

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Senate Assembly

Minutes of Regular Meeting of 16 December 1985

ATTENDANCE

Present: Ascione, Bailey, Bassett, Beutler, Bissell, Briggs, Burdi, Carnahan, Checkoway, Chudacoff, Cornell, Thomson, Durrance, Easley, Eaton, English, Farley, Green, Vinh, Hanks, Hudson, Kalisch, Kusnerz, Larson, Lehmann, Leonard, Lougee, Loup, Lusk, Ard, Malvin, Manis, McCarus, McClamroch, Miller, Moerman, Mosher, Nadelman, Pierce, Radine, Reed, Rutledge, Olson, Sears, Schteingart, Stebbins, Warschausky, Zelenock, Yocum

Absent: Brewer, Boyd, Comninou, Eschman, Glover, Han, Herbert, Howe, Jacobs, Kahn, Lavoie, Lewis, Lockwood, Lorey, Margolis, Mermier, Meyer, Moran, Oleinick, Olsen, Payne, Rizki, Marc Ross, Muriel Ross, Sanders, Schauer, Snyder, Arnett, Stapp, Taylor, Todor, White, Wiseman, Zweifler

Professor Green convened the meeting at 3:15 p.m.

MINUTES

One correction was offered to the minutes of 18 November. On p.2, item 1, paragraph 3, "tenure track" should be "non-tenure track". The minutes were then accepted.

MATTERS ARISING

The Faculty Advisory Panel for 1985-86 includes Professors Hilbert, Burdi, Don Brown and Easley.

Referring to last month's report from the School of Social Work, Professor Green apologized for seeming to cut off discussion. This was not his intent.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SACUA has its annual meeting with the Regents this Thursday.

Judith Nowack has accepted a position as Assistant to the President, Denison University. Professor Green congratulated and thanked her for her excellent service to the faculty over the last several years. Her position has been posted and applications are being received.

Steven Johnson, President of the Board, PIRGIM, spoke briefly and explained that PIRGIM works to translate student ideals and ideas into action. PIRGIM lost its secured funding last year but there will be a petition drive next semester aimed at continuing students' support.

#### ELECTION OF SACUA NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee will select a slate of names from which Assembly members will elect three new SACUA members for next year. Those elected were R. Bailey and R. Green (SACUA) and L. Eaton, B. Kalisch, P. Kusnerz, and S. Warschausky (SA).

#### "ISSUES IN GRADUATE EDUCATION." REMARKS BY JOHN D'ARMS, DEAN OF RACKHAM GRADUATE SCHOOL

Dean D'Arms expressed pride in the recent award by the Council of Deans of Graduate Schools and University Microfilms to Timothy Johns, an ethnobotanist, for the best doctoral dissertation written this year in the biological sciences. Dr. Johns earned his Ph.D. at U of M under the direction of Dr. Richard Ford. His dissertation required training in biology, anthropology and pharmaceutical chemistry. To the Dean, Dr. Johns illustrates the important role which graduate students play in the intellectual life of the University and also how the teaching of graduate students can reinforce the faculty's deep commitments to intellectual discovery and sharing.

Although the Graduate School has an administrative function, Dean D'Arms suggested that Rackham's place in the intellectual life of the University is of still greater interest and importance. Rackham can focus more attention on the quality of the 600 Ph. D. theses submitted annually by identifying the outstanding ones and by fostering discussions of research methodologies and the significance of results achieved. Rackham might also play a role in encouraging faculty to feel prouder about being part of the U of M.

The transfer of responsibility for major University awards from the Office of Academic Affairs to Rackham may also help emphasize Rackham's interest in intellectual values and their recognition. The University needs to pause more often to single out some of; the extraordinary accomplishments of its faculty. A recent analysis of national awards, which can be viewed as external signs of recognition, indicates that the U of M is behind most of its peers in the number of awards received and the rate of awards adjusted by faculty size. The reasons for this may be complex but amenable to alteration

if time and thought are invested. A University Honors Office, in this enlarged sense would help. It may be that the office should be the Graduate Dean's Office.

Another initiative is an annual series of book launchings each of which, in addition to marking the publication of a new work, would be a colloquium featuring the author and persons in the same and related fields. The hope is to celebrate a significant intellectual achievement with a substantive intellectual event. Such an initiative might also countervail the decentralized structure and large size of the University. Without duplicating other efforts, the Graduate School, positioned as it is to encourage initiatives and introduce perspectives which move across fields, units, departments and colleges, may be in an excellent position to make a difference.

Of the major issues in graduate education, the Dean stated that his focus would be primarily upon programs in the Arts and Sciences. At a later time he would discuss issues related to the professional schools, foreign student enrollment and the recruitment and retention of minority students. From a long list of other issues, he singled out four which to him are of particular and pressing concern.

1. The shifting state of academic labor markets.

The demand for new faculty has shifted noticeably among academic disciplines in the past decade. Rapid growth in Computer Science and in some fields of Engineering has been accompanied by a dramatic weakening of openings in the Humanities and in some of the Physical and Social Sciences. Moreover, the proportion of recent Ph. D.'s who have secured academic appointments has gradually declined across a wide range of disciplines. The general trends are clearly reflected in graduate enrollments at the U of M where there are 5958 students enrolled in Rackham degree programs today compared with 7545 in 1975.

2. Funding.

Inflation and other economic factors have been driving up the costs of graduate tuition while the major sources of support for graduate students have fallen off precipitously. The relatively few new fellowship programs from government and foundations will do little to offset the massive retreat of both the federal government and private foundations from graduate student funding. The results of rising costs and falling external support are that the net costs to the major universities and to the students (and their families) have grown astronomically. The U of M has already reallocated \$2M in General Fund monies to Regents Fellowships and this year requested a \$1.5M increment. Nonetheless, funds will fall \$2.5M short of the amount identified as needed four years ago. The newly appointed Task Force on Graduate Aid may recommend further increases so that the University can compete for the strongest graduate students with its peers.

The task force will also study costs borne or bearable by the individual students. No nationally compiled statistics are currently available but it is generally known that, both at Michigan and at peer institutions, students are borrowing larger amounts of money to offset the decline in other forms of support. Some of these students may be repaying their educational loans well into their middle years.

3. The implications of both these trends for academic quality.

It is not the numerical decline of graduate students in some fields which should preoccupy us. The real worry is about the quality of Michigan's graduate students, in the short run, and of our nation's university faculties, in the longer run. It has long been clear that universities are losing significant portions of their most talented students in the arts and sciences to professional pursuits. Part of the challenge at the U of M is to contend with problems of the short run: funding problems, but also that of ensuring wise allocation of limited resources. Programs need to be accessible to all who can and should best profit from them but the University must also resist dipping too far down into its shrinking applicant pools simply to guarantee a continuing graduate student population of arbitrarily designated size. We need to understand better just how large a graduate student population ought to be department by department, and what compromises in quality admissions committees may be forced or tempted to make.

Maintaining and improving the quality of graduate students, while at the same time ensuring the continued vitality of whole fields of study, is no small challenge. The problems for the longer run may be more challenging still, for a "scholars' gap" is on the horizon. All of the recent major demographic studies of graduate education project substantial improvement in academic employment prospects beginning in the mid-1990's when there will be a bulge in faculty retirements. Academic demographers are not in full agreement about the outcome but we need to recognize that the issue presses and we need to plan for it. It seems clear that if universities of the caliber of Michigan will not provide the next generation of teachers and research scholars, lesser institutions will fill the gap.

4. The current character and content of graduate study in the Arts and Sciences.

For as long as there have been graduate schools, tension has existed between the demands for special competence within a relatively narrow field of study and the importance of a broader perspective on learning. The present-day reality in higher education includes these features: 1) major reductions in size of many graduate programs; 2) shifting status of many fields, away from traditional "cores" and across disciplinary boundaries; 3) a

resurgence of national interests in more liberal, general undergraduate education. Taken together, these may present occasion to reassert some claims for greater breadth also in graduate education.

As regards the first of these features, we will want to ask, program by program, how often reductions in numbers of graduate students has been accompanied by a searching re-examination of the component parts of Ph. D. programs, and of their interrelationships. As regards the second feature, we need to ask: how accurately are current disciplinary directions reflected by present departmental structures and boundaries? Some fields are metabolizing at the edges rather than in their traditional centers while some interesting research being conducted resists disciplinary and departmental pigeonholing. Finally, as regards the new interest in more general undergraduate curricula, we need to ask: will some of the more narrowly-trained specialists who are currently emerging from Ph. D. programs be properly equipped to provide the broader, more general kinds of undergraduate instruction towards which so many colleges are presently moving?

Graduate deans ought not to try to legislate these matters but they may be well-positioned to raise questions. They are questions which departments may find difficult to confront systematically and even Deans may not find easy to address except indirectly. At the very least, questions such as these may encourage the search for appropriate ways to broaden our graduate curricula without sacrificing necessary and essential depth. Our programs stand to gain much from periodic and systematic review. Indeed, such rigorous re-examination and questioning are essential if we are to maintain our reputation as a research university of the highest quality. Whatever the outcome of such reviews, we can be confident that the tension between breadth of knowledge and specialized knowledge will continue to exist.

Professor McClamroch inquired about plans for an Honors Office in Rackham. Dean D'Arms replied that it would not be a specific office but rather a symbolic one. One objective is to tap the knowledge of people who have won awards and recycle it to their colleagues.

Professor Bailey asked how the university might identify social domains to which it might apply academic inquiry and expertise. Dean D'Arms stated that he is working closely with Vice President Frye and Wilson to pool academic resources and encourage efforts along non-traditional lines. Because there is no coherent plan yet for what Rackham might do, he encouraged comments directed to him.

Professor Bailey also asked how the Dean and Rackham can foster interdisciplinary research. The Dean noted that there is no single answer but a prime way is to listen to faculty performing cross-cutting research.

Discretionary funding is limited and there are many requests for money. Some of the best interdisciplinary research, he believes, goes on in the individual mind.

PROPOSAL FOR A DEPENDENT CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Professor Green stated that SACUA endorsed the draft resolution but with comment that the \$.50 fee and the issue it reflected be referred to Financial Affairs Committee. Professor Easley reported that CESF supported the proposal for dependent care because its benefits could be widely applied. In addition to children, aged parents are included. Professor Lehmann moved, Professor Chudacoff seconded, that Senate Assembly support the proposal. Motion passed without dissent.

REPORTS FROM SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Professor Green noted a letter from Vice President Frye to Deans regarding University-wide initiatives and the need to involve faculty governance in discussions.

Professor Beth Reed, School of Social Work, reported that there had been much reaction to the report she submitted last month. A key point is concern over the less faculty involvement in the current search for a Vice President for Academic Affairs than in previous searches. If it would aid discussion, she would offer a motion expressing the Assembly's concern. Subsequent discussion included review of the search process to date, SACUA's efforts to involve the faculty governance structure in the search, a review of past searches and the erosion of faculty governance. Summarizing Professor Reed's initial statement as amplified through discussion, Professor Bassett moved that a communication be sent to President Shapiro stating that the Senate Assembly feels and expresses concern that there have been evidences of erosion in faculty governance. Professor Stebbins seconded. Professor Thomson offered an amendment to read "numerous erosions in faculty governance." Professor Stebbins seconded. The vote on the amendment showed all in favor, none opposed. Professors Checkoway and Moerman expressed reservations about the effectiveness of the motion to accomplish its intent while Professor Nadelman questioned the relationship of the motion to the work of the Assembly's ad hoc committee on University Faculty. Professor Warschausky suggested the need for a more carefully expressed motion and noted that the expression of faculty attitudes, on the one hand and the erosion of faculty involvement in important issues, on the other, need not be linked in a single motion. Professor McClamroch moved, Professor Lusk seconded, that the motion be tabled. The vote was 24 Yes, 16 No. The motion was tabled. Professor Green invited anyone interested to re-work the motion and submit it at a later date.

OLD BUSINESS

Professor Nadelman distributed a questionnaire from the ad hoc committee on the University Faculty. The committee asks that members reply for themselves and also for colleagues in their schools and colleges. It encourages members to put the item on the agenda for their local faculty meetings and return the questionnaires by the third week of February.

NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned a 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia B. Yocum  
Senate Secretary