

# The Senate of Michigan Technological University

---

## PROPOSAL 1-81

### THE SENATE OF MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY RECOMMENDS RETENTION OF THE PROGRAM LEADING TO THE ASSOCIATE IN APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE IN NURSING TECHNOLOGY

#### SUPPORT MATERIAL FOR AN AFFIRMATIVE VOTE ON THE PROPOSAL:

The following statements are in support of retention of the Nursing Program as a viable education program at Michigan Tech, one which fulfills the goal of the University as stated in the long-range plan of 1978. The first two statements are based on information provided by the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The third points to goals of the University and the role the nursing program plays in education and public service. The fourth statement clarifies entry into practice position of the American Nurse Association. Lastly, the fifth attempts to clarify the difference between the financial crisis the University currently faces and the effect of cancellation of the nursing program.

1. The data provided by the Vice President of Academic Affairs office clearly indicate that the cost of the nursing program at Michigan Tech is high when compared to all other programs at Tech (two other programs are higher). When compared to all other nursing programs in the state, however, it was below the state average. There are several programs at Michigan Tech which are much higher than the state average.
2. The cost per credit hour of \$125.91 for the nursing program has been compared to the College of Engineering average of \$50.88 per credit hour. This data must be examined in light of the fact that nursing is only one program within the School of Technology. If one compares the School of Technology average of \$57.38 to the average of \$50.88 for the College of Engineering, the impression is different. The data shows that one engineering degree program is higher in cost per student credit hour than the nursing program. These are based on 1979-80 academic year information.

When the cost per student credit hour in engineering is compared to the state average, Michigan Tech is doing the job at 2/3 the statewide average. Examining the cost data in this light, our cost in engineering should really be around \$75 per credit hour, based on the statewide average. Looking at current information from the Department of Nursing, the cost per credit hour is about \$104 with the current low enrollment in nursing. It is believed that if active recruitment of students for nursing was initiated and enrollments increased to a full 40 students, cost of this program would also be about \$75.75, not significantly out of line.

3. There have been statements that the nursing program does not fit the goals of this University. The long range plan developed for Michigan Tech in 1978 states the purpose of the University as follows:

"To enhance and develop programs in education, scholarship, research and public service that will, because of their contributions to the satisfaction of

important societal needs, bring distinction to the University and its graduates in technologically related areas. A balance between theory and practice will be emphasized along with the appreciation for the development of technology to serve society."

Clearly, public service is part of the stated goal for the University. The nursing program at Michigan Tech and the program prior to 1973 at St. Joseph's Hospital does provide public service for the local community and the Western Upper Peninsula. The many letters of support received by the Board of Control attest to the importance of the nursing program to the local community.

Michigan Tech has played a role in providing good health service to the community and seems to want to continue to play a role in health science in the future. The four year medical technology program is very well accepted throughout the state. The College of Engineering is building a Bioengineering program which is very closely aligned with the medical profession. Research in the Chemistry Department is currently cancer oriented. Michigan Tech students have done very well in getting accepted to medical schools. The nursing program seems like a logical component of these efforts.

The comprehensive health services available in the Copper Country do play a role in the recruitment and retention of faculty. The less than two percent of the budget it takes to operate the nursing program may be more important than some non-academic activities with similar costs. However, detailed information on non-academic cost was not provided to the Curricular Policy Committee.

4. The American Nurses Association at the Entry Into Nursing Practice National Conference February 1978, Kansas City, Missouri reaffirmed the 1965 American Nurses Association position paper that the minimum preparation for beginning professional practice should be the baccalaureate in nursing and the minimum preparation for beginning technical practice should be the associate degree in nursing. This brings nursing into line with engineering and other professional disciplines. The Department of Nursing at Michigan Tech is in the School of Technology and is educating technical nurses on the same level as other programs within this school.
5. The State of Michigan is faced with several financial problems and Michigan Tech has felt the pinch. Monies do need to be carefully watched during this time. It is hoped by all that as the economy of the state picks up, funding for Michigan Tech will improve. Cancellation of the nursing program will not solve the immediate problem, in fact, little savings will be felt for two years. The solution to our short term problem does not lie in implementing a long term solution. The financial holocaust the University is currently facing should not be confused with or associated with the cancellation of the nursing program. They are two completely different problems.

## **SUPPORT MATERIAL FOR A NEGATIVE VOTE ON THE PROPOSAL**

The two-year Nursing program at MTU is a quality program. It does provide educational opportunities for local residents and others. It does contribute substantially to the quality of health care in the Copper Country. However, the resources allocated to Nursing could make a greater contribution to MTU's mission if they were allocated to other areas.

The primary role of MTU in the State of Michigan is education in engineering and related disciplines. MTU was never intended to be a community college or a liberal arts institution. Past, present, and future budget problems in Michigan have jeopardized fulfillment of MTU's primary role. Over the past eight years, the number of student credit hours generated per full-time

equivalent faculty have risen 34 percent at MTU as a whole and 89 percent in the College of Engineering. This rise has been steady and cannot be explained away by an engineering enrollment dip in a particular base year. The near-doubling of loads in Engineering obviously impairs accomplishment of MTU's primary role. The proper course of action for MTU to follow is to curtail nonessential activities and concentrate on the primary mission.

Nursing would be terminated over a two-year period. All current Nursing students would have the opportunity to graduate. Only one tenured member of the faculty would be affected. No other MTU degree programs require Nursing courses in their curriculum. Nursing courses are not typically taken as electives by persons in other degree programs. Although the loss of Nursing would be unfortunate, it would not have a noticeable impact on the quality of any other degree programs nor would it affect the role of the University. Moreover, the possibility of Nursing ever evolving into a program which achieves national recognition or which is integrated into the broader educational program of the University is low.

There are dozens of Nursing programs in Michigan. MTU's Nursing program is a high cost program relative to other degree programs at MTU and relative to other Nursing programs.

**Defeated by Senate: 12 November 1980**