

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

SENATE ASSEMBLY

Minutes of Regular Meeting of 21 April 1986

ATTENDANCE

Present: Ascione, Bassett, Borcherts,
Brewer, Briggs, Burdi, Checkoway,
Chudacoff, Comninou, Thomson,
Dandekar, Debler, Dobbins,
Durrance, Eggertsen, Gage, Glover,
Goldberg, Haefner, Han, Hanks,
Hollingsworth, Hudson, Kearney,
Larson, Lehmann, Lenaghan, Lorey,
Lougee, Loup, Lusk, Margolis,
Manis, McCarus, McClamroch, Meyer,
Moerman, Moore, Moran, Mosher,
Nadelman, Ness, Oleinick, Olsen,
Olson, Reed, Rosenthal, Marc Ross,
Muriel Ross, Rutledge, Sanders,
Sargous, Schteingart, Seider,
Shannon, Silverman, Stebbins, Yocum

Absent: Arnett, Barlow, Bissell, Carnahan,
DeCamp, English, Gray, Hook,
Lavoie, Leonard, Lewis, Malvin,
Miller, Pierce, Rizki, Schauer,
Snyder, Stapp, Todor, Vinh,
Weiler, White, Wiseman, Zelenock

Professor William Stebbins convened the meeting at 3:20 p.m.

MINUTES

The minutes of 17 March were approved as written.

WELCOME TO NEW SENATE ASSEMBLY MEMBERS

Professor Stebbins asked the new members to stand and be recognized. He emphasized the importance of being informed about matters affecting the University in particular and higher education in general, and urged members to participate by presenting reports during the section, "Reports from Schools and Colleges" and by serving on standing committees. Members unable to attend Assembly meetings should arrange for their alternates to do so. He then introduced members of SACUA.

"UNEASY REFLECTIONS ON SOME TRENDS IN UNIVERSITY LIFE," BILL E. FRYE, VICE PRESIDENT AND PROVOST

Professor Stebbins thanked Vice President Frye for his support and for his openness to faculty influence. Both contributed substantially to the good health of faculty governance at the University. Vice President Frye stated it has been a privilege to be part of the faculty and he expressed gratitude for the opportunity this faculty has given him.

He opened his prepared remarks by acknowledging some of the familiar problems and tendencies affecting higher education. These constitute a compelling and constraining environment within which other concerns must be considered. All are important and likely to continue to be major problems for many years. Some, like funding, may grow more serious from established causes, and also from growing aspirations that we will feel compelled to support. Particularly troublesome are the retrospective funding gaps that occurred in the past 15 years and have never been made up, and the prospectively widening gaps between those few institutions that are experiencing favorable budgetary growth and those that are not. Budget problems are by no means over.

The issue of state regulation is noteworthy as our constitutional autonomy is challenged in various ways by the governor and legislature. Historically the extraordinary degree of autonomy that the University of Michigan enjoyed has been one of its greatest sources of strength. Now, increasing control over revenue sources and expenditures is becoming a major concern. State priorities for higher education may or may not be consistent with the central priorities of the University and the long term best interest of higher education. They suggest a view of the role of the University that is, in his judgment, a threat to the character and quality of the University that we have not yet begun to fully appreciate.

Deterioration of the physical plant and equipment and instrument inventories has been pointed to as a national disaster of billions of dollars. At Michigan it is a problem of monumental proportions, estimated anywhere from \$300-500 million. This problem is a time bomb for universities that is not only a major part of the funding problem, but will eventually erode the ability to attract, retain, and render productive the best faculty and students and to keep up with the technical needs of society.

As we respond to these sorts of problems, we assign different priorities among them without necessarily having carefully thought through why we regard some to be more important than others in the long run. It is not only difficult to make the choices we have to make, but dangerous to do so unless we continually reexamine some of the basic precepts upon which our universities operate. Our choices can be radically different depending upon

our beliefs about the central goals and values of the University. In his view, the most urgent problems facing the nation's universities may not be those tangible, external challenges of the type mentioned earlier--critical though they are--but the need to understand better and gain broader consensus for the central goals and beliefs that guide the decisions we make about the University.

If we were founding a new university today, with the goal of creating an optimum scholarly environment, we would likely place a higher value on:

1. -diversity of scholarship than conformity;
2. -novelty and venturesomeness than on intellectual conservatism;
3. -imagination and creativity than on mere intellectual rigor;
4. -encouragement of synthetic work, and the development of new conceptual paradigms and unifying theories than on specialization and fragmentation of knowledge.

Each of these alternative possibilities would require careful dissection before its meaning in the context of our real choices were clear but there would probably be wide-spread agreement about which direction is to be preferred. Yet there seem to be factors pushing us in exactly the opposite direction. These include:

1. The extraordinary growth in the size and complexity of universities over the last 40 years, that has made the achievement of shared goals and values, and even meaningful communication about them, difficult;
2. The increasing amount of knowledge and technology which seems almost to demand specialization for mastery of a field;
3. A shift in the source of status and rewards as perceived by the faculty, and of the intellectual and organizational context of scholarship at least modestly away from teaching toward research, and therefore from an institutional to a more disciplinary focus; and concurrently;
4. The emergence of increasingly important, sometimes preponderant, funding sources from outside the University, most notably the federal government, targeted toward individuals and managed largely along disciplinary rather than institutional lines.

Other factors could be mentioned but the one which makes him most "uneasy" is:

5. The increasing dominance of the disciplines in the organization and administration of universities. By "disciplines" he means not only the academic departments and professional schools, but the broader disciplinary context that extends far beyond the university to include the national

"societies" of disciplines and associated professions, and all of the supporting infrastructure of professional associations, journals, funding agencies and the like.

To a substantial degree the disciplines, and their counterparts beyond the university, have become a dominant culture that has increasingly displaced the university in such critical matters as:

- Organization and content of curriculum, even at the undergraduate level;
- Source of rewards and incentives to faculty and students;
- Source of individual and departmental status and identity;
- Major source of funding, in many instances;
- Increased reliance on successful competition as the context for setting objectives and measuring individual success.

He acknowledged the great benefits associated with increasing disciplinary dominance. The pace of generation and application of new knowledge has quickened. Methodologies with greater power and reliability have emerged, and the intellectual standards of scholarship have risen and become more consistent. The ability of academic disciplines to relate to and meet the needs of related professions has undoubtedly increased and the disciplinary organization of knowledge has proven to be a forceful way of managing information as well as encouraging intellectual ferment and developing new conceptual paradigms. In short, the disciplines have come to be the foundation of the University, and they are supported and valued accordingly. But the very strength and successfulness on the national scale of the disciplinary and professional organization of scholarship is what makes some of its side effects so invidious.

There are several central tendencies that affect the character of scholarly life that we should be concerned about:

1. The tendency toward conformity and conservatism in scholarship. Factors such as increased emphasis on comparative ratings, frequency of scholarly publication, and funding linked to results may encourage faculty to feel an increasing pressure to conform, to pursue popular and predictable lines of investigation, and to avoid "higher risk" areas.
2. The tendency toward specialized discipline- or task-oriented scholarship in preference to conceptually "larger" and more synthetic and integrative work. This may be shaped by the factors just mentioned and by the character of graduate and professional education that has perhaps favored a narrower mindset among many research faculty than might be desirable.
3. There are some inhibitions to interaction of scholars across disciplines, and for involvement in emergent new, unproven fields. As status and prestige

have settled on some departments and disciplines, as expectations for scholarly productivity in fields that have general currency have increased, and especially as resources have diminished, the will and the opportunity for faculty and departments to participate in cross- or multi-disciplinary activity has surely diminished.

A problem of a different sort concerns how a great university renews itself and maintains a truly stimulating, creative intellectual environment in the face of a no-growth environment. As Daniel Alpert suggested in his paper, "Performance and Paralysis: The Organizational Context of the American Research University," when faculty define the mission of the university solely in terms of their individual departmental missions, and can conceive of change only in terms of departmental interests, it is inevitable that accepted mechanisms for assessing performance and making change in institutional structure or priorities will be severely limited.

He underscored his thesis with a series of rhetorical questions which illustrate the sorts of core beliefs upon which we make decisions that affect our University every day. We concern ourselves too little with the reexamination of such matters because we are preoccupied with reinforcing the success of the disciplinary model of higher education. Implicitly there are answers to such questions that we cannot accept without fear of compromising that success. We need to find ways to reexamine and give new meaning to some of our basic precepts without unduly jeopardizing the unquestionable great strengths that derive from our present ways of doing business.

In summary, he is concerned that universities may be defining their objectives, including the ways we assess and view quality, too narrowly. We may be insufficiently cognizant of the importance of, and what it takes to achieve, balance among the various objectives and responsibilities of the University, as well as among the various approaches to knowledge. He is concerned that we may not understand as well as we should the interrelationships among our various choices, rewards and incentives and therefore may not recognize fully the trade-offs and contradictions that may be inherent in our administrative decisions. We may not have a consistent understanding, much less consensus, about what our values and objectives are, and therefore we practice inconsistent or contradictory behavior. We may not sufficiently take account of external forces, such as federal funding, that may shape or override our objectives as we understand them. We may not recognize that there have been subtle shifts in the meanings of the labels that we place on some of our scholarly goals, such that we have serious misunderstandings among ourselves. Worst of all, he is concerned that we may not even recognize that there is a problem--a need to reexamine some basic assumptions. Therefore, we cannot recognize some trends as undesirable and, instead, may go on reinforcing them because individually and intrinsically they appear to be right.

In raising these sorts of apprehensions he did not mean to suggest that some things are "right" and others "wrong." Rather, he was speaking about balance. A university is a large and complex organization with many different legitimate goals and values which, together with the strengths of the institution, are largely the sum of the goals, values and strengths of the individuals that comprise the community. Judgment about what mix is optimum is difficult because there are no outcomes by which one can immediately assess the consequences of any particular chosen mix of goals, beliefs and practices. In his view The University of Michigan is achieving a more optimum balance among the various possible tendencies than most.

Despite the power of the national disciplinary environment, he believes that we can charter our own course to some degree. Central administration has surprisingly few ways to influence the character of the University. It can insist on high standards of scholarship, try to choose wise and perceptive academic leaders, and encourage new intellectual directions. It can also do its best to assure resources and a nurturing institutional environment, try to assure that the system of rewards and incentives as well as the sources of status and self-esteem are not too narrowly conceived, and can hope to sustain a special sense of institutional character and purpose.

He then made two suggestions that could help allay some of the unease he noted. First, he proposed creation of a special fund to encourage new scholarship in new areas across disciplinary boundaries. It would complement the strengths of disciplines and perhaps offset some of the less desirable tendencies discussed above. Second, he urged that we try to find new ways to move our thinking about these issues from the level of abstractions to the level of practical problems that we can do something about. A center for integrative studies, for example, could explore questions such as the relationship between academic rigor and creativity, or that between the disciplinary culture and the propensity of scholars to do integrative, reflective, and synthetic work.

He acknowledged that it is easy to criticize and to raise idealistic concerns. But we should not lose sight of the fact that we have a good thing going. He suggested that these matters be approached with considerable humility and openness of mind. In the absence of certainty on such matters, our concern should be tempered by healthy indulgence of those shortcomings with which we are impatient.

"PURSUING PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE: AN UPDATE ON MINORITY ENROLLMENT ISSUES,"
NIARA SUDARKASA, ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Dr. Sudarkasa noted that over the past 15 years, the University has supplemented its efforts to aid minority students. However, after 1976 enrollment of Black students began to decline while that of Hispanics and

Asian-Americans rose imperceptibly. Concern about these developments led to a systematic study and the first in a series of discussion papers to the Executive Officers. In March 1985 she and Vice President Frye presented their findings to the Regents.

In related work she was appointed to chair a Michigan State Superintendent's Special Advisory Committee on Minorities, Handicappers, and Women in Michigan's Colleges and Universities. Like the nation, gains in minority enrollment in the state over the last decade have come among Asian-Americans, the majority of whom are out-of-staters concentrated at the big three universities. Most of these students are self-supporting and not assisted by scholarships or grants. The committee concluded that over the last decade 6800 minority students were lost to higher education in the state. Currently, community college enrollment accounts for the 43% of minority enrollment in Michigan and reflects the limited choices available to minority students who want to go to college. Indeed, there is no segment of higher education in the state where minority enrollment doesn't need to be increased with all due speed. The most disturbing fact about Black enrollment to her is its movement downward on a statewide level in contrast to the pattern for other minorities.

Contrary to the assumption that minority enrollment at The University of Michigan is an anomaly, the study shows instead that it parallels both state and national trends. It also points to underlying economic factors which are nationwide in their occurrence and impact. In addition there are three key factors underlying the enrollment decline of the last decade. These are:

- (1) Shrinking financial aid;
- (2) soaring high school dropout rates reflecting the continuing inequality at the pre-college level which leads to poor preparation; and,
- (3) attacks on Affirmative Action and special programs for minority students.

Specifically affecting The University of Michigan have been:

- (1) Back-to-back state recessions which hit blacks especially hard;
- (2) cuts in financial aid programs; and,
- (3) serious erosion in the quality of education in Michigan public schools, and minority students have borne the brunt of this decline.

The low point of Black enrollment was 1983. Enrollment has risen in each of the last two years, with a 12.7% increase this year. However, Black enrollment is still less than 5% of total student enrollment. The need to enhance recruitment efforts involves reconceptualizing recruitment to make it more personalized, increasing Alumni Association assistance in identifying potential students, and, on the graduate level, enlisting the help of U of M

alumni who teach in schools throughout the country to identify graduate students.

While recruitment is the key, retention of students is also very important and the University has a deep commitment to it. In 1975 the graduation rates of White students was 20% higher than that of Blacks. That gap has since been narrowed by 3%. The goal is to close the gap completely. The forthcoming report on undergraduate retention will recommend changes in some areas and will also illustrate the successes. Because patterns of graduate school attendance are difficult to determine, it is hard to quantify retention rates. Of those students completing their degrees, Blacks and Hispanics do so in less time than do Whites.

Professional schools show very small differences in graduation rates and length of time spent earning degrees. Thus, the situation here is very encouraging.

She is optimistic about improving undergraduate enrollment and credited Vice President Frye with an unswerving commitment to this area even during difficult financial times. The matter also involves the commitment of the faculty because the departments, schools and colleges are the best places to provide support to minority students. She urged Assembly members as leaders of the faculty to engage in discussion of the issues put before them. The University's goal should be to prove that equity of access and equality of opportunity for success can be afforded to all students in this country.

Dr. Sudarkasa then answered several questions from members.

"PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE LOCUS AND LIMITS OF TENURE FOR FACULTY MEMBERS WHERE APPOINTMENTS ARE DIVIDED OR PARTIAL," JAMES J. GINDIN, TENURE COMMITTEE

Referring to the statement prepared by the Tenure Committee, Professor Gindin explained that the document describes current practices at the University. The committee's aim was to clarify those practices and that Section 1.2 is the most important clarification being offered. Lehmann moved, Chudacoff seconded, that the statement be supported. Several information questions were answered. The vote was unanimous in support of the motion. The statement will now be forwarded to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

REPORTS FROM SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Professor Manis reported that the faculty of LSA recently rejected a proposal to offer credit for ROTC courses unless they are cross-listed for credit with another college. An LSA committee studied the issue with an eye to modifying its former position so that a student could elect up to four credit hours at the junior or senior level. The prevailing arguments in the defeat of the proposal were that neither the instructors nor course content would be controlled in the same way as others in LSA.

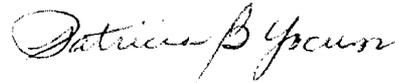
OLD BUSINESS

Professor Sanders inquired about the status of the ad hoc committee to review guidelines for classified research. Professor Stebbins replied that the report was close to completion and would be submitted to Vice President Wilson. The Assembly understood that it would receive the material as soon thereafter as possible.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia B. Yocum
Senate Secretary