

Good Afternoon. My name is Bill Schultz, Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Applied Mechanics and Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering, and for one more week, I am the chair of the faculty senate. Twelve months ago, my predecessor, Silke Weineck addressed this body to declare her devotion to our great institution and I do not want to stray far from that. After all, "Who's got it better than us?" We made it through a difficult year with little mention in the Chronicle of Higher Education -- free of scandal or controversy. Perhaps we are just lucky, but much of this is due to the strong leadership in this room. Strong, but not overly meddling. Good leaders know that faculty want and need a strong dose of independence. But we also need support and the ear of leadership.

We hear often of facilitating difficult conversations at UM and imagine we might be quite good at it. The administration, faculty, and student body could speak in one voice to quickly condemn what was probably one demented racist poster, but had more difficulty knowing what to do in response to make us feel less threatened. The conversation became even more difficult and much more important in early November after a surprising and controversial election. How do we respond at a blue campus in a blue SE corner of a state that is in a much larger sea of red -- especially when a student's family are geographically and politically on another part of the color wheel? Michigan is a purple state and -- as we always knew -- we have a purple campus. We need civil difficult conversations that come from purple citizens, purple students or more likely, red-tolerant blue students and vice-versa to build a diverse community of a different sort.

We appreciate the administration's (specifically Student Life's and CAPS) listening to central student government's concerns of the special challenges of college life, especially at this time. These challenges include stressful competition, 24/7 information overload, political polarization, litigative tendencies, changing societal norms and, of course, the rapid evolution in personal development and independence. In spite of all these efforts, I have seen deep hurt in November from many of our students about a career choice, or the loss of liberal democracy.

I, too, hurt and I feel the hurt from my faculty colleagues. That in spite of the University's best efforts, we do not feel adequately trained to handle student's mental health concerns -- nor our own. After all, faculty live in a perpetual vicarious state of late adolescence, with a department chair waiting for another book and research proposal and while balancing daily family life. And like our amateur psychiatric attempts, we are not usually taught how to be good parents or caregivers of aging parents ---just as we haven't had teaching lessons. It is just typical modern daily life---on steroids. So FASAP, here we come.

Faculty should improve our conversations with GEO, LEO, and clinical faculty --members of our greater faculty team. While congratulations are in order for all parties on a successful contract negotiation, I was concerned that faculty sat across the bargaining table from the GSIs teaching our undergraduates, taking our graduate courses, sweating through our joint research -- they are our legacy. They have their own mental health issues and possibly with concerns about

their ability to travel home overseas for that summer break. They need more faculty support in spite of the differences in our union status. Similarly, lecturers and clinical faculty numbers are growing, and while they are not part of the Faculty Senate, we sometimes represent them. We will need to better coordinate and accommodate.

And we have had difficult conversations this year about the Flint and Dearborn Campuses. While governance within the AA campus can be baffling, our relationship with Flint and Dearborn Faculty Governance is very confusing to all. Often Ann Arbor and SACUA are considered faculty governance of last resort. We have formed the Tri-Campus Task Force, chaired by Robert Ortega (my successor as faculty senate chair), which is writing a final report but is likely to spur challenging discussions for years to come.

Finally, we need more conversation –difficult or not--with regents. Faculty governance can be somewhat envious that CSG gets more airtime at Regents meetings. And faculty governance is aware that many of our XOs have faculty status, but it's not the same. We have diverse points of view even if our goals are the same. Our peers 1 hour NW of here, have greater student and faculty conversational access to their board. Perhaps this would have facilitated challenging divestiture discussions that students sought earlier or would have gotten more stakeholder discussions on the fate of Inglis House when faculty and neighbors seem not to be adequately consulted. The faculty were the primary users of IH one to two decades ago and the neighbors live with it every day. Faculty loved it for those special occasions when competing with television sets, gift shops, and pizza parlors at other campus venues were not appropriate. I hope the board can reconsider.

Having said all this, I will end this perhaps difficult conversation by saying that I do not know a better institution to tackle these difficulties. We are all in this together. We are a work in progress. It has been my pleasure to serve as Chair the Senate this year. It is truly great – to be – a Michigan Wolverine. Thank you.