

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

SENATE ASSEMBLY

Minutes of Special Assembly Meeting, February 7, 1975

ATTENDANCE

Present: Professors Anton, Baublis, Berki, Bishop, Brockway, Pooley, Cartwright, Cosand, Crawford, Danielson, Dernberger, Deskins, Easley, Evaldson, Beaver, Floyd, Gikas, Goldman, Harrison, Hoffman, Horsley, Hymans, Jameson, Johnson, Kaplan, Kelsey, Kish, Larkin, Lehmann, Loomis, Lytle, Magrill, Mohler, Nesbitt, Ostrand, Rowe, Schmickel, Scott, Seligson, Matejka, Springer, Sudarkasa, Taren, Vaughn, Williams, Wilson, Leonard, Hoch, Cohen

Absent: Professors Adams, Brown, Caldwell, Cassidy, Cornell, Creeth, DeKornfeld, Flynn, Goodman, Ilie, Kachaturoff, Kell, Lyjak, Lands, Livermore, Murphey, Oberman, Sibley, Terwilliger, Vander, Van Der Voo, Weeks

Guests: President Fleming, Vice-President Frank H. T. Rhodes, Dean Billy E. Frye, LS&A, Professor Rosemary Sarri, Ms. Aleda Krause, Messrs. Jack Wileden and Sandy Wilkinson

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Cohen at 4:15 p.m.

GEO NEGOTIA-
TIONS

In opening this emergency session, Chairman Cohen indicated that the meetings of the Assembly are normally announced in writing well in advance of the meeting date. The Rules of the Senate Assembly do, however, permit emergency sessions to be called at the request of 15 members of the Assembly, the subject of the meeting being stated, with none other than the stated business to be transacted at the particular session. In the present case the meeting had been called by some 20 members of the Assembly, at the urging of the University's AAUP chapter, in order to address in some fashion the negotiations in progress between the Graduate Employees Organization and the administration. That there was general concern with having the parties achieve a settlement at the earliest possible time was evident from the text of two resolutions read by Chairman Cohen, one from Dean Fellin, on behalf of the School of Social Work, the other from Professor Downen, on behalf of the Student Relations Committee.

In view of the nature of the present meeting, Chairman Cohen proposed that the Assembly might first wish to hear from a number of relevant parties, then proceed to a quasi-committee-of-the-whole for general discussion, and subsequently rise from the quasi-committee-of-the-whole to deal with whatever action may be proposed at that time. This suggested order of procedure having appealed to the members of the Assembly, the Chairman recognized Professor Kaplan for some opening remarks, inasmuch as he had been among those who had requested the present meeting.

Having had occasion to attend the open bargaining sessions as an observer designated by SACUA and the Assembly, together with Professor Seligson, Professor Kaplan voiced profound concern over the difficulties a work stoppage

would pose, expressing the ardent hope that such an eventuality could be averted, given the faculty's loyalties to both the University and its students. Those whose services would be lost are, after all, not only students but also colleagues and prospective faculty members. The agenda of the meeting, Professor Kaplan asserted, was then a straightforward one--how a strike might be averted.

Invited to address the Assembly in his role as an officer of GEO, Mr. Wileden expressed similar sentiments on behalf of his organization. It too recognized the difficulties a work stoppage would cause and had considered such action only after long deliberation, finding efforts to achieve a settlement seemingly unavailing. GEO, he declared, had extended its previous deadline of January 30 by an additional week, only to find that the administration negotiating team was not available for additional bargaining sessions during the period. His organization, he insisted, was eager to achieve a settlement and willing to go to binding arbitration. Fact-finding had been entered into but is a protracted process. Hence, while having hesitated to take precipitate action, GEO had felt the need to speed things along by testing the sentiment of its membership with respect to a strike course.

Recognized as spokesman for the other side, President Fleming stated the administration's view. While he has not personally participated in the negotiating process, he has been kept fully apprised of developments and will, of course, be party to any decision-making. No one relishes a strike, Mr. Fleming felt certain--neither the University nor GEO. Such a situation pits colleague against colleague, leads to statements and actions one is later inclined to regret, and, in the last analysis, leaves no one in the role of victor. That the University and its students suffer in the process is indisputable; disruption exacts a price. The key question, then, is whether a strike can be averted. It can, he insisted; settlement can and will be reached.

The basic problems, as President Fleming saw them, remain economic ones. With the legislature having demanded enforced savings on the part of the University this year, and with next year's appropriation expected to be 4% less than this year's base, there is no blinking the fact that there simply will not be enough resources to meet the requests of all University groups. The respective demands are understandable, inflation continuing to take its toll of everyone's earnings. Yet the reality is that, though the University does retain some flexibility over how it apports its funds, whatever monies are needed will have to be generated internally, that is, by effecting savings in one form or another and redistributing the internal funds so freed. While appreciating the good intentions of the Assembly, President Fleming was convinced that resolution of the present situation continues to depend on negotiations between the parties concerned or else will have to be achieved by some proceeding under which the University would need to do what is ordered. The administration understands and is not without sympathy for the GEO position, he assured the Assembly, and, indeed, is prepared to meet intensively over the weekend in the hope of reaching a satisfactory accord with GEO. Such is possible, he

felt, if both sides extend themselves, and, should it prove necessary, representatives of the administration would again be available on Monday, February 10, if the Assembly wished another meeting.

Having been recognized as President of the AAUP chapter, Professor Sarri noted that some graduate students are among its members, that the chapter has provided liaison with the GEO, and that, where requested, it has sought to assist GEO in facilitating solution of the non-economic aspects of the negotiations in particular, and it has raised pertinent issues with SACUA. It was in this spirit of helping achieve accord between the parties to the negotiating process that the AAUP chapter had urged this special meeting of the Assembly.

Invited to comment in his role as Dean of the largest and most seriously affected college, Dean Frye left no doubt that LS&A would be particularly hard hit in the event of a strike. He hoped therefore that GEO would accept President Fleming's offer to enter into intensive discussions with the administration over the weekend in the hope of averting any work action. The Dean felt no need to comment further at this point, nor did Professor Lehmann, who had been named by the Assembly to the Advisory Committee of the University Negotiating Team, though both expressed willingness to respond to questions in the course of later discussion.

A motion, offered by Professor Brockway and seconded, that the Assembly move to a quasi-committee-of-the-whole at this point, was passed unanimously, opening the way to informal discussion, whereupon interest was evidenced in hearing further from the major parties. Professor Sudarkasa, for example, sought the reaction of the GEO officers to President Fleming's belief that the major issues were economic in character, and Professor Taren wondered whether Mr. Fleming's invitation to confer vigorously over the weekend represented a new position on the part of the administration, while Professor Nesbitt hoped to hear the GEO reaction to such a proposal in any case. Though Chairman Cohen invited further comments and questions from the Assembly before replies were sought, Professor Johnson pointed out that the members preferred to hear the respective responses.

Speaking for GEO, its President, Ms. Aleda Krause agreed with President Fleming that the economic issues were indeed the most important. However, she wished it made clear that additional significant matters remained unresolved as well, citing as cases in point concern over a recognition clause, inclusion under the Affirmative Action program, a non-discrimination proposal with respect to sexual preferences, and the continuation of the Pilot program. GEO was certainly willing to meet over the weekend, she assured the Assembly, pointing out that the organization's bargaining team had been unsuccessful in getting the administration team to arrange bargaining sessions during the preceding week.

In his response President Fleming acknowledged the existence of issues other than economic ones but saw none as insurmountable. Part of the difficulty, he felt, resides not only in agreeing on some of these matters

but in putting the agreement into acceptable language. On the other hand, there is no easy solution for the economic issues, though the administration stands ready to bend every effort to address them appropriately in the weekend sessions. With respect to Professor Taren's query as to whether the latter proposal represents a new position, Mr. Fleming informed the Assembly that failure to schedule negotiating sessions during the preceding week had been attributable solely to such fortuitous circumstances as illness on the part of some and the need for the University attorney to be absent for a court hearing.

Though Professor Kaplan wished to offer no formal resolution later unless necessary, it behooved him at this point to assure the Assembly that those who had requested the present meeting hoped that the bargaining teams would negotiate intensively during the weekend to achieve the earliest possible resolution of the matters at issue.

At the suggestion of Professor Loomis, Chairman Cohen subsequently sought comments from non-Assembly members who might wish to speak. Accepting the invitation, Mr. Allmand, chief negotiator of the University bargaining team, took occasion to remark on the spirit in which the negotiations have proceeded. Though a number of important issues remain unresolved, it is not for lack of having tried. Both parties have been freely available during the period, the recent small group meetings have proved particularly productive, and rapport throughout has been excellent despite the failure to have reached full agreement. He too looked forward to intensive discussions over the weekend in the hope of resolving the outstanding issues. Professor Seligson concurred, noting that while, as observer at the open negotiating sessions, she had first experienced a feeling of tension between the parties, the latter had progressively given way to a comfortable relationship.

Professor Berki's suggestion that there be a move at this time to adjourn until Monday was deferred for a moment as Professor Dernberger wondered rather about first rising from the quasi-committee-of-the-whole. Meanwhile Professor Kaplan, expressing satisfaction with the good spirit prevailing during the meeting, wondered whether the negotiating teams could handle some of the more difficult issues temporarily by a broad statement of intent, as seemed to have been the case in such negotiations at Rutgers University. Such a proposal reflected some misconceptions, asserted Mr. Wilkinson, another of the GEO officers, as did in his opinion President Fleming's earlier remarks concerning difficulties with language and wording. Simply to agree on intent, he remarked, can amount to postponing difficult situations rather than facing them; it turns out, too, that frequently parties who feel they are in agreement discover that the latter vanishes in the course of searching for appropriate language. Nevertheless, he added, GEO joins the administration in hoping that a settlement will develop in the course of the weekend sessions.

A motion, offered by Professor Dernberger and seconded, that the Assembly rise from its quasi-committee-of-the-whole was adopted unanimously,

whereupon Professor Berki moved, as he had intended to earlier, that the Assembly adjourn, with the understanding that it would convene again at 4:15 p.m. on Monday, February 10, to take such action as might seem appropriate in the event that an agreement between GEO and the administration had not been reached by that time.

The meeting of the Assembly was adjourned at 5:16 p.m.

Erasmus L. Hoch
Secretary