

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

SENATE ASSEMBLY

Minutes of Regular Meeting of 16 March 1987

ATTENDANCE

Present: Arnett, Ascione, Barlow,
Bassett, Bissell, Borcherts,
Briggs, Burdi, Checkoway,
Chudacoff, Cohen, Comninou,
Craig, Pastalan, Debler,
DeCamp, Dobbins, Durrance,
Gage, Goldberg, Gray, Yang,
Haefner, Hollingsworth, Hook,
Lavoie, Lehmann, Lenaghan,
Leonard, Lougee, Loup, Lusk,
Margolis, McCarus, McClamroch,
Meyer, Miller, Moerman, Aller,
Mosher, Nadelman, Ness,
Oleinick, Olson, Pierce, Reed,
Muirhead, Rosenthal, Ross,
Hudson, Rutledge, Daub,
Schteingart, Seidler, Stapp,
Stebbins, Thomson, Borer,
Wiseman, Berent, Yocum

Absent: Brewer, Vorus, Eggertsen, Ard,
Glover, Han, Hanks, Larson,
Lewis, Lockwood, Lorey, Malvin,
Manis, Moran, Olsen, Sanders,
Schauer, Shannon, Silverman,
Nystuen, Weiler, White

Professor William Stebbins convened the meeting at 3:21 p.m.

MINUTES

The minutes of 16 February 1987 were approved as written.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The AAUP and the Committee on the Economic Status of the Faculty will sponsor a program on "Financial Advice Related to the Retirement Years," April 9, 12:30 p.m., Room 4, Michigan League.

PREVIEW OF FACULTY PRESENTATION TO THE REGENTS ON CLASSIFIED RESEARCH

Professor McClamroch reported that at their meeting this month the Regents will consider issues relating to the University's policy on classified research. Relative to that discussion SACUA has transmitted a number of documents to the Regents through the Office of the Vice President for Research. These include reports of faculty deliberations conducted at Senate Assembly meetings last autumn; the Senate Assembly resolution supporting the Majority Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Classified Research; the Oleinick amendment; and the Loup resolution supporting humane values in the University. The report from the Research Policies Committee supporting the Majority Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Classified Research has also been transmitted.

On Thursday morning March 19 the Regents plan to discuss informally various research policy issues with representatives of the Ad Hoc Committee on Classified Research, Michigan Student Assembly and SACUA. Professors Stebbins and McClamroch will represent the latter.

ELECTION OF SACUA

Professor Stebbins stated that four members of SACUA must be elected. Election will be on a straight numerical basis within constraints noted at the February meeting. The Hare system will again be used and thus each of the eight nominees must be ranked for a ballot to be valid. No late ballots will be accepted. In the ensuing election, Professors Lenaghan, Chudacoff, and Dobbins were elected to regular three year terms and Professor Olson to a one year term replacing Professor Nadelman.

REMARKS BY CHAIR

Professor Stebbins noted the tradition of farewell comments by the outgoing Chair. The SACUA Chair regularly sits with the Executive Officers and the Deans and Directors. This year he also was a member of the Strategic Planning Group (SPG) from the Office of the Academic Affairs Vice President and Provost. It is the SPG, together with the President, that has played a major role in the development of the new initiatives that have come before the Assembly in the last few months. The experience of working with these administrative committees as a welcome and contributing member provided an important and interesting perspective on the University for a faculty member. In his view, the faculty are in very good hands, administratively speaking, because both President and Provost as former faculty members seem willing not only to listen to the faculty viewpoint but to seek it and to ensure that it plays a significant part in their

decision making. It is also important that the SACUA Chair sit with these administrators and have their ear because the Chair can be a major source of faculty input to the Administration at the entry point for most issues that are on their way to becoming University policy. For these reasons, faculty governance is as strong at Michigan as it is at any major university. However, it is by no means as strong as it should be, and there are significant weaknesses. His reception by the Executive Officers, Deans, and Directors has been very cordial, and, he feels, has represented an effective working relationship. Other interpretations of his remarks are possible but this is a judgment for the faculty to make based on events of the past year on matters affecting the faculty and originating in the Central Administration.

He then turned to what he considers to be the major unresolved issues that will confront the Faculty Senate, the Senate Assembly, and SACUA in the coming year.

First is what SACUA members refer to as the "new excellence," which is the Provost's and President's new strategic plan for resource allocation. Its first wave consists of the three new initiatives on interdisciplinary research, undergraduate programs, and diversity and affirmative action. He believes that most of the faculty are very supportive of these initiatives at least in the initial form in which they have been presented. Some on the faculty have been active in much of the early planning for these initiatives. But the long range strategic plan, that is, the plan for the next five to ten years is not yet evident; in fact, its outlines are not well defined, and therefore the future of the University is not sharply focused. This may well be the most important issue facing the Assembly next year. The attention that members give it will affect us all in the coming decade.

The second issue is one that the Senate Assembly Ad Hoc Committees highlighted a year ago in their special reports: a considerable number of faculty feel that we need to redress the imbalance between teaching and research in the faculty reward system. Intimately related to the major initiative on undergraduate education, this issue has also surfaced in the answers to the faculty questionnaire on merit review that the Committee on the Economic Status of the Faculty distributed over a year ago, the reports on which will soon be released. Few contend that research and scholarship are not essential components of the reward system or that we should have a cadre of teachers who only teach. Stebbins went on to suggest that most of us feel that teaching, research, and service are all important elements in a faculty member's repertoire. But many argue convincingly that good teaching is not adequately evaluated and therefore not adequately rewarded at this university. He hopes that in the coming year SACUA and the Senate Assembly will act on

this matter. In his view the success of the Undergraduate Initiative will depend on it. Unfortunately, he does not see it as a high priority on the agenda of the Central Administration.

Equally important is the achievement of greater diversity at this university by the use of affirmative action, the focus of the University's third initiative under the new strategic plan. Professor Stebbins hopes that we could agree that this is an achievement from which we could all benefit. SACUA has contributed to it with a proposal for the hiring of more minority and women faculty. It is absolutely critical that the faculty of the schools and colleges as well as SACUA and the Senate Assembly play a major role in assuring the success of this initiative.

Fourth is a problem that continues to concern us, and is one that we have not dealt with adequately. It is what he considers the weak link between central and peripheral faculty governance. Both this year and last the Assembly has asked for reports from the schools and colleges in an attempt to be more fully informed of critical events as they occur in the various units. While these reports have been helpful, he feels that other mechanisms will be needed to keep us more closely in touch. He does not suggest that members interfere in what may be the internal concerns of a particular school or college, but that there be a more effective flow of information between the schools and colleges that members represent, and SACUA and the Senate Assembly so that members can offer support quickly when it is needed and when it is requested.

The fifth item is one that was discussed recently at a meeting of the Deans and Directors, and is currently under discussion by the Tenure Committee. It is a proposal to increase the probationary period for tenure to ten years. This practice is in effect at some other universities and has the advantage of increasing administrative flexibility. Its disadvantages for the faculty are many and could represent the first step in an attempt to dismantle the tenure system. He sincerely hopes that this faculty will vigorously oppose such a proposal.

His sixth concern suggests an unusual opportunity for the faculty to take stock of the University's athletic program. It is a time both of and for substantive changes in the program with the impending retirement of the director who has exercised very strong and, in many ways, effective leadership over that program for many years. But in other less fortunate universities, the deceit and the abuses in intercollegiate athletics by administrators at the university level and even in state government call out for reform and major changes in intercollegiate athletics across the country. The faculty will have to become more actively involved, for the widespread malpractice of intercollegiate athletics interferes significantly with the educational mission of the University.

Change has to be an important feature of any university and, among the many recent changes that we can point to at the U of M, one of the most costly is in the area of information technology. There is little doubt in his mind that our university should be at the forefront in this area. His seventh concern, then, is presented in the context of a question. What degree of accountability does the faculty require with regard to the ongoing developments in this area? Senate Assembly members have asked SACUA about the expense and malfunction of the phone system, for example, and he does not feel that SACUA has been able to provide the kind of specificity in answer that faculty deserve. SACUA has simply not been able to obtain it. Another problem is the matter of computer use by faculty and students. Many questions have been raised but few answered. Simply put, information technology is an operation that needs more faculty input.

The eighth and final issue he leaves with the Assembly is one which it has already acted upon and passed on to the Regents for final action. It is the policy on classified research and, depending on what action the Regents take, the Assembly may wish to pursue the policy that it proposed both with the Regents and with the Central Administration. Much will depend on how seriously the Assembly's position and faculty concerns are taken in the formulation of the final policy.

He thanked the Assembly for being an interactive group and promised that continuing members will not have a dull year ahead of them.

Ms. Jean Loup rose to commend the energy, effort and hours Professors Stebbins has invested during the past year on behalf of the Senate Assembly. The Assembly concurred with applause.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia B. Yocum
Senate Secretary