

Minutes of 10 October 2005
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MINUTES OF THE SACUA MEETING OF 10 OCTOBER 2005

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

Absent: None

Guests: E. M. Gramlich, K. Gibbons, D. Gershman, R. Krasny, K. Bergquist

MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED:

1. Draft Agenda
2. Draft Minutes of the SACUA meeting of 3 October 2005
3. Electronic mail exchanges, copied to SACUA, regarding web-based mid-term course evaluations, 3 and 6 October 2005
4. Agenda for Academic Program Group meeting, 10 October 2005
5. Electronic mail messages from SACUA members regarding questions for the provost, dated 6 and 7 October 2005
6. Memorandum to B. Giordani from E.M. Gramlich, dated 20 September 2005, regarding Faculty Composition Data
7. Faculty Composition from 1998 to 2004
8. Democracy and Authority: Faculty Executive Committees at the University of Michigan, report dated 22 January 1996
9. Democracy and Authority: Understanding Faculty Executive Committees at the University of Michigan, report dated 22 March 1998
10. New Prescription Drug Plan Vendors Announced for 2006, HRAA News, 30 September 2005
11. Charge to Shared Governance Task Force, not dated
12. SACUA/Senate Assembly Planning Schedule, updated 6 October 2005

Chair Giordani convened the meeting at 2:06 P.M.; the draft agenda was adopted.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of 3 October 2005 were corrected and approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES

1. Chair Giordani reported on his and vice chair Gull's monthly private meeting with the provost. Topics included the tenure proposals and faculty involvement in governance. The provost said that he would consider central review, perhaps by a committee comprised of faculty and administrators, of the unit plans developed in response to the flexible tenure document. In addition, the provost said he would encourage faculty to be involved in governance
2. Professor Zorn reported that in every discussion he has witnessed among faculty, serious reservations are reported about the tenure proposals.
3. Professor Smith reported that Committee A of the national AAUP will meet on 4 and 5 November to consider the U-M tenure proposals.
4. Professor Combi reported that the College of Engineering will introduce on-line mid-term course evaluations this term. He said there is also a research project between Engineering and CRLT that is designed to provide feedback to faculty members about their courses.
5. The chair said that Professor W. Stark had inquired about the selection process for Academic Freedom Lecture speakers, and he was referred for further information to the president of the Academic Freedom Lecture Fund (AFLF). Professor Smith explained that the composition of the speaker selection committee is specified by action of the Senate Assembly, and consists of the SACUA chair, the president of the local AAUP chapter, and the president of the AFLF.
6. The chair asked if assigned seating at Assembly meetings would be desirable, as had been suggested by an Assembly member who said this used to be the policy. The secretary replied that it would help with minutes keeping. It was decided that, initially, the chair would invite people to give their name and unit as they rise to speak.
7. Distributed item 10 reports that new vendors have been chosen for pharmacy benefits management.
8. Both Athletics Director Bill Martin and Laurita Thomas, Chief Human Resource Officer, have asked to speak at a future meeting of the Senate Assembly. Topics would be athletics and benefits, respectively.
9. The Academic Performance Committee is awaiting another meeting with associate provost Philip Hanlon.

COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS

Childcare Steering Committee-

Professor Giordani reported that he attended the first meeting of the new childcare steering committee chaired by Laurita Thomas. The meeting was productive.

Development Committee-

Professor Younker attended a meeting of the Development Committee. A campaign is being initiated to raise funds from faculty and staff, with noted success owing to gifts already received.

Student Relations Advisory Committee-

Professor Seabury reported that he attended a meeting of the Student Relations Advisory Committee. He said that the meeting consisted of interesting presentations, but no time was left for committee business. He suggested that the faculty might need to exert more control over the agenda of future meetings.

Faculty Perspectives Page Editorial Board-

Professor Lehman reported that the Faculty Perspective Page board is reviewing several submissions, and that the year may prove to be very active.

VISIT OF INTERIM PROVOST GRAMLICH

The guest and K. Gibbons arrived at 2:36 P.M.

Alleged Racial Incident-

The provost reported that there are unanswered questions about what actually happened during an incident of alleged racial hatred that has been reported in local news media, and that the campus police are still investigating. He added that the Campus Safety and Security Advisory Committee will try to develop a better tracking system for hate related incidents. He said there is much effort being expended on the subject, but asked if SACUA could recommend additional measures. No one suggested anything further.

Use of Facilities-

The provost addressed a question from Professor Zorn about possibly expanding the use of teaching space during either the day or the year. He said that dormitory constraints impose a limit at present, but that new dorms are being built. He added that for each school there is an optimization between marginal benefits and marginal costs. He said it is important to construct a better monitoring system, and that the LSA “performance metrics” may help track building use. He said he agreed with the spirit of the question, but that LSA could not be expanded indefinitely.

Professor Zorn said that increasing enrollment was not his point, but rather that classroom space is oversubscribed at popular times and greatly underused otherwise. He suggested that students could be offered a tuition incentive if they elected to take classes at atypical hours. The provost expressed interest in the idea, but said that it probably should be explored at the level of departments. He said he did not know how much incentive could be provided, but said he could talk with the appropriate deans. Professors Seabury and Younker reported that their units, Social Work and Music, respectively, routinely offer courses from early morning to 9 P.M., and that facilities are not underutilized in their experience.

Chair Giordani noted that at a past Senate Assembly meeting a representative from the Flint or Dearborn campuses had expressed concern that if Ann Arbor began offering courses routinely during evening hours, this might be seen as competition with the regional campuses. The provost replied that there was historical precedent for collaboration rather than competition and modern technologies could make potential collaboration even stronger.

Professor Smith asked why faculty groups are charged rental fees for use of facilities, citing charges to the Senate Assembly for use of the Assembly Hall in Rackham and for auditorium use for the Academic Freedom Lecture. He noted that in spite of the assessed fee, the audio system was defective for the Academic Freedom Lecture. The provost responded that there is a marginal cost associated with the various events, but that he agreed the audio was poor

at the Lecture and that somebody ought to check into the situation. He contended that groups ought rightly to pay if they use university resources.

Evaluation of Deans-

The provost reported that the deans were not necessarily delighted about the upcoming round of administration evaluations by faculty, but in the spirit of collecting comments for self improvement, he would participate in the process. He added that in his case, however, it seemed a bit early. He suggested that the deans might be more cooperative if results of evaluations were not released publicly, and rather were held in confidence. Professor Lehman explained that the Senate Assembly voted to post evaluation results on the Administration Evaluation Committee (AEC) website only after there were two successful requests under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) for the data, and Assembly representatives were advised that there was no privacy exemption for the material. Professor Seabury said that he disagreed with the deans' perspective. He pointed out that students as well as faculty are evaluated continuously. Among administrators, however, it seems that as rank and privilege rise, transparency declines. He said he sees no harm in openness of evaluation results, and that it might even help by providing a modest social incentive for people to improve.

The provost said that his office does evaluate deans, and possibly with a three-fold higher response rate than that achieved by the AEC. Professor Seabury remarked that the provost's reviews are from the top down. Professor Meerkov added that the mechanism used by the provost is not a good way to solicit comments. He said that faculty are in general reluctant to express negative comments directly to administrators because they fear reprisals. Moreover, he said, when in the past he himself expressed criticism of a dean it was an ordeal to get the provost's office merely to acknowledge receipt of the letter. Professor Smith added that he has received feedback from colleagues confirming that faculty with negative views about administrators rightly fear that their anonymity will be compromised and that retaliation will occur. The provost said that he assures everyone that those fears are baseless. He said he is not a technical expert about security but that he knows confidentiality can be maintained.

The provost said that he would like to encourage participation in the evaluation process for self improvement, but that public exposure works against it. He suggested that maybe the public exposure of faculty evaluations could be re-examined, as well. Professor Meerkov asked why it is bad to be open about reality; he said it is better to have light than darkness. The provost replied that it would be more productive to work toward fixing problems privately before they are broadcast publicly. Professor Meerkov said that faculty in the College of Engineering tried to fix its problems through private discussions for over a decade, but to no avail. He said that he personally had no objection to the fact that his evaluations from students were made public. Professor Zorn said that his impression was that the central administration had reappointed a dean despite widespread dissatisfaction expressed from the faculty. Professor Meerkov added that evaluation of administrators was not developed in a spirit of negativism, far from it. He said that he has learned that subsequent to the first round of evaluations deans in at least two units are meeting with faculty more regularly and meaningfully, and that this is a good thing.

Chair Giordani remarked that in response to attitudes revealed by a survey conducted by the Academic Affairs Advisory Committee (AAAC) the dean of the Medical School has started to conduct regular evaluations. Professor Smith said that the question of access to evaluation materials is a complex matter, and he pointed to a current debate within the C-Tools working group about access to student information. Professor Giordani said that it is essentially impossible to keep faculty and administrator evaluation results private because of FOIA. Professor Lehman explained that the histories of AAAC and AEC evaluations are somewhat different, and that AEC evaluations do have a genuinely confidential aspect to them in that responses to administrator-generated questions as well as free format comments are sent automatically only to individual administrators and all records about those comments are simultaneously destroyed. Professor Meerkov noted that many deans in fact had excellent evaluations through the AEC process, but the main criticism across the board was lack of consultation with faculty before making important decisions.

The provost said that he assures everyone that his office conducts a very thorough evaluation of deans at their 5 year anniversary, and that identities of referees are shielded. He suggested that if the AEC evaluations were presented in a way that is mainly intended to improve relationships between faculty and deans, the result will be better cooperation and better deans.

Chair Giordani remarked that student evaluations of faculty have morphed into uses far different than they were originally intended, citing their use in some units for merit review and promotion. He said they are not seen as means to help faculty succeed. Professor Krasny said that review of deans in their fifth year is one thing, but he thinks it is more critical to learn if something is wrong in years 1, 2 or 3. The provost replied that he thinks deans do want to be in tune with their faculty, and that feedback in the third year could perhaps be useful. Professor Lehman pointed out that the Senate Assembly is the body that authorized open posting of the evaluation results, and that it does not meet again until 31 October; the on-line evaluation process begins on 1 November. The provost suggested that the deadline for evaluations be pushed back. He expressed a willingness to consult on the content of the letter to faculty that will precede the evaluations. Professor Lehman replied that it would be wonderful if a common letter could be generated that contained the provost's endorsement of the evaluation process. The provost said that he could not guarantee such an outcome.

Tenure Probationary Period-

The provost said that he would appreciate learning from SACUA the dominant view among faculty regarding proposed changes to tenure rules. He said that such analysis would be more useful than an unabridged communication of individual comments. He explained that he was asking SACUA to conduct the analysis, but that he could not require it to do so. Professor Smith remarked that some of the strongest criticism he has heard about the proposals comes from young people who are likely to be most affected. Chair Giordani said that the subject will be the major topic for the November meeting of Senate Assembly.

SACUA members thanked the provost for a productive exchange of opinions. The guests left the meeting at 3:37 P.M.

VISIT OF COMMITTEE FOR A MULTICULTURAL UNIVERSITY CHAIR R ORTEGA

The guest arrived at 3:38 P.M. Chair Giordani invited the guest to share his perspectives about committee business. Professor Ortega said that he is facing the challenge of how best to energize the committee and to develop a productive agenda. Professor Zorn asked if the committee plans to address issues of retention of underrepresented minorities. Professor Ortega replied that it was indeed a subject of interest. Professor Smith asked whether it was known if retention rates have changed. He pointed out that past statistics compiled by the Multicultural Committee indicated that retention rates were abysmal. Professor Ortega replied that he understands that associate provost Monts has information about that subject but that there is no systematic report available. Smith said that the committee had been extremely active and influential in the past, even bringing a successful resolution before Senate Assembly endorsing diversity that the University subsequently cited in its court case.

Chair Giordani said that SACUA would invite Professor Ortega and Lester Monts to a future meeting to discuss retention of minority faculty. Professor Zorn said that retention of students is an important issue, as well. He suggested that the committee look into those retention rates as well as whether we are supporting the students appropriately. Professor Smith said that the Multicultural committee had been developing a report on that very topic some years ago, but that university resources were withdrawn and the effort foundered. Chair Giordani suggested that it might be productive for the Multicultural committee to work with Student Relations on the topic. He said it would also be helpful if the committee looked into issues surrounding the newly proposed multicultural institute, including the proposed role of faculty and budgeting relations.

Professor Smith inquired about the current status of the Center for Afro-American Studies (CAAS). Professor Giordani asked about the Comprehensive Studies Program, as well. SACUA members expressed differing perspectives about the effectiveness of these programs in the past. Professor Ortega said that there seems to be a problem getting access to appropriate data for conducting the suggested analyses. Chair Giordani responded that the Senate Office would help collect the necessary data. Professor Smith pointed out that he was working with the staff to conduct longitudinal analyses of faculty as part of SACUA's investigation of the tenure probationary period, and that the data might be useful for the Multicultural committee, as well. He suggested that the committee might wish to provide a report first to SACUA and then to the Senate Assembly later in the year.

The guest left the meeting at 4:05 P.M. A recess was declared until 4:12 P.M.

GRIEVANCE REVIEW TASK FORCE

Chair Giordani proposed that construction of the task force be delayed pending a future meeting of SACUA. The purpose of the future meeting would be to interview faculty and administrators knowledgeable about operations and deficiencies of the current faculty appeal procedures in order to develop the set of questions and issues to be resolved around the grievance process. Members agreed that the proposal was acceptable.

SHARED GOVERNANCE TASK FORCE

Professor Meerkov reported that he has seen no sign of activity from the task force on shared governance that was established on 19 September, and he is concerned that time is slipping away. Chair Giordani noted that the charge to the committee had asked that the committee Chair, Professor Berent, first develop a draft document blending the Criteria for Shared Governance with the Principles of Faculty Governance book to bring to the committee as a starting point for its work. He said that he expected that Dr. Berent was doing this.

ACTION OF SACUA 101005-1

Professor Smith moved that SACUA charges the Shared Governance Task Force with submitting a report to SACUA by December 31, 2005. (Professor Younker seconded.)
The action was approved unanimously.

ACTION OF SACUA 101005-2 Professor Lehman moved that SACUA asks the chair of the Shared Governance Task Force to provide a status report of task force activities for the next meeting of SACUA on 17 October. (Professor Smith seconded.)

The action was approved unanimously

UNIT GOVERNANCE TASK FORCE Professor Meerkov presented a proposed matrix for information about unit governance structure and authority in each unit. He said that he has invited Professors Ulsoy and Marcelo to join the task force. SACUA members encouraged him to find additional members as well, particularly from LSA and Art. Professor Meerkov said that he would work during the coming week to identify additional members. He said he hopes that the task force will have a proposal conceptualized by the end of November, and then will write its report during December.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no other old business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 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.

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