

The University Senate of Michigan Technological University

PROPOSAL 9-04

ENHANCING THE CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY

A study released in February 2003 by the National Bureau of Economic Research <http://www.nber.org/papers/w9482> concluded that "high aptitude students are nearly indifferent to a college's distance from their home or whether it is in-state or public." **However, this same study found that the mean distance between a student's high school and the college attended for 3094 respondents was 575.6 miles.** This suggests that although the majority of students are not averse to traveling farther away from home to attend a college or university, more than half of all students find an acceptable university within 600 miles of home. These are two related but independent variables. Together they suggest that to overcome the inertia of distance, Michigan Tech must entice prospective students with a combination of programs, price, and place (that is, aspects of place other than distance from home).

National Geographic Adventure magazine included Houghton in its July/August 2002 cover story as the gateway to one of America's top 10 summer sports meccas; Norman Crampton included Houghton in his book *The 100 Best Small Towns in America* (second edition, Macmillan, 1995); and *Men's Journal* included Houghton in its March 2002 cover story "The 50 Best Places to Live: The Healthiest, Safest, Most Fun Towns in America." Beyond academic excellence, these surveys provide strong evidence that students might be persuaded to travel long distances to attend Michigan Tech. However, simply promoting the place is not enough. We need to think as well about enhancing the place to take advantage of the opportunities that nature and history have provided us.

Therefore, the University Senate proposes that Michigan Tech solicit, screen, and implement proposals for further enhancing and better promoting the campus and surrounding community. Proposals should be screened by a campus-wide committee established for this purpose. Successful precedents for such efforts include the recent call for Vision Initiative Proposals and the Budget Reduction Advisory Committee's (BRAC's) call for feedback from across campus.

This effort should be broadly construed to include everything from renovating residence halls to improving classroom design. Successful examples in this area include the construction of the Rozsa Center, the enhancement of the Tech Trails, and the proposed Center for Integrated Learning and Information Technology, MUB expansion, and residence hall renovations. Much more could be done, however, with classroom design (see, for example, the cover story on this topic in the March 7, 2003 issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*) and with developing recreational use of our waterfront location--especially the land between the Minerals and Materials Building and Lot 10--which could be particularly helpful with plans to develop a full, 14-week summer semester.

Adopted by Senate: November 19, 2003

Approved by President: January 22, 2004