

**Approved: October 3, 2017**

**2017-2018: Meeting # 1**

**MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
THE STEERING COMMITTEE APPROVED MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 5, 2017 3:15 PM  
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, BOARD ROOM**

**Present:** Present Simon, Provost Youatt, E. Appiagyei-Dankah, M. Dease, S. Fuente (Luna Gagnon), Jeremy Francis (for C. Hogan), R. LaDuca, G. Lourens, L. McCabe, M. Mechtel, E. Tabuteau (for Richard Miksicek), D. Moriarty, L. Santavicca, G. Swain, T. Tomlinson, E. Watts, Others: T. Curry, S. Lott

**Absent:** UCSA Chair Pending and COGS Rep Pending

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 3:15 p.m.

**2. Approval of Agenda for September 5, 2017**

The **agenda for September 5, 2017** was **approved** as presented.

**3. Approval of Draft Minutes for April 4, 2017** (Appendix A)

The **minutes for April 4, 2017** were **approved** as distributed.

**4. President's Remarks:** Dr. Lou Anna K. Simon

President Simon stated that “these will be times that will test the mettle of our vales in very profound ways, and will also test us to see if we believe what we say, in many ways, that universities hold a special place to have clashes of ideas.” She added that universities are the one place in the world designed to engage in the clash of ideas, and they have engaged in this class over the long history of universities, dating back to the Middle Ages.

President Simon noted that the expectations of those clashes were built on intellectual foundations and civility. Even though one might not like what someone else said, however outlandish, that individual could have those conversations in a place called the university, without demonizing the person who has expressed the views we do not agree with. This role is being tested severely. If one were to look at the national polls, she added, the respect for universities is plummeting. Some would argue this decline is happening because universities have forsaken that role as being the model for the very difficult discussions that society must have in order to move forward.

At the core of what the university does, President Simon stated that universities have always had fringe elements, but they did not, through the most difficult times, define the university, the faculty, the staff, and the students. She said that when history is written 50 years from now, the relevance of universities will be defined as places for difficult

conversations and the role of scholars in those conversations. Because, she added: “In my model we are educating citizen scholars.”

President Simon reported that the threat of litigation was predictable, and if one looks at the landscape in how this litigation has been resolved at other institutions, it has not necessarily been resolved in ways that bring comfort. Thus, she added, we will have to have some additional conversations about how Michigan State's role in this part of history will be played out, because our capacity to deal with this situation will be what history will care about in this difficult age for America.

President Simon stated that she signed a letter again today regarding DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) that was released this afternoon by the AAU (American Association of Universities), believing that our voices are stronger together than apart. She said that we, as a university community, have to advocate ways that are both humane and represent social justice. She added that the current political uncertainty regarding immigration is disturbing and problematic.

President Simon reported the positive news that MSU’s student enrollment is up, and that the University had a good fundraising year. She also said that research is at an all-time high.

#### **5. Provost’s Remarks: Dr. June Youatt**

Provost Youatt stated that MSU is starting this year with more first-year students than anticipated, and that the University can accommodate these additional students with regards to course enrollments. She added that MSU opened the new Counseling Center in the Psychiatric Services Unit, which is now located on the third floor of the Olin Health Center (and called Integrated Behavioral Health). Thus, any of our students who are seeking assistance for behavioral health or emotional health issues go to one place, and they are guided to the right type of care from the beginning and with an integrated team.

Provost Youatt noted that MSU has more counselors this year than last year, and that the University is going to continue to add staff to that unit. She said that MSU expanded that care to also social workers in the Neighborhoods, students can be guided to the right help. In addition, a new service has been developed where students can receive telephone counseling in their native language. Students studying abroad will also have access to this service.

Provost Youatt announced that Thomas Jeitschko, from Economics, is now the new Graduate Dean. She added that Judith Stoddart is going to take a research leave from administrative work and step back from her Graduate Associate Dean role, adding that Stoddart has done an amazing job, and that MSU is very appreciative of her service. Provost Youatt noted that MSU has to select a New Dean of the Lyman Briggs College, and congratulated Elizabeth Simmons for her appointment as Provost at UC San Diego.

Provost Youatt reported that MSU’s search for a Dean for Natural Science was unsuccessful, and that the search will continue this year. She said that, nationally, applications in finance return for Veterinarians. Provost Youatt stated that D2L posted a video about a panel of experts discussing the First Amendment issues on August 17<sup>th</sup>. She also announced that MSU would do a Title IX review.

#### **6. Chairperson’s Remark: Dr. Laura McCabe**

Professor Laura McCabe introduced herself as the new Chair of the Steering Committee. She reported that the Vice Chair of the Steering Committee is Deborah Moriarty, and that Gary Hoppenstand is the Secretary for Academic Governance, along with Sherry Lott as the Executive Secretary of the Academic Governance office. She also noted that there is an Academic Governance structure for MSU that is online that can provide useful information. Professor McCabe stated that our goal as the Steering Committee is to advise the Provost and also to collect information and action items from around campus and move it through Academic Governance. She said that the Steering Committee decides and sets the agendas for the Faculty Senate and University Council. In addition, the University Standing Committee Chairs give an update of their work at each Steering Committee meeting.

Professor McCabe concluded her remarks by saying that an open question period will be on the Faculty Senate that will allow the gathering of ideas and issues for the Steering Committee.

## **7. Introductions**

The members of the Steering Committee introduced themselves and their departmental affiliations.

## **8. Committee Reports**

### **University Committee on Curriculum (UCC) – Professor Marci Mechtel**

Professor Mechtel reported that the UCC approved five new programs, 24 changes to programs, and no program deletions. The newly approved Minors are effective now, and they involve Comic Art and Graphic Novels, Forestry, Forestry Field Applications, Indian and South Asian Languages and Cultures, and Urban and Community Forestry. Regarding course approvals, 48 new courses have been approved, as well as 50 course changes, and four course deletions. Professor Mechtel noted that a report will be presented to Faculty Senate for approval.

**University Committee on Academic Governance (UCAG) – Professor Gayle Lourens – No Report**

### **University Committee on Undergraduate Education (UCUE) – Professor Emily Tabuteau for R. Miksicek**

Professor Tabuteau reported that UCUE has not met yet this academic year, but that it met twice during the Spring Semester after the Steering Committee's last meeting. On April 13th, UCUE approved one minor in Turf Mass Management, and approved three moratoria on Minors for Teacher Education and Elementary Education. Additional moratoria were mandated by the State of Michigan, which is dropping the Minors in Computer Science, History, and Russian. On April 27th, a very short meeting was held, and new officers were elected. In addition, student evaluations were informally discussed.

**University Committee on Graduate Studies (UCGS) – Professor Chris Hogan – Jeremy Francis for Fall Semester**

**University Committee in Faculty Affairs (UCFA) – Professor Thomas Tomlinson – No Report**

**University Committee on Faculty Tenure (UCFT) – Professor Michael Dease - No Report**

**University Committee on Student Affairs (UCSA) – Lorenzo Santavicca - No Report**

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

### **9.1. Proposed East Lansing Income Tax and How Faculty can Respond, Mark Burnham, Vice President, Governmental Affairs, and Janet Lillie, Assistant Vice President, Governmental Affairs**

Mark Burnham presented the proposed City of East Lansing income tax that will be on the ballot this coming November. He stated that the East Lansing City Council is proposing a 1% income tax for residents, and a 1/2% income tax for non-resident income (to begin on January 1, 2018) that is linked to a deduction of the property tax for the residents of the City of East Lansing. Such a proposed tax structure would raise an addition \$10 million dollars in revenue, and that approximately \$5 million dollars of tax relief would be given back to property owners as a tax reduction. A discussion ensued on the impact and various dimensions of this income tax proposal.

### **9.2. Mid-Semester Feedback Instrument, Lorenzo Santavicca, ASMSU (Associated Students of Michigan State University) President (Appendixes B, C, D and E)**

Lorenzo Santavicca presented the documents regarding the mid-semester feedback proposal that was sent out to everyone on campus. He stated that this effort has been long in the making for ASMSU and advocacy work here at MSU. He noted that ASMSU worked with Lyman Briggs College last fall on the mid-semester feedback proposal, which would be designed only for professors and their students. The hope, he said, is that this proposal can be encouraged among faculty and students, but not mandated. A discussion of the proposal ensued.

A motion was made to move the mid-semester feedback proposal to UCUE, UCGS and UCFA, to see how this can be implemented across campus. R. LaDuca and D. Moriarty first and seconded. **Motion carried. This item will be brought back to the Steering Committee in October.**

### **9.3. Role of Student Instructional Rating System (SIRS) in Faculty Evaluation, Establish an Ad Hoc Committee to Assess Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness, Thomas Tomlinson, UCFA Chairperson**

Professor Thomas Tomlinson reported that some individuals expressed concerns about the ways in which the SIRS forms, by themselves, were being used for the evaluation of teaching effectiveness and reviewing faculty for merit raises, promotion, and tenure. This is a problematic situation, because there is evidence that female faculty members are judged more harshly on student evaluations than are male faculty members. He added that there is genuine concern about the use of a single instrument for merit review and promotion, especially one like the SIRS forms, and this situation explains how this issue came before the University Committee on

Faculty Affairs. He adds that because this matter is not just one to be considered by UCFA, it was referred to the Steering Committee to make decisions about how to handle this issue going forward, including how to coordinate the work of the various committees who have a potential stake regarding input. A discussion ensued.

A motion was made to move the SIRS concerns to UCGS, UCUE and COGS, and then to return it back to the October Steering Committee meeting with their report. UCFA will develop a problem statement for the various committees. R. LaDuca and G. Lourens first and seconded the motion. **Motion Carried.**

**9.4. 2018 Health Care Plan Design, Renee Rivard, Director, Human Resources  
Joe Galardi, Assistant Director of Human Resources**

Joe Galardi presented a report on the MSU Healthcare Dashboard. He noted that MSU is seeing double digit increases in prescription drug costs. He added that for the last year (2016-2017), MSU experienced a 12.6% increase. Part of that increase, he said, comes from the fact that within the faculty population, MSU had some high cost claimants. In addition, he noted, MSU had a considerable number of "shock claims." He stated that shock claims are for members that have healthcare experiences over \$100,000 during the course of the year. Galardi explained the concept of "net cost avoidance." He said that when we talk about net cost avoidance, we are taking into consideration any treatment that was prescribed, and potentially change by the recommendation of that status. He added that conversations about this concept have occurred quite often with the Faculty Healthcare Council. A discussion ensued.

A motion was made and first and seconded to send the Healthcare assessment to the Faculty Senate. **Motion Carried.**

**Comments from the floor**

None

**10. Draft Agenda for Faculty Senate for September 12, 2017**

- 10.1. University Committee on Curriculum (UCC Report), Professor Marci Mechtel, UCC Chairperson (Information Item)
- 10.2. 2018 Health Care Plan Design, Renee Rivard, Director, Human Resources  
Joe Galardi, Assistant Director of Human Resources
- 10.3. Faculty Senate Agenda Setting, Professor John Beck, Human Resources and Labor Relations

**11. Draft Agenda for University Council for September 19, 2017**

- 11.1. University Committee on Curriculum (UCC Report), Professor Marci Mechtel, UCC Chairperson (Appendix, Short Report) (Long Report, click on link)
- 11.2. Proposed East Lansing Income Tax and How Faculty can Respond, Mark Burnham, Vice President, Governmental Affairs, and Janet Lillie, Assistant Vice President, Governmental Affairs

## **12. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn was first and seconded. **Motion carried.** The meeting was adjourned at 4:57 pm.