

MINUTES OF THE INFORMAL MEETING  
of the  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
March 16, 1972

Present: President Wharton; Trustees Carrigan, Hartman, Huff, Martin, Merriman, Stevens, Thompson, and White; Provost Cantlon, Executive Vice President and Secretary Breslin; Vice Presidents Muelder, Perrin, and Wilkinson; Messrs. Ballard and Carr.

Absent: No one.

Report by  
College of  
Engineering on  
Environmental  
Systems Project

President Wharton called the Informal Meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 7:45 p.m. He announced that the first presentation of the evening would be made on the Environmental Systems project of the College of Engineering. Dr. Lawrence W. Von Tersch, Dean of the College of Engineering, introduced Dr. Herman E. Koenig, Chairman of the Department of Electrical Engineering and Systems Science, to make the presentation.

Dr. Koenig reviewed the areas of financial support for the systems analysis program. He listed MSU's Colleges of Engineering and Natural Science, Center for Environmental Quality, and Office of Interdisciplinary Research as the chief on-campus financial supporters. Outside support has come from RANN (a major program funded by the National Science Foundation), the General Electric Foundation, Dupont De Nemours and Company, and the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation.

The major purpose of the systems analysis program is to apply modern systems techniques to solving problems of the environment. Dr. Koenig indicated that the long-range research goal of the program is to build a scientific base for coordinated planning in technological development and land use. He added that included in this goal is the development of tools for assessing the limitations of the environment to process man-made wastes and the development of regulatory and economic policies to promote ecologically sound technological development and economic growth.

Dr. Koenig discussed the short-range research goals of the program: applying the "ecosystems" approach to the long-term impact of nutrient and thermal waste input to fresh water bodies; developing computer models from which long-term impact of spray irrigation of animal and municipal wastes on land can be charted; using computers to plan sites for power plants so as to be efficient and at the same time ecologically sound; applying the systems approach to beef production; and using management technologies in pest-insect management.

Dr. Koenig also discussed the research strategies being used in the systems analysis program and why rural areas were selected for environmental studies.

Vice President Muelder made some brief comments concerning the next presentation which concerned the MERIT Computer Network between Michigan State University, Wayne State University, and the University of Michigan. Dr. Muelder reviewed the historical development of the network. He then introduced Dr. Bertram Herzog, Professor of Industrial Engineering at the University of Michigan and Executive Director of the MERIT Computer Network.

Dr. Herzog discussed support of the network concept by the Michigan Legislature. He added that it has only been recently that all matching funding including state, federal and private sources has been obtained. He also indicated that he has been very pleasantly surprised with the high level of cooperation between the three institutions.

The chief purpose of the project is to connect the computer centers of the three universities in such a way as to maximize research potential for all three institutions and at the same time maintain the autonomy of each computing center. Future goals of the project include possible connection with the computer operation at Western Michigan University and establishing remote terminals at other interested state-supported colleges and universities in Michigan.

Dr. Herzog presented a film which had been made from a video tape taken by Wayne State University in December when the first message was sent through the network utilizing the computers of the University of Michigan and Wayne State University.

Following the film, President Wharton indicated that the success of the network so far has created growing interest from other colleges and universities in the state. He added that he felt it was quite important that before the network is expanded more experience should be gained in the operation of the MERIT project.

The members of the Board expressed appreciation to Dr. Herzog for the presentation.

President Wharton adjourned the Informal Meeting at 9:35 p.m.