

Draft minutes of 12 May 2008
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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
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MINUTES OF THE SACUA MEETING OF 12 MAY 2008

Present: Fraser, Frier, Frost, Navvab, Poe, Potter (Chair), Riles, Thouless; Carr, Schneider

Absent: Stark; Lehman

Guests: Fred Askari (Chair of the Committee on the Economic Status of Faculty), Ron Lomax (Chair of the Budget Study Committee), Lester Monts (Sr Vice Provost of Academic Affairs), K. Brown (University Record), Dave Gershman (Ann Arbor News)

MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED

1. Draft agenda
2. Draft minutes of the SACUA meeting of 5 May 2008
3. Proposed resolution re: the Michigan Supreme Court decision of 7 May 2008 written by B. Frier
4. Alternate proposed resolution re: the Michigan Supreme Court decision of 7 May 2008 written by K. Riles
5. Proposed Senate Assembly Agenda of 19 May 2008
6. SACUA/Senate Assembly Planning Schedule, 12 May 2008
7. Committee on the Economic Status of the Faculty Annual Salary Report to the Regents, 2008, pp. 13 and 14
8. Committee on the Economic Status of the Faculty Annual Benefits Report to the Regents, 2008, p.4.

Chair Potter convened the meeting at 3:05 P.M.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Consideration of the minutes of 5 May 2008 was postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Chair Potter and Bill Martin met at which time SACUA was asked to send two members to each of the ABIA meeting. Those individuals are welcome to submit agenda items prior to the

meeting. Provost Sullivan had recommended that trust should be built between the faculty and the Athletic Dept. and so SACUA will attend the ABIA meetings.

2. Chair Potter announced that it was not a practice of SACUA to publicly disseminate emails created by SACUA members. Professor Riles had submitted an email prior to the 5 May 2008 meeting which he believes he had asked to be read at the meeting. It was determined that the reading of the email by SACUA members prior to the meeting was the same.

3. Chair Potter announced that Professor Frier has recently received the Distinguished Professor Award. A round of applause was given to Professor Frier by all SACUA members.

SACUA SUMMER RETREAT

The annual SACUA retreat is scheduled for Monday, 2 June 2008 from noon to 5 P.M.

LIAISON REPORTS

No reports were given.

CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA

Discussion revolved around the priority of items to be discussed. The agenda was approved unanimously.

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT DECISION

Professor Frier proposed a resolution to be put before the Senate Assembly next week regarding the recent Michigan Supreme Court decision on 7 May 2008. The proposed resolution was read by Chair Potter. Professor Frier explained that, although the Michigan electorate did not intend to eliminate benefits, the Michigan Supreme Court ignored evidence that supported that intent and ruled that public employers are forbidden from providing health insurance benefits to their employees' same-sex domestic partners. The resolution expresses disappointment in the decision. Professor Fraser asked if the passing of the resolution by the Senate Assembly would have an impact on recruitment.

SENATE ASSEMBLY ITEM FOR ACTION

ACTION OF SACUA 051208-1

A motion to amend Professor Frier's resolution and adopt with said amendment was made and seconded.

The Action was approved with only one negative vote.

RATIFICATION OF ATHLETE ADVISING RESOLUTION

ACTION OF SACUA 051208-2

A motion to reconsider SACUA Action 050508-1 was made, seconded and approved for reconsideration.

Professor Riles asked that the following statement be inserted into the record:

It is largely pointless and certainly inefficient for SACUA to ask the Assembly to ask SACUA to appoint a committee to look into the athletics issues. SACUA has the authority to form a committee already.

But the committee will be more powerful if both its charge and its membership are directly endorsed by the Assembly.

My sense from the last Assembly meeting is that the Assembly wants a larger committee than two members. It was hard to judge, but I think that a 5-member committee would be agreeable to most Assembly members, and I am agreeable to that number (or fewer).

I think that Rich Friedman should chair that committee, given his longstanding interest in the matter and the work he has already done on it. He was the SACUA member who found Jim Harbaugh's statements most troubling and who insisted that SACUA look into those original allegations. I believe the Assembly would support his chairing the committee.

Although I would be happy to serve on the new committee, too, several of you and at least one Assembly member have questioned my objectivity, given my past criticism of the Athletics Department on other matters. I reject the implication that I cannot participate in an examination of athletics counseling without somehow poisoning the committee's work or compromising its credibility.

But I do not want the issue of my objectivity to interfere with the formation of the committee. If SACUA agrees to name Rich as the committee chair and appoints other members of the committee who have no conflicts of interest in the matter, I will withdraw my name from consideration for the committee. Persons I regard as having conflicts of interest include current ABIA members and university or college administrators, especially anyone on record as having disputed or dismissed the allegations made recently by the Ann Arbor News.

I suggest that SACUA appoint Rich as the committee chair in open session and defer the nomination of other members to executive session, preferably with Rich as an invited guest. I have a list of names for your consideration, which I would be happy to discuss in executive session.

Professor Frier suggested the removal of “by drawing on volunteers from the Assembly and from within SACUA itself” from the motion. Chair Potter believes that by removing the last part of the motion, SACUA can look for “experts” outside of the Assembly and itself. Professor Riles prefers that a slate of names be presented to Senate Assembly for its approval.

There was discussion about whether or not the charge to the five-member committee was too narrow. It was decided that the committee itself should be allowed to determine the extent of the charge.

SENATE ASSEMBLY ITEM FOR ACTION

ACTION OF SACUA 051208-3

A motion to amend SACUA Action 050508-1 by removing “by drawing on volunteers from the Assembly and from within SACUA itself” and to send the amended motion to Senate Assembly on 19 May 2008 was made and seconded.

The action was approved unanimously.

SENATE ASSEMBLY AGENDA

Approved as read.

PRESENTATION OF BUDGET STUDY COMMITTEE (BSC) ANNUAL REPORT

The first part of the report centered on the topic of “ratcheting” which is the salary increase of a faculty member who moves to an administrative position and then moves back into a faculty position but maintains the “administrative” salary. The second part of the report discussed the Consumer Price Index relating to the higher cost of education. Included in the higher cost is the stated increase in liability of other post-employment benefits (OPEB) shown in the University’s financial statements. OPEB are comprised mainly of retiree health care costs and long-term disability. The OPEB are expected to increase as more individuals retire from the University.

PRESENTATION OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF FACULTY (CESF) ANNUAL REPORT

Fred Askari, Chair of the CESF, presented the two part report involving salary and benefits. In the Salary portion of the report, there has been an ongoing discussion with the Provost’s office to obtain the total financial compensation of faculty. Without this information, the analysis of salary is obfuscated by a lack of transparency. Market analysis shows that there is room for improvement in the salary and benefits at Michigan.

It is important to retain the brightest and most accomplished faculty. The University should be commended for hiring new and developing current faculty, so that Michigan can compete with other peer universities. The University has developed plans to facilitate intellectual property development and the faculty endorses these investments of time, thought and capital.

The Benefits portion of the report addressed seven points:

1. The continued need for elected faculty to be involved in the discussion and decision-making of all benefits.
2. The current economic model for healthcare with its rapidly increasing costs is unsustainable for both the University and its employees. Co-premiums should be assessed proportionally to salary.
3. The University should be aggressive in proposing national responses to healthcare.
4. It appears that the current pharmacy plan will be renewed and the report supports that renewal.
5. A new dental plan which would allow international coverage, allow retirees to chose level of coverage and provide additional cleanings for certain medical conditions appears to be on the horizon.
6. Sufficiently advanced warning should be made for all significant changes made by the University in its choice of benefits.
7. A dependent tuition support should be implemented on the Ann Arbor campus.

Both the BSC and the CESF will be presenting to the Senate Assembly on 19 May 2008.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The meeting entered executive session at 4:35 P.M. to discuss committee nominations.

A short discussion occurred regarding the findings of the RPC relative to research track ranks.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Carr
SACUA Support

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.
