

**Student Commission Meeting  
Thursday, December 10, 2020  
Zoom Meeting**

**Present: Joe Cooper, Marc Geborkoff, Tim Griffin, Lynda Heinonen, Beka Horsch, Joel Isaacson, Mia Kemppainen, Margaret Landsparger, Dan Liebau, Pattie Luokkanen, Keith Machiela, Michael Maurer, Wesley McGowan, Mike Meyer, Laura Putwen, Lauren Spahn, Reese Wagner, Matt Weekley,**

**Welcome – Lynda**

**Last Meeting**

After serving on the Student Commission for 15 years as minute taker, meeting scheduler, and behind the scenes organizer, Lynda Heinonen is retiring. This is her last meeting and Joe and the committee members thanked her for her years of service.

**New Committee Members**

With Bonnie retiring Lynda introduced Joe Cooper as the new Interim Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students and Mia Kemppainen as the new Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students.

**Guest - Mike Meyer, Director, Jackson Center for Teaching and Learning  
Student Hybrid/Remote Workload Discussion**

At the previous meeting, students had expressed concern about being overwhelmed with work during this fall semester. To address this issue Mike Meyer was invited to the December meeting to give some insight to what is different this semester compared to previous ones.

Mike reported that 400+ faculty had taken a course on best practices for online learning. The training emphasized that faculty need to create objectives and that these objectives need to be taught and measured on a daily basis. Instead of just asking the students to review certain material or doing homework problems they accomplished this by:

- Imbedding questions in their videos, having short Canvas quizzes that followed the lecture video or being due during class.

The organizations that led the training for the faculty felt this assessment was a best-practice for the students.

The result of this is that there was a lot more day-to-day work and some students have been taken aback by this approach. Mike questioned how much time is really invested in study outside the classroom? He reported that there had been a pilot study a few years back that indicated Michigan Tech undergraduate students were studying 17 hours a week outside of class vs. the national average of 12. He commented that it is Senate policy that if an instructor

gives an evening exam then faculty will release the class from a class period during the day but that this gets fuzzy when you have take-home exams.

Mike commented that he felt that a significant part of what is going on here at Michigan Tech is that the faculty are being much more prescriptive. They are giving a lot more quizzes and homework assignments to make sure students are understanding the material. He also commented that some instructors may have gone overload.

Mike felt if the students were meeting the faculty's expectations their grades were better but there is the issue of balance for the good of the student's mental health. First-year and senior students seem to be handling this better. If sophomore and juniors are not engaged they are falling off the radar. He commented that he is concerned about retention. He is teaching a Physics Lecture and this is the first year that he has had close to 10% of his students drop his class.

Mia commented that the students that she has observed in the Library are really internally focused and not reaching out to each other. Mike agreed that students are using the Zoom format for projects and that it's hard for them to feel safe to collaborate in person.

Mike commented that faculty are trying to figure out this new mode and are finding ways to balance it all.

Comments and questions from the students included:

- Ask faculty to prescribe more succinctly as to the class requirements.
- Encourage faculty to be more transparent in what their expectations are.
- Break down the syllabus more rather than just saying 2-3 hours of study outside of class.
- They were happy to get a more in-depth explanation, glad the issue was addressed, and they will share this information with other students.
- This semester was beneficial to help figure out the process.
- USG is trying to determine the effects of the fall break. A lot of students appreciated the time off but some faculty looked at it as a time for students to get work done.
  - Mike commented that faculty are caught between giving homework that is due before the break or right after.
  - Some students use the time to catch up with work or get ahead.

Mike thanked the Student Commission for inviting him to the meeting and being able to address this issue. He commented that while he can't require the faculty to do anything he can make suggestions. Please reach out to him if you have any suggestions or questions at [mrmeyer@mtu.edu](mailto:mrmeyer@mtu.edu).

## Updates

### **Non-Motorized Transportation Working Group - Dan**

Dan reported that the committee has not met but he will discuss this with Theresa Coleman Kaiser and report back at the January meeting.

### **Capital Project Requests**

Tim reported the 2022 Capital Projects Requests will be decided on December 18. At the January meeting he will report as to what was decided on the Women's Restrooms.

Dan reported that he submitted four different connector (sidewalks) projects across campus and he will report back if all, some, or none were approved.

### **Sidewalks and Lights on Cemetery Road – Wesley**

Wesley reported that a lot of students walk from Daniell Heights to the SDC along the Cemetery Road and he inquired about installing lighting and sidewalks on this road. Dan reported that he is pursuing a grant through MDOT and will report back when it is decided upon.

### **Campus Barrier Free Access/Accessibility - Michael**

Michael reported that he has not contacted Jake Guter yet to discuss this issue. He commented that after the explanation (at last month's Student Commission meeting) of what the accessible door/building signs indicated it was clearer to GSG members. With this new information, they are working on a specific list of items they would like to see improved.

### **New Items**

#### **Graduating in December**

If you are graduating in December, please let Lynda ([lheinone@mtu.edu](mailto:lheinone@mtu.edu)) know and she'll take you off the committee meetings and Google Group.

### **Next Meeting**

Thursday, January 14, 2021

### **2021 Spring Meeting Dates**

Thursday, January 14, 2:00 p.m. - Zoom  
Thursday, January 28, 2:00 p.m. - Zoom  
Thursday, February 11, 2:00 p.m. - Zoom  
Thursday, February 25, 2:00 p.m. - Zoom  
Thursday, March 25, 2:00 p.m. - Zoom  
Thursday, April 8, 2:00 p.m. - Zoom  
Thursday, April 22 -