

Minutes of 17 November 1997
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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
SENATE ASSEMBLY MEETING
MINUTES OF 17 NOVEMBER 1997

Chair D'Alecy convened the meeting at 3:19 P.M.

MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED

1. Senate Assembly Agenda
2. SACUA/Senate Assembly Skeletal Agenda
3. Draft minutes of the Senate Assembly meeting of 27 October 1997
4. Approved minutes of the Senate Assembly meeting of 29 September 1997
5. Text of address to the Senate Assembly by President Lee C. Bollinger, dated Monday, 27 October 1997, and marked as a draft
6. Letters to Chancellors of UM Flint and UM Dearborn from President Bollinger, dated 29 October 1997
7. Memorandum to Regents of the University and others from SACUA Chair L. D'Alecy, dated 5 November 1997, regarding divestment of tobacco investments
8. Memorandum to Regents of the University and others from SACUA Chair L. D'Alecy, dated 5 November 1997, regarding Senate Assembly Resolution
9. "Smokestock", Michigan Daily editorial, dated 27 October 1997
10. Committee Update to Senate Assembly, dated 17 November 1997
11. Memorandum to Senate Assembly from Committee for a Multicultural University, dated 17 November 1997, regarding feedback on activities and issues
12. Announcement: Faculty Salary and Benefits Policies

CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF 27 OCTOBER 1997

Consideration of the minutes 27 October 1997 was postponed until the December meeting, pending augmentation of discussion remarks associated with one of the resolutions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair D'Alecy called attention to distributed item 11, which included a questionnaire for Senate Assembly members. He invited members to complete the survey and return the form to the committee.

Chair D'Alecy said that one item of business at the next Senate Assembly meeting would be selection of a nominating committee to select a slate of candidates for election to SACUA.

D'Alecy reported that resolutions adopted by Senate Assembly at its October meeting have been passed on to the Regents and University Officers (items 7 and 8). He said that the Financial Affairs Advisory Committee had also taken up consideration of the tobacco stocks issue.

D'Alecy called attention to item 6, and expressed appreciation to President Bollinger for distributing the "Principles of Faculty Involvement in Institutional and Academic Unit Governance at the University of Michigan" to the Chancellors of Flint and Dearborn campuses.

D'Alecy pointed out that update information about activities of committees had been distributed to members (item 10), and he said that appropriate contacts had been identified in each case so that members could provide feedback or obtain more information.

Chair D'Alecy announced that a forum discussion on faculty salaries and fringe benefits would occur the next week (item 12).

PRESENTATION BY PROVOST NANCY CANTOR

Chair D'Alecy introduced Provost Cantor and invited her to address the Senate Assembly at 3:25 P.M. Provost Cantor presented a prepared address (Appendix) regarding proposed changes to the university budget models and evolving budget systems previously known as VCM. She described rationales for some of the changes and explained that full details would be made available shortly by publication in the University Record, and by electronic posting on the University of Michigan Web-page. She said that her office would observe a waiting period in order to receive comments during the remainder of the semester, before commencing work on the budget for the next year. Her prepared remarks were completed at 4:18 P.M.

Chair D'Alecy invited questions from the audience and initiated the discussion period by asking if the Provost allocation was to be regarded as the protector of the "public good", and why the Provost did not insist on stronger participation by unit faculty in allocating financial resources to central services. The Provost replied that the Provost allocation was a large and significant part of the unit budgets. She said that she believed that there was a responsibility at all levels to support "goods" and services from local to university scale. She added that involving unit executive committees in allocations to public goods would introduce great complexity and trigger automatic allocations, rather than deliberative ones.

A member from the audience asked if the model proposed by Provost Cantor will work as well in the Medical Center as in the academic units. The provost replied that the Medical Center was not placed under the original VCM model, and that it will not be placed under the modified model, either. She added that the Medical School, however, did operate within these models. She said that she did not necessarily agree that the models could not work for all academic units.

Another member asked who will define the "missions" of the various central service units or facilities. Provost Cantor replied that reviews will be conducted with the advice of the ACUB, Advisory Committee on the University Budget. She said that unit reviews would include internal committees and external review, as well.

Professor Burdi stated that "centrality" could be defined variously within the university, and that some aspects could exist at local and unit levels as well as across units. He asked the provost if she would articulate the relationship between the vision of centrality that she described and the institution of tenure. He explained that centrality often seems to have a short half-life. Provost Cantor replied that she is a very strong believer in tenure, but that she gets worried when attention is focused on presence or absence of tenure rather than the question of what a faculty member should be doing or working. She said that there are lots of ways to contribute, and that not everybody can contribute in a highly collaborative way. She said that we need security at the university so that we can be as risk-taking as possible, but that we also need constant evaluation of where we are going. She added that it was a delicate balance.

Professor Kaplan pointed out that a repeated criticism of VCM was that faculty understood very little about it. He said that the faculty needed details about the new model. Provost Cantor replied that her office had 38 pages of details that would be made available on the World Wide Web very soon. She said that beyond that the details would be shared with the Oversight Committee, the Einhorn Committee, and various other advisory committees. She said there are a lot of technical details still to work out, and that is why a waiting period is needed.

Professor Steneck asked Cantor if she could provide a rough estimate of the anticipated expansion size of the Provost's budget. Cantor replied that perhaps in some way station sense there was an enlarged Provost budget, but that nobody has yet done the rationalizations of central service budgets that she just talked about. Associate Provost Paul Courant added that the proposed move to "take back the back pages of the budgets" from the units would have no effect in the short run, and that it was essentially a bookkeeping change as a first order effect.

Professor Dunn asked if there had been a change in concept of where the libraries fit into the university budget. The provost replied that the library probably represented a prototypical public good, but that in her opinion the library system is underfunded. She said that her view was that the provost

should be answering questions about the nature of funding for the library, and not about where the funding is coming from. She added that the simple answer was that the library's position in the budget model had already been revised, and it's now treated as an academic unit.

Professor Bryant asked how affirmative action would relate to the new budget model. He asked if there would be goals and objectives, and whether units would be rewarded or punished depending on performance. The provost replied that many policies are themselves examples of public goods, and that within the context of long range budget planning for units, her office would absolutely look at how each unit is contributing and taking part in enhancing diversity. She pointed out that financial aid policy is another example of a public good.

An audience member asked about the status of search for a new library director. Provost Cantor said that she would be turning attention to that issue soon.

Professor Lee asked the provost to define more completely how indirect cost models will be used to encourage multidisciplinary research. Cantor said that her office would try to make funds available for groups that don't own their own faculty, but that she did not yet know how costly it will be. She explained that she was using the term "collaborative" research because she recognized that some disciplinary research could be as broad as interdisciplinary work.

Chair D'Alecy said that the Provost's efforts were focused at the deans level, but that many disincentives for multidisciplinary research are imposed at the level of department chairs. The provost replied that she did not believe such obstacles were a universal problem, but that it took the right people to accomplish the goals.

Professor Rush asked the provost what balance she was seeking for student involvement in courses from external units versus the home unit. Cantor replied that she was not a fan of citing across the board numbers, and that some units would be more able to participate in this regard than others.

A member of the audience asked how the state appropriation would fit into the new budget model. Provost Cantor replied that there was no essential change--that the state appropriation would continue to be allocated as part of the general fund. It is not possible to track exactly the source of the funding for specific general fund expenditures.

Professor MacAdam asked if there were any parts of the university in addition to the library that need protection urgently. The provost said that it was necessary to plan ahead on many fronts, but that there was not a lot of money at the moment.

Professor Kleinsmith asked if provisions were being made to keep computing facilities current. The provost said that computing was a complex issue and it required judgment about how much of the computing costs should be shouldered by units or by central funding. She noted that the mission of the ITD was under review.

A student visitor in the audience asked how the new budget model will affect the student experience. The provost said that she planned to visit both the MSA and LSA student governments to talk more about the issues. She said that she believed that collaborative teaching across units would be beneficial for students.

Chair D'Alecy thanked the provost for her remarks and discussion.

There was no old business.

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The meeting adjourned at 5:03 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

John T. Lehman
Senate Secretary