

Minutes of 3 April 2006
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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
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MINUTES OF THE SACUA MEETING OF 3 APRIL 2006

Present: Giordani (Chair), Gull, Lehman, Meerkov, Seabury, Smith, Younker, Zorn; Schneider

Absent: Combi

Guests: President Coleman, B. Frier, K. Riles

MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED:

1. Draft Agenda
2. Draft SACUA minutes of 27 March 2006
3. Statement by SACUA chair-elect Smith, undated
4. Letter to the Regents of the University of Michigan from 33 faculty members, dated 23 March 2006, regarding private luxury boxes in Michigan Stadium
5. Standard Practice Guide 201.34-1 revised 10/1/92
6. Draft Standard Practice Guide revision 201.34-1
7. Selection Committee: Regents Award for Distinguished Public Service
8. Selection Committee Volunteers for Regents' Award for Distinguished Public Service
9. Memorandum from P. N. Courant to M. Navvab, dated 11 February 2002, regarding Librarian Awards
10. Selection Committee for University Librarian Awards plus supporting materials
11. SACUA/Senate Assembly Planning Schedule, updated 22 March 2006
12. Proposed Senate Resolution concerning gender expression and gender identity
13. Memorandum to T. Sullivan, S. Forrest, and B. Giordani from Research Policies Committee, undated, regarding review and recommendations on burden of human subjects research regulation
14. Memorandum to T. Sullivan, S. Forrest, B. Giordani, and R. Krasny from Research Policies Committee, undated, regarding recommendations for interdisciplinary research enhancement
15. Memorandum to N. Gramlich from L. D'Alecy, dated 3 April 2006, regarding criteria for shared governance document
16. Criteria for Shared Governance at the University of Michigan, draft dated 3 April 2006

Chair Giordani convened the meeting at 2:10 P.M.; the draft agenda was approved.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of 27 March 2006 were amended and approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Giordani announced:

1. Professors Giordani, Gull, and Smith met with the president last week. Topics included AAAC issues, including registration brackets, median grades on transcripts, and requests for data about admissions and performance. The president suggested that one has to be careful about handling data, and she questioned who wanted the data and why given that graduation rate is 90% overall. Regarding skyboxes at the Michigan Stadium, she noted that the stadium had been built in 1927, and that it needs infrastructure renovation; she said that at other universities skyboxes have helped pay for renovations. She said she did not know why some faculty were writing to the Regents in opposition to this effort.
2. On additional topics, the SACUA guests informed the president that the University Shared Governance Taskforce would be interacting with provost as its next step. They also discussed the role of the Block M versus the University Seal. The president responded that use of the Block M was a marketing issue, and she said that the university seal has not, in fact, been replaced. She said she did not know if faculty were consulted before the action, but she recommended SACUA consult with L. Rudgers about the marketing process.
3. Professor Smith announced that an associate editor of the University Record had requested a statement from him, and that he had provided one, although only excerpts were published. Members recommended that the full statement be posted to the governance website (www.umich.edu/~sacua/) and be distributed to Senate Assembly members.

VISIT OF PRESIDENT COLEMAN

The guest arrived at 2:37 P.M. In response to questions about the status of the university seal, the president suggested that SACUA invite vice president Rudgers for further discussion. Professor Meerkov asked whether it would not have been better to have a discussion of the Block M issue before the decision rather than after. He suggested that lack of consultation creates resentment rather than allegiance. Professor Lehman pointed out that such concerns may be redressed by the on-going Shared Governance initiative. President Coleman reiterated that individual faculty may choose whether or not to use the seal. She said she believes the Block M is a stronger identifier for the U-M.

Professor Smith commented that the alumni association has lost 3000 members this year. He asked what might be the cause of such an unprecedented occurrence. The president suggested that the president of the alumni association might be the better person to respond, but she speculated that the economy might be a factor, and that people are making choices about discretionary spending. Professor Smith asked if performance of organized sports might be a factor. The president said she doubted it.

The president remarked that the alumni association has been designing an alumni association for Asia, and that a panel discussion is planned for China later this year. She said an ultimate goal is fundraising, but that there is no tradition of philanthropy in China.

Professor Smith stated that the SACUA chair historically attended meetings of president with vice-presidents, as well as meetings of the provost with the deans. He asked if we might explore ways to recover that tradition. President Coleman replied that she did not think it would work. Smith asked why. She said that there are so many issues that fall outside the purview of faculty governance, such as business relations, student admissions, and others. She explained that many ideas may be floated in a speculative, confidential atmosphere and were not intended for general release.

Professor Lehman asked about the evolution of the decision to cease Medicare Part B reimbursements to recent retirees and to freeze the benefits for those who are already retired. The president said that that suggestion would have come from the benefits office, not from the executive officers. Professor Smith commented that the action had come as a surprise to faculty groups because they had specifically asked whether benefits changes were being contemplated and had been told that no changes were in the works. President Coleman stated that she was confident that no one deliberately tried to mislead SACUA officers. She said that she found it ironic that the CESF complained that there was no plan or specific reserves to deal with long term benefits liabilities, but then objected when the administration took steps to save expenses.

Professor Smith said that the larger issue was a desire for transparency in the decisions coming from the administration. The president replied that she thought her administration has a good record on transparency. Professor Meerkov said that more input from formal faculty governance could be beneficial on topics including admissions, academic freedom, and so forth before decisions are made. The president responded that she was not sure that is appropriate in all instances. Professor Zorn commented that the president may naturally want to consult people with specific knowledge and skills, but that maybe governance can be informed so that it is possible to interact with them. Professor Smith remarked that associate provost Hilton's committees seemed to present a good model in this regard.

Professor Lehman noted that SACUA has just been informed that some faculty committees are experiencing protracted delays in their efforts to obtain reasonable information from administration sources. The president said that she did not know about those cases. Professor Smith explained that one example was information about time to tenure; another was academic performance of students subsequent to admission. The president said that the latter inquiries could potentially invite a lot of speculative, unformed discussion.

The president said that she must balance many factors in her decision-making. She explained that all people do not define fairness and justice in the same way. She stated that there was concern, for example, about the gender, racial and ethnic composition of SACUA (mostly male). SACUA members responded vigorously that there may indeed be an underlying issue why 19 people of diverse backgrounds who were asked to stand for election declined to do so. Chair Giordani said that he had personally verified through conversations that central

governance is conspicuously devalued by deans and chairs, and that faculty are actively discouraged from serving. He said those instincts can be countered through statements and actions from the central administration.

Professor Zorn asked if the president has a perspective on grade inflation. The president said that she regards it as a faculty issue, and that she is not up to date on specific U-M data. She said it is hard to believe that professors are not grading carefully. She suggested that the ease of dropping courses even at a relatively late state may work to bias final grade distributions as underperforming students self-select themselves out of the pool.

President Coleman reported that there is emerging concern about a commission on higher education established by U.S. Secretary of Education Spellings. She said it may be seeking an analogy to the "no child left behind" program, with much discussion about accountability and outcomes. She said one suggestion would create a gigantic database to track performance and students.

Professor Riles remarked that considerable GPA differences exist at the department level within LSA, with physics and psychology differing by 1.0 mean GPA for 200-level courses, for example. He suggested that the differences probably affect the choice of majors by pre-medical students. Professor Meerkov pointed out that the College of Engineering admits substantial numbers of African American students, but by junior year the numbers are low. He explained that to counter this poor success he and some colleagues are thinking about creating a U-M weekend school for capable students of low income. He said he has found volunteer U-M faculty who will teach classes in math, physics, chemistry and English for free, but in return for credit comparable to that given for a committee assignment. He said the program might need modest money for clerical help and for buses. He said that SACUA has created a committee to develop a plan. The president suggested that Meerkov contact people in School of Education. Professor Meerkov replied that, of course, the SACUA committee would consult widely as we do in all things. He said he would like to try a pilot program of about 25 students who could become a credit to the U-M or to other top universities. The president remarked that another faculty governance initiative, childcare, is moving ahead very successfully. She said that these things take time.

The guest left the meeting at 3:35 P.M.

COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS

Communications Advisory- Professor Zorn said that the committee conducted a site visit to the Bentley Library; no governance issues were discussed.

Multicultural- Professor Meerkov said that the committee discussed its report about the status of underrepresented minority faculty, but that only 3 members were in attendance, including himself and the chair. He added that the report assembled by Mr. J. Lee appears quite solid.

University Shared Governance- Professor Meerkov reported that a draft report is complete and has been sent to the provost. He said that there is no way to predict how fast the provost will

respond, and so it is not clear that a revised report will be ready for the April Senate Assembly meeting.

Unit Shared Governance- Professor Meerkov said that he plans to introduce resolution during the College of Engineering faculty meeting in April to assign implementation of Taskforce recommendations to the College Rules Committee. He suggested that all members bring the matter forward at their own Unit meetings. Chair Giordani suggested that Senate Assembly members be enlisted in the effort, as well. Everyone agreed.

AEC- Chair Giordani said that the Senate Office needs to know if additional members should be added this year. Professor Lehman said he would review the action taken by the Assembly on this point.

Tenure Probationary Period Data Analysis- Professor Smith reported that a final package of data has not been provided to the working group, but that everything so far received is consistent with previous analysis. He said the foot-dragging on final steps has the earmarks of a planned slowdown, and that consequently there may not be a report ready by April 10.

Pharmacy Benefits Oversight Committee- Professor Smith reported that there is now an effort to terminate the pharmacy benefits manager arrangement and combine pharmacy benefits with health care insurance, as was done previously. The status of this effort is unknown.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION CONCERNING GENDER EXPRESSION AND GENDER IDENTITY

Professor Seabury called attention to distributed item 12. He said that students have worked hard on this issue, but faculty have not spoken on it.

PROPOSED ACTION OF SACUA Smith moved that SACUA endorse this resolution on gender expression and gender identity and recommends it to the Senate Assembly (Yunker seconded).

Professor Frier said that he would alter it to seek a change in Regents' Bylaw 14.06. He said the issue seems to have become a political issue on this campus. He said the resolution seemed to be a retreat from positions taken by other groups. Professor Riles asked whether this change has any legal implications. Professor Frier responded no, but that there is a slow pace by which the language is propagating to all university policy documents. He reviewed consequences that need to be considered. Professor Zorn suggested that Vietnam era language should be removed from the Bylaw, as well.

Action on the motion was postponed until the following week with charge to a subcommittee consisting of Seabury and Frier to revise language of the resolution.

ACTION OF SACUA 040306-1 PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Professor Lehman moved that attendance at regular private meetings with executive officers shall henceforth include the chair as well as individual members of SACUA on a rotating basis, with consideration of the members' interests in meeting agenda topics (Meerkov seconded). Members discussed pros and cons of the motion, including the merits of small discussion groups versus merits of continuity by members from one meeting to the next. Professor Zorn said he

thought it would be crippling to mandate that members rotate. Professor Meerkov said that it makes sense that if a discussion involves a matter important to a SACUA member, that member should be present. Professor Lehman explained that his proposal does not preclude having 3 or more SACUA members at a meeting if that seemed appropriate. Moreover, this would be a good way to demystify private meetings and expand potential leadership ranks.

Vote on the Active Motion-

Number approving- 4

Number disapproving- 3

OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

Chair Giordani reported that a conference with the provost's office about the Senate Office budget is upcoming. He said that the chair-elect will be present at the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:18 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

John Lehman
Senate Secretary

University of Michigan Bylaws of the Board of Regents, Sec. 5.02:

Governing Bodies in Schools and Colleges

In each school, college, or degree granting division of the University, including those at the University of Michigan-Dearborn and at the University of Michigan-Flint, the governing faculty shall be in charge of the affairs of the school, college, or division, except as delegated to the executive committee, if any, and except that in the School of Graduate Studies the governing board shall be the executive board, and in the Medical School shall be the executive faculty.