

*Motion carried.*

### **28-26: “Establishment of a New Graduate Certificate in Product Management”** (Voting Units: Academic)

Establishes a graduate certificate intended to train students in product management.

*Motion carried.*

### **29-26: “Proposal to Establish a Graduate Certificate in Robotics Engineering”** (Voting Units: Academic)

Establishes a new graduate certificate in robotics engineering.

*Motion carried.*

### **30-26: “Master of Science in Robotics Engineering”** (Voting Units: Academic)

Establishes a new Master of Science degree in Robotics Engineering.

*Motion carried.*

### **34-26: “Proposal to Shelve the Enterprise Concentration”** (Voting Units: Academic)

Proposes to shelve the Enterprise Concentration effective the following fall.

*Motion carried.*

**35-26: “Minor in Artificial Intelligence”** (Voting Units: Academic)

Establishes a new minor in Artificial Intelligence.

*Motion to approve. Seconded. Motion carried.*

**36-26: “Minor in Individual Health and Well-being”** (Voting Units: Academic)

Establishes a new minor in Individual Health and Well-being.

*Motion carried.*

**16-26: “Enhancing Shared Governance: Clarifying Staff Voting Eligibility in the Senate”**  
**(Voting Units: All)**

The proposal was discussed. A motion to amend was introduced, proposing the following language, returned as 7.ii and amended: “Only Faculty Senators or their alternate, including at-large faculty senators, may vote on degree programs and their associated curricula.”

Substantial discussion followed. Senators raised questions and concerns regarding the scope of the proposed change, its implications for the Senate’s shared governance model, the respective roles of faculty and professional staff in academic matters, and the relationship of the proposal to applicable federal, state, and Board policies. A request was made for a secret ballot. It was agreed that an electronic ballot would be distributed.

**New Business**

**18-26: “Charter Policy Proposal — Update to Faculty Handbook 1.4.1 — Departmental Charters”** (Voting Units: Academic)

The Administrative Policy Committee introduced a proposal to establish a policy requiring departmental charters to be reviewed and updated on a regular cycle. The motivating factors include making the charter revision process more manageable and ensuring charters remain current. Under the proposal, charters not updated within six years would revert to a Senate default.

Significant concerns were raised by senators on behalf of their constituents. The primary objection was that departmental charters are governing documents under the control of individual units, and that the proposed requirement would impose an external mandate on a process currently managed by the units themselves. Concerns were also raised that the default charter provision could effectively override unit-level faculty governance. The proposal will be further discussed at the first meeting of the 2026-2027 academic year.

**38-26: “Proposed Change to Senate Procedure 805.1.1 — Search Procedures for Departmental Chairs and School Deans”** (Voting Units: Academic)

The Administrative Policy Committee presented proposed revisions to the search procedure for departmental chairs and school deans, intended to bring Senate procedure into alignment with current HR practice. Key changes include: revised committee composition (three tenured/tenure-track members selected by secret ballot, with Instructor-Track Faculty now included where applicable); clarification of the College Dean’s role as hiring manager; updated language regarding student representative eligibility (must be enrolled in a degree program represented by the unit); and designation of an ex-officio, non-voting administrative representative. A redline and clean version were made available.

Questions were raised regarding student representative participation in required training, anonymous voting procedures in small units, and the role of the unit senator in the search process. The appropriate balance between faculty governance and administrative authority over

chair appointments was also discussed. The proposal will be brought back in the next academic year for further consideration.

**Public Comments**

Congratulations were extended to senators Jari and Kailee Sague on the birth of their daughter.

The new Graduate Student Government president was introduced and recognized. The president raised the issue of the university's IT policy regarding email deactivation for graduates which has been recently changed. The GSG president will share further information with the Senate officers.

*Meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm*

**Respectfully submitted**

Holly Hassel

Senate Secretary

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