

Government Relations Advisory Committee

Dec. 13, 2018 Draft Meeting Minutes
4025 Fleming Administration Building

In attendance:

Ellen Bauerle, Chair
Sigrid Cordell, UM Library
Karen Downing, UM Library
Julie Gales, Government Relations (Staff)
Diane Giannola, Michigan Medicine
Vincent Glud, ITCS
Steve Gray, Law School
Justin Hodge, School of Social Work
John Mansfield, LSA emeritus
Dorene Markel, Michigan Medicine
Jacob Pollitt, CSG Representative
Cynthia Wilbanks, Vice President for Government Relations

Absent:

Kara Charbarneau, Michigan Medicine
Colleen Conway, SMTD
Mark Kushner, Engineering - EECS
Afifa Shamim-Uzzaman, Michigan Medicine

Introductions

A. Debriefing November State and National Elections

Overall: Substantial changes at most levels. In Washington, the House of Representatives flipped from Republican to Democratic. Michigan House and Senate didn't flip, but Republican margins narrowed. Michigan statewide office holders (Governor, Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, and Attorney General) shifted from all Republican to all Democratic.

Federal level: Four members of the Michigan House delegation are new (Levin, Slotkin, Stevens, Tlaib), which is quite a lot for a 14-member delegation. Cong. Fred Upton (UM Grad) survived an unusually close race. Dave Trott and Sandy Levin retired. Mike Bishop lost his bid for re-election. The partisan balance shifted from 9 Reps/5 Dems to 7 Reps/ 7 Dems. In the US Senate, Debbie Stabenow won re-election, but it was noted that somewhat surprisingly, Sen. Stabenow and opponent John James had similar resources in the election.

State level: Quite a lot of change occurred in the state elections and some was unexpected with a handful of incumbents losing their re-election bid. Of the Michigan Senate's 38 members, there are 30 new members, though some served in the Michigan House of Representatives previously. Democratic women made significant gains in their number – a trend that was also visible at the federal level.

Of the Michigan House of Representatives' 110 members, there are about 50 new Representatives whom Cynthia and her staff are in the process of getting to know (and vice versa). Neither the House nor the Senate flipped parties, but the margins narrowed. The Democrats gained 5 new seats in each chamber. This means that more cooperation will be necessary to pass legislation.

The Legislature will organize its committees the third week in January and legislative priorities will be better understood then. UM has been reaching out to legislators engaged in Higher Education and Health Policy.

Executive Branch: Democrats were elected to all four statewide offices.

Gov-Elect Whitmer will be sworn in on January 1, 2019 and will likely wait until then to announce her choices to lead the State Departments. The transition is a very busy period, but this transition team seems very well organized. Many UM faculty members have had interactions with the transition team.

B. Lame Duck Policy Issues where UM is Engaging:

1. State of Michigan currently – and unusually – has some surplus revenues. The 15 public universities agreed to seek additional money from this pot for infrastructure repairs and technology upgrades. Jointly, the 15 publics are requesting \$50M, but hope to get 1% or \$14M.
2. A second priority is seeking authorization for a capital outlay project. UM has requested \$30 million to support the renovation and an addition for a joint collaborative space for the College of Engineering and the School of Information. This is a challenge since UM Ann Arbor received money for the Dental School capital outlay project a couple of years ago.
3. Teacher Preparation bills: Issues include 3rd grade reading standards, A-F grading for schools across the state, and professional education requirement for every teacher who trains teachers.
4. Genetic counseling licensure/credentialing. There is considerable variability on genetic licensure across the US.
5. Sexual assault bills: About 50 bills addressing different issues related to sexual assault were introduced this session. A small handful have been enacted. It is unclear whether any of the other sexual assault bills will get attention in the lame duck session. It is important that we harmonize such legislation with federal law.

C. Undocumented Students

The size of this issue not clear as undocumented students are not tracked. The UM student body is quite aware of this issue and engaged. Additionally, in 2016-17, Cynthia chaired an ad hoc group that looked at immigration issues facing faculty and students, including visas, aid, undocumented students, etc. UM's Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives (OAMI) has been charged with working with undocumented students, including the challenge of reaching out and communicating with this population.

D. City Council / Local Update

Voters elected new members of City Council, several who are less aligned with the mayor than previously. While the council has largely represented a single political party, there are philosophic differences that largely are focused on re-ordering spending priorities. Those that were in the minority in the last council now have a majority, so the mayor and council could be engaged in robust debate in the coming years.

From UM's point of view, it is less important who the council members and mayor are; we are more interested in strong relationships and open communication with city authorities. Some issues up for renewed discussion are: the location of the train station, the proposed Treeline project, and the city master plan.

Fingerle Sale: With the Board of Regents' approval, UM has started its due diligence following the purchase of the Fingerle property. To date, UM has not yet identified a specific use for the site.

Next Meeting: February 7th @ 3pm in Fleming Building Room 5075