

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

SENATE ASSEMBLY

Minutes of Assembly Meeting, November 18, 1974

ATTENDANCE

Present: Adams, Allen, Anton, Bishop, Brockway, Browder, Brown, Caldwell, Cartwright, Cassidy, Cosand, Crawford, Danielson, Dernberger, Eisley, Evaldson, Beaver, Floyd, Goodman, Harrison, Horsley, Ilie, Jameson, Kachaturoff, Kaplan, Kelsey, Kish, Lyjak, Lands, Larkin, Lehmann, Livermore, Loomis, Lytle, Downen (vice Magrill), Mohler, Murphey, Nesbitt, Oberman, Ostrand, Rowe, Scott, Seligson, Springer, Taren, Terwilliger, Van der Voo, Vaughn, Weeks, Leonard, Cohen, Hoch

Absent: Baublis, Berki, Cornell, Creeth, DeKornfeld, Deskins, Flynn, Gikas, Goldman, Hoffman, Hymans, Johnson, Kell, Schmickel, Sibley, Matejka, Sudarkasa, Vander, Williams, Wilson

Guest: Dean Alfred S. Sussman, Graduate School

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Cohen called the meeting to order at 3:20 p.m.

APPROVAL OF  
MINUTES

The minutes of the Assembly meeting of October 21, 1974 were approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Assembly was informed of the following interim developments:

a) Work on the faculty handbook is nearing completion, with copies expected to be available soon.

b) SACUA has been in communication with the Research Policies Committee concerning the question of Senate membership for primary researchers, a matter to be brought before the Assembly shortly.

c) Having been offered faculty representation on the advisory committee of CCAF/UAW, SACUA had referred the matter to the Financial Affairs Committee and will subsequently invite the Assembly's consideration.

d) The counsel of the Civil Liberties Board has been sought with respect to the implications of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, a report on which will be made to the Assembly after expected amendments to the Act have enabled the University to adopt a clearer position.

e) The Assembly was reminded of the meeting of the Senate on November 25, an occasion it was hoped would be well attended.

SACUA  
VACANCY

With Professor Allen, present member of SACUA, due for a leave during the coming term, Chairman Cohen sought the advice of the Assembly as to procedure for naming a replacement for the period. The matter of proposing two nominees for the vacancy could either be left to SACUA or handled by the Assembly itself. On voting the latter course, the members were subsequently balloted, being asked to select a nominating committee of six, consisting of two retiring members of SACUA and four retiring members of the Assembly. The ballots having been counted, the committee proved to consist of Professors Loomis and Goodman (of SACUA) and Professors Brockway, Hymans, Larkin, and Mohler (of the Assembly).

So that action could be taken at the December meeting of the Assembly, Chairman Cohen invited Professor Brockway to serve as convener of an early meeting of the nominating committee.

DISCUSSION  
WITH DEAN  
SUSSMAN

Having been invited to address the Assembly on developments in higher education, Dean Sussman proceeded to sketch the picture from his perspective. The scene is hardly as pleasant as one would hope, he suggested.

Graduate enrollment is primarily a function of two variables--undergraduate enrollment and research support--and both are currently in a state of flux. The picture with respect to the former is generally dim, Dean Sussman observed. Both at the state level and nationally undergraduate enrollment is levelling off, and while this University has not yet been significantly affected, it is apparent that our undergraduate enrollment is stabilizing and may start to decline. The prospects on the other front--research support--are no brighter. If funds are not yet declining significantly, they are at least not rising as steeply as has been the case until now. In any event, some new emphases are to be noted. Increasingly the focus is on contract and mission-oriented research, with applied problems being given the edge over basic research.

Dean Sussman left little doubt that these developments have consequences for the University in general and for graduate education in particular. True, if one looks at graduate enrollment figures at the moment, dire predictions may not seem warranted in our case. In longer range terms, however, we can fully expect a decline in the number of traditional students, he prophesied. Some of the slack may well be taken up by non-traditional students, that is, older, part-time, and self-supported students and increased numbers of women and minority group students. Whatever such a shift portends, it is a fact that we are not accustomed to dealing with such students, on the one hand, and can expect a change in the character of graduate education in any event.

The picture is complicated too by some reality factors, in particular the decline in the job market for graduates nationally, with Ph.D. candidates finding a tighter employment situation in certain fields. Again, while our University has not yet been as directly affected as some, the pinch is already felt in such areas as the humanities. Even in fields where positions continue to be available, one notes a softening of the market and lessening opportunities. With declining undergraduate enrollments, Dean Sussman reminded his audience, university positions in particular will suffer, so that graduates will need to look significantly more to opportunities at the junior college and community college level, as well as to the industrial and public sectors.

What, then, should be our stance, he asked. Decisions need to be made with respect to applicants for graduate education, and one must choose among alternatives. We could, for example, adopt a free-choice model, or, alternatively, adopt as our frame of reference the current and predicted job market. Although Dean Sussman made it clear that he favored the free-choice model, he pointed out that, whatever basis is used for the admission of students, we owe it to them to be as frank as possible about the opportunities available in the real world on graduation.

In short, as Dean Sussman summarized the situation, we can expect stabilizing undergraduate enrollments, a levelling off and change in direction of research support, and a softening of the employment market, all factors with which graduate education must reckon. Whatever the future holds, preservation of the quality of our programs is essential, he insisted. Innovation and uniqueness are prized as much as ever; they do, however, not come cheaply, programs being difficult to mount. In any case, many issues are to be faced in the near future and over the longer haul--the decrease in the 18-year old cohort and increase in older students, the needs of women and minority group students, the eventual surfeit of faculty, and, more generally, the gradually changing character of graduate education. On these and other issues Dean Sussman warmly invited the views of the faculty, whose ideas and suggestions will be given careful consideration.

The ensuing discussion, invited by Chairman Cohen and Dean Sussman, contributed to a fuller understanding of the situation. A question from Professor Kaplan led, for example, to consideration of the place of the Doctor of Arts degree. The latter is apparently faring well at the moment, its holders finding readier employment than are Ph.D. candidates. However, the long-range prospect was felt to be less optimistic, Dean Sussman pointing out that unplaced Ph.D.'s will become increasingly available to institutions employing D.A.'s. Nonetheless, as Professor Cosand reported on the basis of his participation at a recent national conference, the general feeling is that the D.A. is a viable degree. Thus, while representatives of academic disciplines at the conference had stressed the traditional Ph.D. degree, the community college representatives had favored interdisciplinary training and actually preferred members of their staff who went on to the Ph.D. over Ph.D.'s from outside. For that matter, Dean Sussman added, our Ph.D. graduates themselves often find adjustment to the community college environment difficult, involving as it does a heavy teaching load and at the same time a dearth of research and the absence of facilities to which they have grown accustomed.

Some members of the Assembly, Professors Brockway, Lands, Larkin, and Taren among them, expressed concern over what seemed a market-place orientation and an overemphasis on "relevance", such pragmatic thrusts seeming to pervert the educational process. There were misgivings too about changing course prematurely on the basis of forecasts that have frequently proved unreliable or, as Professor Dernberger noted, allowing to go unchallenged the rumors that our Ph.D.'s are driving taxis. While appreciating the concerns expressed, Dean Sussman cautioned against complacency in the face of some significant trends--the gradually changing student population, the expectation of having to teach non-degree-seeking students, the need to accept increasing responsibility for preparation of students for the opportunities or lack of opportunities they face on graduation, the unique convergence of socio-economic factors in determining the past generation's growth in graduate education. Some units of the University have apparently already grasped the nettle. The School of Engineering was said to be addressing audiences off campus; the School of Medicine, according to Dean Sussman, is updating the training of people; and, as Professor Lytle noted, the School of Architecture has taken non-degree candidates in stride, accepting students from a wide variety of sources.

As Chairman Cohen observed in thanking Dean Sussman for his appearance, the problems of the moment have no clearcut answers, making such discussion all the more necessary. Dean Sussman in turn thanked the members of the Assembly for their interest, welcomed their ideas and suggestions for dealing with the problems at hand, and offered to return for continuing dialogue at a later date if the Assembly wished.

SPECIAL  
REPORT ON  
TENURE

Addressing the issue of appointments at senior ranks that continue indefinitely without tenure, Chairman Cohen reminded the Assembly of its previous request that SACUA gather more information on the impact its special report on tenure might have on certain units. Feedback having been received from the Office of Affirmative Action, the Commission for Women, and various schools and colleges, Chairman Cohen was in position to reassure the Assembly that, while a few remaining reservations had been expressed, there was general agreement that the report was a constructive effort to deal with a situation that deserved attention. Thus the Assembly was now in a position to consider action.

Several residual qualifications were expressed by members of the Assembly. Professor Loomis, for example, was concerned lest the footnote on page 2 of the report overlook the fact that there is still need to distinguish, on notices of appointment, between those appointments which are not intended to acquire tenure and those currently non-tenured appointments for which the expectation is that tenure will be acquired in due course. Professors Kaplan and Lands, on the other hand, were concerned about ambiguities over the applicability of Section 5.09 of the regental Bylaws, feeling that the report, as it stands, either leaves the protection afforded by this Bylaw unclear or actually withdraws such protection by leaving full-time persons solely at the mercy of an up-or-out decision. Chairman Cohen did not so interpret the provisions of the report, and, by way of moving discussion along, Professor Allen suggested that since the full-time/part-time issue presented problems in its own right, the latter were properly the subject of future deliberations. She urged therefore that the Assembly address itself to the present document and its intent. Without questioning the latter, Professor Livermore raised, however, the question as to whether the present budgetary issue might result in the termination of a number of people, were the report adopted at this time, a concern subsequently allayed by Chairman Cohen, who reassured the Assembly that the principles would be applied with discretion and consideration. Thus, those currently in the status under discussion would not be adversely affected.

In the spirit of the above, a notion by Professor Loomis, seconded by Professor Allen, and clarified by Chairman Cohen, to the effect that the Assembly approve the recommendations (on pages 3-4) of the special report on tenure of August 5, 1974, was passed unanimously.

GEO NEGOTIATIONS

At the invitation of Chairman Cohen, several members of the Assembly offered observations on the negotiations in progress with GEO. Speaking as one of the Assembly's observers at the public sessions, Professor Kaplan indicated that, with GEO making some concessions and the administration offering some proposals, the negotiations are edging forward. A substantial number of issues still remain to be resolved, however, among them such matters as job security, the meaning of fractional appointments, class size, and grading practices, to name a few. In the course of supplementing these

remarks, Professor Seligson, also an Assembly observer at the open meetings, expressed a sincere desire to see the present adversary relationship come to an end, the more so since graduate students and faculty have much in common.

The bulk of further discussion centered on the theme of communication. Misinformation abounds, Professor Lands felt, some members of the faculty being quite untutored not only about the negotiating process itself but even about the binding nature of the outcomes. Dialogue among faculty at the local level and between faculty and students, he stressed, is sorely needed in the interest of clearing up misperceptions and gaining necessary feedback. How such communication is best facilitated is another matter and one on which Professor Kaplan reiterated his previous sentiments about the need for some neutral faculty body that might widen channels of communication among the parties. Whether such a neutral stance would be legally feasible was questioned by Professors Dernberger and Brockway, though Professor Loomis saw nothing amiss about a small committee whose function it would be to encourage faculty discussion within departments and perhaps assess sentiment by polling the faculty via the simple questionnaire suggested by Professor Ilie. Not all were of the opinion. Professors Larkin, Evaldson, and Rowe had reservations about such matters as getting answers to complex questions by simple questionnaires, the representativeness of what would be presumed to be the position of the faculty at large, and the risk of hardening the position of the faculty, while Professor Browder urged that no steps be taken without advice of counsel.

The discussion struck at least one member of the audience as ironic, and, having been recognized by the chair, Dean Sinnott, a member of the University Negotiating Committee, remarked on the strange situation that finds the faculty wondering about how to make proper input, while at the same time the members of the negotiating committee have not been approached with ideas and suggestions. The absence of members of the faculty at the open negotiating meetings seems symptomatic, he suggested. If anything, he emphasized, the committee yearns for input from the faculty; it has no desire to restrict information, the negotiating process being cumbersome enough even when information flows freely. Hence, the faculty is not only invited but, indeed, urged to make its feelings known, either through departments or by direct communication with the negotiators. These sentiments were affirmed by Michelle Hoyman, whom the chair recognized so that she might speak in her role of chairperson of the GEO Negotiating Committee. The GEO welcomes faculty input in whatever form, she stressed, inasmuch as the organization would find such information helpful in framing its proposals. As matters stand, Ms. Hoyman pointed out, the members of the negotiating team are dependent for their information primarily on the respective departments with which they happen to be associated as graduate students. Faculty input would enlarge the horizon; it is therefore warmly welcomed. Reiterating such sentiments, Professor Lehmann, too, invited comment, written or oral, from the members of the Assembly on any matter, so that the faculty representatives on the Advisory Committee to the University Negotiating Committee might better be guided as the negotiating process continues.

NOMINATIONS  
AND APPOINT-  
MENTS

The Assembly approved the recommendation of SACUA that Professor David D. Starks be appointed to a term on the Program Evaluation Committee extending to September 1, 1977, replacing Professor Scott.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting of the Assembly was adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

Erasmus L. Hoch  
Secretary