

The University Senate of Michigan Technological University
Proposal 12-08
(Voting Units: Academic)

Faculty Referendum
on Inclusion of Workload and Merit Description in Unit Charters

Background

In the early 1990's, departments in the university had a mixture of Heads and Chairs. In 1992 several governance proposals were put up for referendum by the Senate. Proposal 4-92 said the title of department supervisor will be Chair and gave the following definitions of Heads and Chairs:

Head: A head is understood to be an agent of the administration with a secondary responsibility as liaison from the department to the administration. The head may establish and disband any committees without the approval or counsel of the department faculty. The head alone is responsible for the smooth operation of the department. The dean selects the head with input from the department. The head serves for an indefinite period of time at the pleasure of the administration.

Chair: A chair is understood to be an agent of the department faculty with a secondary responsibility as liaison from the administration to the faculty. Under a Chair, the departmental governance is defined by a departmental charter created with input from all departmental faculty. This charter may not be altered without the faculty's consent. The faculty and the Chair share responsibility for the smooth operation of the department. Selection procedures for the Chair are determined by the faculty with input from the Dean. The Chair serves for a definite period of time, often with the possibility for reappointment.

Proposal 5-92 dealt with establishment of department charters in order to delineate the responsibilities of the Chair from those of the unit faculty. The charter requirement was also considered necessary for Schools. Proposal 4-92 received 148 *yes* votes (83.6%) and 29 *no* votes (16.4%). Proposal 5-92 received 172 *yes* votes (80.8%) and 41 *no* votes (19.2%). However, the Senate had established that the passage of the proposals required 50% of the voting constituency for which the two proposals fell short by 2 and 5 votes, respectively. The Senate then created Proposal 16-92 on charters and the administration subsequently approved the charter proposal as well as the title of all supervisors as Chairs.

In the years that followed, several problems on unit Charters emerged. On January 18, 2006, proposal 11-06 was introduced in the Senate to address these problems. On February 1, 2006, the Senate unanimously approved the proposal. Revisions to the proposal were requested by the Administration. On April 19, 2006, the Senate once more unanimously approved the revised Charter proposal. On November 27, 2006, the Administration rejected the proposal.

The Senate officers identified two items which some Chairs and Deans found objectionable. In the list of required Charter contents are:

(11j) Guidelines for determining salaries and wages, including distribution of merit pay.

(11k) Guidelines for allocating workload, including teaching assignments, committee assignments, advising, and other university and unit responsibilities.

The Senate proposal clearly says that a unit may choose to state that these (required items) will be the responsibility of the department Chair / school Dean. Some of the Chairs and Deans who find this objectionable believe it is their responsibility and right to allocate workload and merit. The dispute on these two items goes to the very basic concept of a Chair. As it was a faculty referendum that was instrumental in creating the Chair form of departmental governance and unit charters, it should be the faculty who now need to weigh in on the resolution of this dispute.

Motion

Faculty in units that have a department Chair or School Dean will vote on the ballot attached. If the ballot is approved, the Senate will forward the results of the referendum (vote tally) to the University President and Board of Control with its recommendation that it be adopted.

Ballot

The unit charter must include guidelines for allocation of workload, including teaching assignments, committee assignments, advising, and other university and unit responsibilities. The guidelines can delegate part or all the responsibility to the department Chair (school Dean). The guidelines must be approved by a secret ballot.

I approve

I disapprove

The unit charters must include guidelines for determining salaries and wages, including distribution of merit pay. The guidelines can delegate part or all the responsibility to the (department Chair) school Dean. The guidelines must be approved by a secret ballot.

I approve

I disapprove

Introduced to Senate: 5 December 2007
Withdrawn: 3 April 2008