

Minutes of 17 April 1995 Senate Assembly Meeting
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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
SENATE ASSEMBLY MEETING
MINUTES OF 17 APRIL 1995

Loup convened the meeting at 3:15 PM.

MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED

1. Agenda
2. Draft minutes of the Senate Assembly meeting of 20 MARCH 1995
3. Minutes of the Senate Assembly meeting of 13 February 1995
4. Minutes of the SACUA meeting of 13 March 1995
5. Minutes of the SACUA meeting of 6 March 1995
6. Minutes of the SACUA meeting of 27 February 1995
7. Minutes of the SACUA meeting of 6 February 1995
8. Letter to J. Loup from M.C. Sengstock dated 20 March 1995 regarding action of the Policy Committee of the Wayne State Academic Senate
9. Resolution passed by the Faculty Council of Michigan State University on 21 March 1995, communication dated 3 April 1995
10. Memorandum to H. Silverman and M.C. Sengstock from J. Loup, dated 12 April 1995, regarding a joint resolution passed by the Senate Assembly on 20 March 1995
11. Faculty Governance Update, dated April 1995

The minutes of 20 March 1995 were amended and approved.

REPORT ON UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

Associate Dean Michael Martin provided a report on undergraduate education initiatives in the College of LSA. He summarized the history, the progress and process, and potential future of the initiatives.

Martin explained that Dean E. Goldenberg had undertaken efforts to identify problems and improve the quality of undergraduate education at this major research university. He said that initial study had revealed problems in the first two years of the undergraduate curriculum, including a dearth of small classes and inadequate student-faculty contact. Martin then reported examples of measures and reforms undertaken which together constitute a broad medley of programs collectively referred to as the undergraduate initiative. He developed five themes: entry level science courses, first year seminars, undergraduate research, instructional technology, and language across the curriculum.

Martin stated that most effort had been directed at program aspects that directly affect first and second year students. He recounted revisions of introductory curricula in both the Department of Chemistry and the Department of Mathematics. He said that Physics has now undertaken curriculum reform, and that Biology may begin, as well. He said that what he characterized as an overhaul of the introductory courses in Chemistry, Math, and Physics would be completed within 2 or 3 years.

Martin discussed the history of the first year seminar program and reported that this year 2200 students were enrolled, which represents roughly 2/3 of the eligible population. He also discussed the growth and merits of the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program, and he encouraged Senate Assembly members to attend UROP symposia. He noted the success of the program and the fact that there was pressure to expand it to all students.

Martin reported that during the last 5 years 68 projects have been supported to incorporate instructional technology into coursework. He noted, however, that experience had shown that it is much easier to develop such courses than it is for the university infrastructure to support the courses once they have been deployed in the computer sites. Such support would be a major challenge for the future.

The "language across the curriculum" initiative is an effort to integrate language teaching with academic subject matter. Martin explained that several courses in subjects from history to political science and math now had sections that were taught in Spanish or German. He expressed the belief that further revision of the language curriculum is on the horizon.

Associate Dean Martin also reported efforts to invigorate and expand residential learning, and he reviewed the new graduation requirements in Race and Ethnicity, and in Quantitative Reasoning, which have led to a host of new courses. He noted the attention now paid to non-concentrators with the implementation of such new concentrations as General Physics and General Biology, which he said were intended for non-scientists as a second major. He also lauded the Classics Department for developing a major in Classical Civilizations, which permits the study of classics in translation, and which has appealed to many technical students as a second major.

Martin reported that eight concentrations had been thoroughly reorganized, and that the efforts in both English and Psychology departments were models of thoughtfulness.

Martin discussed 5 points of emphasis for the future: language instruction, writing instruction incorporating portfolio assessment, residential programs, the possibility of community service learning analogous to UROP, and the role of instructional technology. He noted that undergraduate teaching was an essential component of support for the research mission of the university, and he referred to the undergraduate initiative as the lynchpin of the College's strategy to remain a research university.

Professor Kaplan asked if the Keller Plan was still in place in College curricula. Martin responded that programs were active in Physics and Biology, but that there were other student-centered learning initiatives, as well. Professor Yohannes asked for clarification about purpose of some of the new introductory science and math courses. Martin replied that new courses in chemistry were designed to introduce scientific methodology to first year students, and that students had responded positively. He said that introductory calculus courses in math had always been directed primarily at non-majors.

Professor Smith asked if there has been an increase in the number of lecturers, and he asked about their roles. Martin replied that there has been an increase in the number of lecturers for more than 5 years. He said that the intent was to involve the regular faculty in undergraduate education, and not to create an undergraduate faculty, per se. He noted that the College had approved 3 tenure-track positions where the primary objective of the faculty members would be undergraduate education and not research.

Associate Dean Martin completed his report at 4:55 PM.

REPORT ON FLEX BENEFITS

Chair Loup reported that SACUA had met with Jackie McClain two weeks ago regarding flexible benefits and that SACUA had invited a similar presentation to the Senate Assembly. She introduced Professor Kent Syverud, a member of the "Flex Team", who presented the report on behalf of McClain.

Syverud characterized flexible benefits as potentially a "win-win" situation in which employees spend dollars as desired and the university has its members pay the true costs of health care for competing health plans, thus potentially driving down health care costs. At the same time, he acknowledged the risks, including (1) acute suspicion of any change in the status quo, (2) the chance that employees may make bad choices, (3) the time consuming nature of the plan, and (4) the risk that the university might adjust benefits and prices in order to subsidize a favored HMO. He said that the committee believes that Jackie McClain's leadership has produced a plan where there are no losers until at least 1998. He noted that the University had committed a \$2.2 million contribution to the employee benefits appropriation to improve the benefits package during this time. He explained that the "balance dollars" agreement is firm only to 1998.

Syverud explained that the current implementation committee worked within previously established constraints. He said that the guiding principles were as follows:

1. Build on the work of the 1994 flex committee.
2. Address issues raised last year.
3. Minimize the number of losers.
4. Incorporate true pricing, with any adjustments identified and explained.
5. Maximize individual choice.
6. Work efficiently, and achieve a quality program.
7. Develop a plan within budget.

Syverud said that the committee met 11 times, often for entire days, and worked with the help of William Mercer Consultants. He then summarized aspects that would be new in 1996, as well as benefits that would not change. He pointed out that severe penalties would exist for employees who fail to enroll in the program. He said that non-enrollers would be provided only with Comprehensive Major Medical insurance; they would receive no life or dental insurance, and would forfeit any flex credits that could otherwise be taken as cash payment. He noted that partial enrollment would give employees their current elected benefits, but with forfeiture of excess credits.

Professor Wahl challenged the claim that there would be no losers under the new plan. He noted that the University was contributing \$2.2 million, and that it was incurring extra administrative costs and consulting costs; he noted that the default package is embarrassingly in favor of the university. He suggested that costs would rise in 2 or 3 years and that it was typical in private industry for these programs to take away benefits in the long run. Professor Syverud agreed that administrative costs would increase. He said that the University had committed funds in the hope of containing health care costs. He said that he felt the biggest risk was that administration would adjust costs to force a subsidy for M-Care or the University Hospital, and that therefore the committee insisted that there be no hidden subsidies. He said that the point about default penalties is true. He said the underlying theory of flex benefits is that employees should be treated as adults who bear the consequences of bad choices. He said that the history of benefits as entitlements is the reason for high health care costs.

Professor McNamara asked why retirement contributions had not been included within the domain of flex benefits. Professor Syverud replied that focus group discussions had led to

the conclusion that retirement contributions should not be touched, and so they were left to the side.

Professor Potter noted that the registration system by use of touch-tone phone was faulty. Professor Syverud replied that the committee was aware of the need for better communication and for a better system. He added that they were uneasy about the time frame within they were working, and they knew there were lots of complaints last year. Potter responded that the problem was that there are severe penalties to the staff for technical failures in the benefits enrollment office, and that perhaps the open enrollment period should be extended. Professor Syverud said he would pass along the suggestion.

Chair Loup thanked Professor Syverud for the presentation at 4:50 PM.

MOTION ON SUPPORT FOR MICHIGAN UNIVERSITIES

Chair Loup called attention to materials distributed on the chairs of the meeting room. Professor Brewer made the following motion (multiple seconds):

The Senate Assembly of the University of Michigan concurs with the Policy Committee of Wayne State University. We hereby express our opinion that the proposed differential appropriations for the institutions of higher education in Michigan detract from continued cooperation and mutual support among the faculties of Michigan State University, the University of Michigan, and Wayne State University.

Professor Dunn asked for ideas about substantive issues that could cement collegiality among the three university faculties. Chair Loup asked that suggestions be directed to SACUA. Professor Kaplan recalled that an Association of Michigan Collegiate Faculties had existed formerly, but that a past SACUA voted to have the UM withdraw and a few years later the organization went out of existence.

Loup called for vote on the active motion. The motion was passed by voice vote with no disapproval voiced.

FAREWELL REMARKS BY CHAIR LOUP

Chair Loup summarized accomplishments by SACUA and the Senate Assembly during the previous year. She identified faculty governance as one important issue, noting that the Senate Assembly had established the concern of the faculty about the Dean's suspension of governance in the Department of Communication. She also cited the Senate Assembly reports on tenure and on faculty of color as other significant accomplishments.

Loup added that two things had surprised her during her term as Chair of SACUA and the Senate Assembly. The first was the high level of anger that exists within the university faculty. She said that anger had been tapped to make progress this past year, but that it had the potential to cause harm. She also stated that she was alarmed at the number of times that she feared for her personal safety owing to situations related to her role as a faculty leader.

Loup identified challenges for the year ahead. She said that one issue would be that of tenure, and of challenges to it. She said that good work is required to protect the faculty. A second issue would be the grievance process. A third issue would be state relations, where problems had come to the surface recently. A fourth issue would be to confront national discussions challenging affirmative action.

Chair Loup voiced her personal thanks to Provost Whittaker, for attendance at Senate Assembly meetings, and for extending financial support. She stated her appreciation to the

members of the Senate Assembly, and to all of her colleagues. She then passed the gavel to Chair Elect Brewer at 5:00 PM.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business was proposed.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was proposed from the floor. Chair Brewer announced that President Duderstadt has agreed to hold a retreat with the Senate Assembly on the morning of 1 June 1995. The focus of the retreat is to be diversity, with attention to both gender and ethnicity. Brewer said that after a few opening remarks by the President, the Senate Assembly would form into small groups for discussions. He alerted members to upcoming reports due in May that would be relevant to the subject of the retreat. Chair Brewer also noted that President Duderstadt had agreed to participate with the Senate Assembly in an open discussion for one hour.

Chair Brewer announced that plans for next fall were under consideration, and he invited input from Senate Assembly members. He said that he sought to make the monthly Senate Assembly meetings lively and reflective of University values. Possibilities under consideration include (1) debate on topics such as the rights and responsibilities of tenure, and (2) inclusion of a prominent, featured speaker at each adjournment.

Chair Brewer noted that SACUA was losing four valued members, and he thanked M. DeCamp, H. Griffin, C. Smith, and J. Loup for their service. The departing SACUA members were given a round of applause by the members of the Senate Assembly.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

John T. Lehman
Senate Secretary

Appendix: Report by Associate Dean Martin on Undergraduate Education [Tom or Nancy- please contact Martin for the text]<<<<<

Appendix: Report by Professor Kent Syverud on Flexible Benefits. [Tom or Nancy- please see if Syverud prepared a text, thanks]