

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

SENATE ASSEMBLY

Minutes of Assembly Meeting, November 17, 1975

- ATTENDANCE      Present: Professors Bishop, Bornstein, Browder, Child, Cohen, C., Corpron, Cosand, DeKornfeld, Dernberger, Eisley, Flynn, Gikas, Smith, Gray, Harris, Hildebrandt, Ilie, Jones, Kachaturoff, Kaplan, Kessler, Kish, G., Kish, L., Lands, Leary, Lehmann, Lindberg, Livermore, Lytle, Magrill, Millard, Nesbitt, Aupperle, George, Seligson, Sherman Springer, Stross, Terwilliger, Van der Voo, Votaw, Williams, Colburn, Hoch, Johnson
- Absent: Professors Adams, Baublis, Berki, Brown, Christensen, Cohen, B., Cornell, Crawford, Deskins, Guinn, Hoffman, Horsley, Kell, Kelsey, Olson, Lucchesi, Mullen, Murphey, Proctor, Tubergen, Sibley, Soucek, Taren, Weeks, West, Wilson
- Guests: Dr. Donald Lelong, Professor Spivey
- CALL TO ORDER      The meeting was called to order by Chairman Johnson at 3:21 p.m.
- APPROVAL OF MINUTES      The minutes of the Assembly meeting of October 20, 1975 were approved.
- ANNOUNCEMENTS      Chairman Johnson presented several items of information, among them the following:
- a. The members of the Assembly were reminded of the forthcoming University Senate meeting of November 24 at which Professors Hymans and Shapiro as well as President Fleming would be addressing economic matters of vital interest to the State and the University. Hence attendance at, and participation in, the meeting of the Senate were urged, particularly since the financial outlook for next year will figure prominently in University decision-making.
  - b. The executive officers will shortly be issuing their recommendations with respect to the reports of the Committee to Review the Graduate School, the Committee on Environmental Research, Planning and Design, and the Committee on Extension Services in Relation to the Flint and Dearborn Campuses. The members of the Assembly were urged to bring these matters to the attention of their respective units for review and discussion.
  - c. Having met previously with Professors Johnson and Williams, the chairpersons of Assembly committees will shortly be meeting with SACUA for continuation of discussion of matters of mutual interest.
  - d. Attention was drawn to the resolution adopted by the State Relations Committee in connection with the Faculty Exchange Program (a resolution in which SACUA had concurred, as reported in its minutes of November 10, 1975), and the members of the Assembly were urged to bring the program to the attention of their colleagues.

e. SACUA had asked the Committee on the Economic Status of the Faculty to review a recommendation from Vice-President Pierpont that parking fees be increased. Though CESF supported the recommendation, SACUA continues to entertain reservations on this general matter. Not only is there a noticeable increase in the number of restrictions pertaining to parking, but at the same time there have been such further impositions as an additional charge for parking in certain areas during athletic games as well as curtailment of parking space in the areas surrounding the athletic building. SACUA has, in fact, asked the Board in Control of Intercollegiate Athletics to discuss the latter with Professor Canham.

GENETIC  
RESEARCH

As noted in the SACUA minutes of July 28, 1975, the University's participation in genetic research has been receiving attention in a number of quarters. Of the three committees addressing the respective issues, Committee B is concerned with the ethical, philosophical, and related aspects of such research. Hence Professor Livermore, the Assembly's representative, was asked to present a progress report.

At this point, Professor Livermore reported, the committee is most eager to get comments, suggestions, and reactions of whatever kind as it considers the University's role in an area of research that holds great promise yet at the same time carries a certain peril. As he pointed out, unlike most committees, Committee B has few precedents on which to rely; in this sense it has something in common with committees on the use of human subjects in research, which likewise constantly meet and must somehow deal with unprecedented situations. Hence, while important issues are under discussion, Committee B is not yet prepared to make recommendations.

Members of the Assembly did have some suggestions. For one, a statement of issues would help, since this area is indeed a new one for most. Too, references to publications raising pertinent questions would be helpful, so that those interested might more readily inform themselves about critical considerations. Both suggestions seemed apt, Professor Livermore giving assurance that he would bring them to the attention of the committee. As Professor Cohen, a member of the committee noted, suggestions are all the more appreciated since there is no parallel group with which the committee can compare notes, a sentiment with which Professor Lands agreed. As he observed, while most committees are in position to deliver fairly specific answers at set deadlines, in this case one needs to exercise a good deal of tolerance while the committee addresses itself over a period of time to the future impact of events yet unknown. In any case, the Assembly itself was appreciative of the nature of the committee's mission.

LONG-RANGE  
PLANNING

In calling attention to the work of the Long-Range Planning Committee, Chairman Johnson reminded the Assembly that three presidential committees exist, of which the latter is one, the others being the Program Evaluation Committee (also to be heard from at this meeting) and the Budget Priorities Committee. All three are at work and the hope is that their efforts will enable the University to cope more effectively with financial difficulties that doubtless lie ahead.

Having been invited to make a progress report on the activities of the Long-Range Planning Committee, of which he serves as chairman, Professor Kaplan had prepared a brief interim statement for the Assembly, actually furnishing each member two copies, so that one might be returned to the committee with reactions and suggestions pertaining to the activities outlined. In commenting on the efforts of the committee, which is preparing a summary report of its work over the past year, he stressed the need to encourage a planning mood throughout the University, especially in a time of increasingly strained resources. Thus, while the committee has continued to consult with other groups on major projects, it has recently formed two new subcommittees, one aimed at encouraging a planning-for-the-future attitude at all levels of decision-making, the other directed toward making the most effective response to external economic and social problems that affect the University.

In thanking Professor Kaplan for this interim report, Chairman Johnson assumed that the committee was encouraging discussion of these issues at departmental and faculty governance meetings, an assumption to which Professor Kaplan heartily assented.

EVALUATION AND  
PLANNING PRO-  
JECT

By way of keeping the Assembly au courant with the activities of the Program Evaluation Committee and developments in its Evaluation and Planning Project, SACUA had extended an invitation to Dr. Lelong and Professor Spivey to brief the body on developments to date. Both welcomed the opportunity to solicit reactions.

In his introductory remarks Dr. Lelong noted that while (or because) authority is widely dispersed throughout the University, the actions of any group have an effect on the circumstances of others. The Office of Academic Affairs therefore particularly feels the need for help in dealing with recurrent responsibilities (for example, budgeting), recognizing that wiser decisions can only be made if more and better information is available to deliberating groups. The need appeared perhaps less acute during periods of growth; in a time of shrinking resources, limitations on full and accurate information are a luxury one can ill afford. Hence, the Planning and Evaluation Project of the Program Evaluation Committee is an attempt to replace ad hoc disjointed judgments made in relative isolation by solidly based decisions reached in the overall context of University needs and priorities and made in a broader time perspective.

The aim is an ambitious one, Dr. Lelong would admit; hence the Evaluation and Planning Project has actually been conceived in three phases. The first is intended to have each unit articulate its objectives and their major operational implications; phase two would evaluate these operations in light of the objectives held; directions and alternative courses of action can then be charted during phase three.

In supplementing these introductory remarks, Professor Spivey emphasized that the document now before the Assembly--Phase 1 of the Evaluation and Planning Project--was the last in a long line of drafts to which reactions had been sought from deans, the Executive Committee of LSA, and the Schools of Natural Resources, Architecture and Urban Planning, and

Public Health, among others. In addition, contact had been made with eight other universities, the relevant literature had been reviewed, faculty response had been solicited, and, after considerable further study, the set of questions and supporting materials now available emerged. At this point the Program Evaluation Committee feels more strongly than ever the need for faculty participation in the evaluation process.

In the ensuing discussion a variety of reactions emerged. Professor Springer, for one, evinced a good deal of skepticism about the usefulness of such an operation. He had no objection to planning per se but wondered seriously about the ultimate meaningfulness of the outcome of the present procedure. Professor Livermore, on the other hand, felt it necessary to distinguish between what he saw as two distinct characteristics of the questionnaire, one element being directed, understandably, toward the elicitation of information, the other, however, appearing to have a kind of coercive flavor. The latter reference was to the underlined statements preceding each cluster of questions, statements he felt suggested a party line to which one had better hew, since the premises were presented as statements of fact, hence were presumably non-negotiable.

Professor Spivey sought to set the record straight. True, he admitted with reference to Professor Springer's sentiments, the project must at this point be accepted on faith, pending an assessment of its ultimate contribution to planning. But the University is engaged in decision-making every day in any event, and the question is simply whether, with faculty participation, one can provide a better information base on which to rest such decisions. He could not, of course, guarantee at this point that the project would exert the desired influence, but its rationale was a reasonable one.

With respect to Professor Livermore's reservations, Professor Spivey pointed out that the earlier draft of the questionnaire was in fact without the sets of underlined statements to which exception was being taken. But the Program Evaluation Committee had been requested to supply the latter by various faculty members as a way of indicating the issues around which the respective questions were being raised. The subcommittee that subsequently drafted the statements in question had, indeed, agonized over each, sensing that they might be construed as value judgments. A deliberate effort had been made to avoid what might sound like leading statements, thought evidently the outcome was not altogether successful.

Commenting further on Professor Springer's concern with avoiding any exercise in futility, Professor Kish wondered whether, given the end of the period of growth and the advent of retrenchment, the Program Evaluation Committee would be concerned with procedures that might be followed in the event that a department or school had to be dissolved. Vice-President Rhodes is, indeed, concerned with the difficulty of some decisions that may have to be reached, Professor Spivey commented, and the Program Evaluation Committee, while advisory in nature, has been assured its efforts will be taken seriously. In the case of budget cuts, for example, differential, rather than across-the-board, reductions are

preferred. This requires the development of criteria and a scale of priorities. In fact, as funds decrease, the need for program priorities increases. Hence, faculty involvement becomes all the more crucial.

Apropos of some of these considerations, Chairman Johnson invited Professor Kaplan to comment on the role of the Long-Range Planning Committee. It, too, Professor Kaplan reported, has made systematic efforts to seek information from the executive committees of schools and colleges and some of the instruction-related units, having learned a lot in the process. The Long-Range Planning Committee sees the intent of the Program Evaluation Committee as even more thorough, though the usefulness of the eventual product will rest on meaningful input and appropriate interpretation. Hence the Long-Range Planning Committee is following the activities of the Program Evaluation Committee with interest and looks forward to studying the long-range implications of whatever documents eventuate.

Reacting to what had preceded, Professor Lands was concerned with two questions--an index of how meaningful the planning and evaluation project is proving, as well as the effectiveness of faculty participation, not only in terms of input but also with relation to subsequent evaluation of the product. Professor Cohen expressed support for such a motion, urging that the Program Evaluation Committee suggest to units that every member of the department have an opportunity to react to and comment on any draft report, a proposal with which Professor Spivey was in full agreement.

Professor Jones, for his part, abhorred redundancy, hence was willing to trust the chairman and executive committee of his department to make an appropriate response on behalf of his unit. He wondered, too, to what extent use could be made of existing attempts at program evaluation (for example, that of LSA). Whatever information is already available and current should be capitalized upon, Dr. Lelong suggested, assuring the Assembly that there was no desire to make unnecessary work for anyone.

While Professors Dernberger and Eisley still had reservations with respect to some aspects of the Planning and Evaluation Project, Professor Cosand took comfort from the fact that, fortified with some internal evaluation, one is in better position to react to possible impositions from without. Nonetheless, Professor Eisley wondered whether criteria are actually in the process of being developed or whether they, in effect, already exist, in which case one could be concerned about an element of gamesmanship, those familiar with the criteria being in position to know the "right" answers. The longer term criteria do, indeed, remain to be developed, Dr. Lelong assured him.

What still concerned Professor Bornstein was whether the real issue was one of faculty participation or the nature of the questionnaire. He too was puzzled by some of the underlined statements, though less by their content than by their interrelationship. Specifically, for example, one statement speaks of "increasing demands for service to the State and region" while another indicates that research "will continue to receive high priority." One might therefore draw the inference that, relative to

other considerations, the emphasis on research (which is simply to "continue") will actually be diminished, since there will be "increasing demands" made on other fronts.

In the last analysis, Chairman Johnson suggested, the present effort can be viewed as an honest search by the University administration for more and better information on which decisions can be based. Nevertheless, faculty members are free to raise questions and express disagreement; indeed, the Program Evaluation Committee hopes for maximum feedback.

With discussion having run its course, the motion proposed by Professor Lands and seconded by Professor Cohen was presented for vote as follows:

RESOLVED: That the Senate Assembly recommends that faculty be encouraged to participate at two levels in connection with Phase I of the Program Evaluation Committee's activities, namely:

a) at the level of initial input--the viewpoints of faculty members should be solicited as the Committee's questionnaire is being completed; and

b) at a second and evaluative level --as units complete their respective reports, faculty review of these reports should be requested by unit administrators.

The motion carried unanimously, and it was the intent of the Assembly that the action be communicated to President Fleming. A brief additional procedural suggestion was offered by Professor Cohen to the effect that the University Record make provision for listing the person or persons in each unit to whom interested faculty could relay their contributions with respect to the Planning and Evaluation Project and its questionnaire, a suggestion in which Dr. Lelong concurred.

On behalf of the Assembly, Chairman Johnson thanked Dr. Lelong and Professor Spivey for this opportunity to engage in dialogue on matters of mutual concern.

OLD  
BUSINESS

Since the Regents were about to consider recommendations with respect to the report of the Commission to Study Student Governance, Professor Cohen suggested that Chairman Johnson call to their attention the earlier action of the Assembly in this connection.

NEW  
BUSINESS

There being no new business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:17 p.m.

Erasmus L. Hoch  
Secretary