

Minutes of 26 April 2010
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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
SENATE ASSEMBLY MEETING
26 APRIL 2010

Present: Abdoo, Andjelkovic-Zochowska, Aronoff, Barber, Bielinska, Borer, Brown, Carson, Denver, Dorsey, Fauman, Ferris, Frost, Geary, Giordani, Hirshorn, Holland, Johnson, Jones, Kearfott, King, Koopman, Larsen, Lehman, Lenk, Lusmann, Mars, Millunchick, Nassauer, Norton, Ottaviani, Ortega, Poe, Prygoski, Reddy, Rothman, Sampson, Sharma, Smith, Soellner, Stark, Sun, Sweeney, Thouless, Williams, Zemgulys, Ziff

Requested Alternate, None Available: Bergin (LSA), Davis (Law), Gest (Medicine), Green (Medicine), Kurashige (LSA), Queen (LSA), Sampson (Nursing), Sheets (Medicine), Wolfe (LSA),

Alternates: Mansfield (Thompson-Engineering), Tolman (Staller-LSA)

Absent: Adlerstein-Gonzalez, Andre, Crane, Fraser, Friesen-Lynn, Jackson, Jagadish, Kabamba, Karni, Li, Lim, Maher, Miller, Mueggler, Navvab, Najita, Patil, Salesa, Shore, Silverman, Sohn, Trandafirescu, Yang

MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED

1. Draft Senate Assembly Agenda
2. Draft minutes of the Senate Assembly meeting of 22 March 2010
3. [Model Faculty Grievance Procedure for Schools, Colleges, and Academic Units, dated 1 April 2010](#)
4. University Senate Agenda

Chair Thouless convened the meeting at 3:25 P.M. The proposed agenda was approved.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Senate Assembly meeting of 22 March 2010 meeting were approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The Annual Meeting of AAUP will be cosponsored by SACUA on 12 May in the Wolverine Room of the Michigan Union. The speaker will be the AAUP General Secretary Gary Rhoades, and his topic will be "Shared Governance in Hard Times."
2. SACUA elected officers for 2010-2011: chair- Professor Rothman, vice-chair Professor Poe.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES REVISION

ACTION OF SENATE ASSEMBLY 042610-1

Chair Thouless called attention to distributed item 3. He pointed out that SACUA negotiated several amendments to the proposed policy with the office of the provost, and that item 3 includes those amendments. He said that SACUA endorses the present policy proposal and transmits it to the Assembly with recommendation for approval.

Professor Abdo expressed dissatisfaction with the insufficient information and discussion provided by SACUA about the recent revisions to the document. She pointed out that there was no easy way to see what changes had been made, and that there has been no opportunity for discussion of these changes within her unit. Her concern was echoed by other members of the Assembly. Professor Frost suggested that in the future the SACUA leadership should provide Assembly members with a marked-up document that shows additions, deletions, and amendments. Other members pointed out that SACUA had been insufficiently forthcoming and engaging with the Assembly this year that had been customary.

Vote on the Active Motion (approval of proposed policy item 3):

Number approving- 33

Number disapproving- none

The chair did not call for abstentions of record.

COMMITTEE TRANSPARENCY

ACTION OF SENATE ASSEMBLY 042610-2

Professors Hirshorn and Prygoski introduced the following resolution:

Whereas the University administration has constituted several university-wide committees charged with health benefits and retirement benefits issues, and whereas the deliberations of these committees are often secret or poorly communicated to the University community, and

Whereas the members of these committees are selected by the administration rather than by peers, and may fail to represent the diverse interests of the several groups that constitute the University employees, and

Whereas a University thrives on open communications and works best when contributions and ideas from all segments of the University community are welcomed,
Therefore the Senate Assembly urges (1) that appointments to these committees be made upon the recommendations of the respective segments of the University community, and (2) that these committees function in an open style that promotes dialogue and communication, and encourages outside inputs.

Discussion-

Professors Poe and Frost asked the proposers to define “respective segments.” Professor Brown asked whether it includes retirees, for example. Professor Stark said that the resolution was not a detailed policy statement, but rather that it was a statement of principle.

Professor Mansfield asked whether the resolution would have any teeth. Professor Abdo asked whether the committee meetings were subject to the Open Meetings Act. Chair Thouless replied that the meetings were not subject to the Act. A member of the Assembly declared that openness is a fundamental issue, and that salaries are being reduced each year by benefits take-backs conducted without transparent deliberation. Professor Giordani suggested that the resolution be amended to reduce its inflammatory language, but acknowledged that there are too many committees operating in secrecy.

Several members of the Assembly declared that the Assembly ought to communicate its strong objection to secrecy, and asked for the rationale for such secrecy. Professor Rothman stated that he was appointed by the provost to a committee charged with changing retiree benefits, but that he could not discuss the deliberations of the committee because he was sworn to secrecy. He said that the rationale offered for the secrecy was that preliminary proposals under consideration might engender strong opposition. He added that he supported the resolution, nonetheless.

Professor Goldman suggested that the resolution be amended to say that a draft form of any proposed policy should be shared openly and remain open for public comment for a prescribed period. Professor Frost moved that the Active Motion be postponed until May (Smith seconded), but the motion to postpone failed.

Vote on the Active Motion-

Number Approving- 30

Number Disapproving- 4

The chair did not call for abstentions of record

VISIT OF PROVOST

Chair Thouless introduced the provost at 4:04 P.M. The provost offered her perspectives on the current state of higher education. She noted that modern universities have greatly expanded their staff in order to help faculty focus their attention on scholarship, teaching, and research grants. She noted that tenured and tenure-track faculty are consequently becoming a shrinking fraction of the university community in general, as well as of the instructional and research populations. She characterized two extreme typologies or models of academic activity as “scientist” and “humanist.” She said that each model involves different types of resource commitment from the institution.

She expressed her belief that shared governance is under duress, in part because of the changing structure of the university, but also because faculty too often fail to work together in the governance arena. She concluded her prepared remarks at 4:25 P.M.

A member of the Assembly asked about prospects of expanding shared governance beyond the faculty. The provost replied that there were several alternative models that might work if there was interest in exploring them.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

There was no additional business.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 P.M.

Respectfully submitted

John T. Lehman
Senate Secretary

University of Michigan Bylaws of the Board of Regents, Sec. 5.02:

Governing Bodies in Schools and Colleges

In each school, college, or degree granting division of the University, including those at the University of Michigan-Dearborn and at the University of Michigan-Flint, the governing faculty shall be in charge of the affairs of the school, college, or division, except as delegated to the executive committee, if any, and except that in the School of Graduate Studies the governing board shall be the executive board, and in the Medical School shall be the executive faculty.
