

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
SENATE ASSEMBLY

Minutes of Assembly Meeting, May 23, 1977

- ATTENDANCE Present: Members Barnett, Bornstein, Brown, M., Butler, Caldwell, Cartwright, Christensen, Cohen B., Cohen, P., Corpron, Crichton, Diamond, Dingle, Downen, Edwards, A., Elving, Gelehrter, Gordon, Gray, Harris, J., Harris, R., Heers, Hungerman, Juvinal, Kaplan, Leary, Lindberg, Livermore, Millard, Naylor, Portman, Rabkin, Romani, Schanck, Shannon, Sherman, Simonds, Sinsheimer, Tilly, Tonsor, Trojan, Votaw, Weeks, West, White, Winans, Schulze, Lehmann
- Absent: Members, Angus, Aupperle, Brazer, Brown, D., Browne, Coon, Cooper, Edwards, O., Fekety, Fowler, Gay, Herbert, Hildebrandt, Jones, Kish, Merte, Morley, Penner, Porter, Proctor, Stross, Zorn
- Guest: Richard Park, Co-chairman, Program Evaluation Committee
- CALL TO ORDER The meeting was called to order by Chairman Lehmann at 3:20 p.m.
- APPROVAL OF MINUTES The minutes of April 19, 1977 were accepted with minor corrections.
- OPENING REMARKS BY CHAIRMAN LEHMANN Professor Lehmann welcomed the new members of the Assembly and invited the active participation, advice and criticism of all Assembly members throughout the next year. He introduced the members of SACUA, and reminded Assembly members that SACUA meetings, held every Monday afternoon on the fourth floor of the Administration Building are open to all. He then described some of the duties of SACUA and the Assembly, stressing the role of communication. Assembly members should report regularly to the faculty of their units on the actions of the Assembly, and bring the concerns of their units to the Assembly for deliberation and action.
- Professor Lehmann announced that the next two meetings of the University Senate would be scheduled to follow immediately upon meetings of the Assembly, so as to increase attendance. He then called attention to the distribution of SACUA minutes and asked for questions and comments.
- Professor Gordon asked about the status of tenure guidelines and requested a debate on the subject in the Assembly. Professor Lehmann described the guidelines being prepared by SACUA as more a statement of principles than a set of regulations. Guidelines prepared earlier by administrators were being discussed by the administration and there was some urgency about presenting our own version.
- Professor Elving complained that the great dilemma we face continually is that major decisions are imposed on us by the administration before they have been adequately discussed by the faculty. Professor Lehmann described the background of the guidelines and suggested that a full discussion of them by the Assembly would be perfectly in order.
- Professor Morton Brown supported the thinking of Professors Gordon and Elving and promised to offer a resolution on the matter before the end of the meeting.

Professor Lehmann then turned the discussion back to the duties of Assembly members. He explained the system of apportionment, and urged members to call upon their alternates to attend meetings that they cannot attend themselves.

He surveyed some of the significant actions taken by the Assembly in the past years: Last year: recommendations on the discontinuance of academic programs and on financial aid for undergraduates; in 1975-76, recommendations on the conduct of DNA research and a statement on freedom of speech; in 1974-75, the decision to include research scientists as members of the Senate, and the recommendation that the University supplement the income of annuitants who retired prior to faculty participation in social security; in 1971-72, recommendations on the University's handling of investments, and on faculty engagement in classified research; in 1969 a statement on limiting disclosure of faculty records; and in 1967 a resolution on the autonomy of the University. Even this partial list of achievements, he thought, justifies the importance of the Assembly.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Professor Lehmann called attention to the letter from Donald Canham, Director of Athletics, that was distributed to Assembly members. Mr. Canham will address the Assembly at its June meeting.

APPOINTMENT

Professor Thomas Sawyer, Eng-Humanities, was nominated for a three-year term on the Board for Student Publications. Professor Tonsor complained that there was insufficient information about the candidate. Professor Elving supported his objection. Professor Weeks was asked to describe the candidate and his qualifications, and he supplied a brief description. Professor Sawyer's nomination was approved by voice vote.

PROGRAM
EVALUATION
REPORT

Professor Lehmann introduced Professor Richard L. Park, Co-chairman of the Program Evaluation Committee (PEC).

Professor Park opened by referring to the written report to the Assembly that had been distributed with the call to the meeting. His intention was to summarize that report briefly, and to add some personal observations. He divided his subject into three parts: current operations; planning for the future; and recurrent problems.

PEC has worked mainly in the area of Academic Affairs, although preliminary surveys in other Vice-Presidential areas were undertaken. In the last two years, the units within Academic Affairs have completed Phase I of their evaluation--statements of objectives and their priorities, and the means of achieving these objectives--and have nearly completed Phase II--the collection of data to support the Phase I objectives. Phase III--the negotiation of memoranda of understanding between major units (schools and colleges) and the Vice-President for Academic Affairs--will be finished by the end of 1978. To accomplish this end, the original plan to collect detailed data for Phase II was scaled down.

Professor Park said that evaluation procedures for vice-presidential areas other than Academic Affairs were difficult because the other areas have their own functions, and serve the needs of Academic Affairs as well; measurement of performance will have to be based on different principles, and this difference introduces the problem of comparability of results across vice-presidential areas. PEC expects to move next into the area of Research.

Three subcommittees will be formed for 1977-78: 1) A coordination and design committee; 2) Academic Affairs, Research, and Student Relations; 3) Finance, State Relations, and University Relations and Development. Subcommittees 2) and 3) will gather information on the vice-presidential areas other than Academic Affairs, and the PEC will continue its work with Academic Affairs through Phase III. The total evaluation process will extend over several years.

Professor Park then indicated three recurring problems. 1) Is self-evaluation (the three-phase procedure in Academic Affairs) reliable and adequate? It is the least expensive. The procedure puts a premium, however, on candor that is difficult to induce. Eventually, he thought, we may need outside evaluations to supplement self-studies, at least for certain units. 2) How can the evaluation process itself be made more intelligible and useful? Among other problems is the need for an analytical design that will bring the hundreds of different programs of the University into a unified system of measurement. 3) Should PEC remain a "quasi-administrative" advisory committee, or be brought under the umbrella of SACUA and the Assembly? He felt that its present status was satisfactory. He offered three reasons for this conclusion: First, the current arrangement assures access to sources of information; second, it promotes (through close communications with senior administrative officers) more direct and effective faculty influence; and third, it helps convince senior administrators of the value of a regular and rational system of evaluation across all areas of the University.

Professor Park then called for questions from the Assembly. Professor Weeks asked whether or not there existed, in Professor Park's opinion, a coherent vision of the goals of the University among administrators or faculty that might help the University to fulfill its various roles. Is there an attempt by PEC to measure the quality of the goals advanced by the various units? Is the emphasis instead wholly on efficiency? Professor Park pointed out that the Long-Range Planning Committee--from which the development of such goals might have been expected--had been suspended. He thought the University might eventually want to revive that committee. PEC nevertheless does consider general and longer-term issues, but mostly deals with issues of relatively immediate importance, e.g., those that require resolution in two or three years. He admitted the solutions often must be made on the basis of opportunities, geared to such questions as: Does the program pay for itself? For the foreseeable future, we will need to change our previous assumption that new educational programs simply could be added to existing ones. Adding new programs may require cutting or closing older ones. For this process, he finds the need for a sharper set of University goals. Professor Christensen asked: If decisions are made on an opportunistic basis by the administration, does PEC then become an administrative device for avoiding criticism? Is its work only "symbolic evidence" of faculty participation, which is to say work without real effect? Professor Park agreed that it was difficult to produce a "grand design" to justify annual decisions, although PEC was working with others to produce one. In the meantime, administrative decisions go ahead on the basis of the best available information.

Professor Leary then asked: Are service units wholly to be measured in terms of their own self-study, or will the units they serve also contribute statements of goals and priorities? Professor Park stated that

academic units receiving services necessarily would be involved in the evaluation of non-academic units. Professor Juvinall asked: Shouldn't we be trying to streamline administrative services? He thought a concerted effort to cut in administrative areas would serve both to save money and to increase morale--the morale of faculty and good administrators alike. Professor Park agreed that such an effort of evaluation was properly part of the work of PEC. He suggested, however, that to cut noninstructional costs effectively, those costs would have to be seen in relation to an overall University design.

Professor Gordon then said that it might be that the PEC's decision to look at Research next was a mistake. Once more the self-studies would have to be produced by the faculty at an enormous cost of time and energy; a real drain. He questioned whether the evaluation of the other administrative areas were really more difficult and complex than the evaluation of academic programs. He further objected to the statement in the written report of PEC activities that urges administrators to "act with decisiveness in making recommendations that faculty, staff and students are loathe to make when close associates are involved." Professor Gordon has not experienced a reluctance among his colleagues to make such recommendations.

Professor Park, in response, thought the decision to look next at Research was a logical extension of the evaluation of Academic Affairs. The complexity of the evaluation of other administrative areas was an impression he had received from self-studies he had seen so far. His impression, he conceded, might prove to be mistaken. On the matter of faculty reluctance to make hard decisions, it was not his intention to criticize the faculty; they might well be able to make difficult decisions. Instead, he had pointed out that making such decisions based on appropriate consultations, was the legitimate role of administrators.

Professor Naylor supported the remarks of both Professors Juvinall and Gordon. He felt, for example, that the performance of faculty on matters of promotion showed their capacity and courage in making hard choices.

Professor Elving sought to return the discussion to the functions of the PEC. He pointed out the apparent lack of a coherent basis for making evaluative judgments about programs. He asked if the natural sequence of reaching decisions--program evaluation, leading to budget priorities' decisions, resulting in administrative action--had ever been followed. Has anything, for example, resulted from the extensive program evaluation undertaken in LS&A more than two years ago? Are the recommendations of PEC purely advisory?

Professor Park explained that both PEC and the Budget Priorities Committee (BPC) were advisory committees, but that BPC has had substantive influence in the making of administrative decisions. He expects that PEC will become more influential as the evaluation process matures. He thought that there had been, in fact, some valuable use made within the Literary College of its own self-study.

Professor Elving pointed out that PEC can become very useful in a negative way--as a source of justification for eliminating programs. It is more difficult to show its positive effects. Professor Park stated that

PEC is having a positive effect within the administration, although it is not easy to demonstrate in concrete terms. He believed that there had been a marked increase in sensitivity to faculty views, and that the administrative staffs involved were becoming better acquainted with faculty, student, and staff points of view.

Professor Rabkin commented on the nature of research done at the University--the next area slated for evaluation. He reminded us that, for many faculty members, research is a necessary, but unfunded activity. We must not say that research is "self-supporting" when as much as 25% of it is paid for from the general fund, or is produced by faculty who must sacrifice summer salaries in order to get it done. In evaluating research programs, PEC must ask: What kind of University do we want to be? How do we become more of a community? Without a broad conception of function, measurements of research are likely to be deceiving.

Professor Park agreed with the spirit of these comments.

Professor Lehmann then thanked Professor Park for the work of his committee and for his report.

RESOLUTION ON
TENURE GUIDE-
LINES

Professor Morton Brown now offered a resolution on tenure guidelines:

It is central to the notion of collegiality that there be full participation of the faculty in any formulation, development, or modification of a definition of tenure at The University of Michigan. Senate Assembly, therefore, requests that the central administration postpone the issuing or discussion of tenure guidelines until Senate Assembly endorses a formulation. We expect that any proposal on tenure submitted to the Regents will be approved by both the faculty and the administration.

Professor Lehmann explained that SACUA is at work on its own tenure document that should be ready for discussion by the June meeting.

There was no further discussion. The resolution was passed by voice vote.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5 p.m.

Earl J. Schulze
Senate Secretary