

Government Relations Advisory Committee

October 25, 2018 Draft Meeting Minutes
4006 Fleming Administration Building

In attendance:

Ellen Bauerle, Chair
Kara Charbarneau, Michigan Medicine
Colleen Conway, SMTD
Julie Gales, Government Relations
Diane Giannola, Michigan Medicine
Vincent Glud, ITCS
Steve Gray, Law School
Lucca Henrion, Rackham Student Government representative
Justin Hodge, School of Social Work
Mark Kushner, Engineering - EECS
Jacob Pollitt, CSG representative
Cynthia Wilbanks, Vice President for Government Relations

Absent:

Sigrid Cordell, UM Library
Karen Downing, UM Library
John Mansfield, LSA emeritus
Dorene Markel, Michigan Medicine
Afifa Shamim-Uzzaman, Michigan Medicine

Introductions and Brief History of GRAC/CERAC:

Round Robin Introductions and comments on committee members' university affiliations

Ellen reviewed the GRAC Committee Charge and provided a copy of the *attached document* outlining both the general and specific 2018-19 charges for the committee. Under specific charges GRAC members suggested they had an interest in learning about federal and local budget priorities as well as state priorities.

In her self-introduction Cynthia observed the value of committee members reviewing both the Government Relations website and also the SACUA site

Overview of Government Relations:

Cynthia shared the organizational structure of her office as shown on the Government Relations website. She explained the duties of the different units (state, local, national).

She offered a short history of the DC office, in place since 1990, at that time, one of only a handful of universities that had a D.C. The goal of establishing a physical office in D.C. was to expand and support the UM's research goals.

The State Outreach function isn't as well known, but the goal is to extend UM's reach and connections across the State of Michigan, and create connections with community and civic leaders and organizations in every corner of the state.

Cynthia provided a brief description of the Wolverine Caucus which takes place about 4-6 times a year Lansing. The Wolverine Caucus brings UM faculty to Lansing to provide insight into critical research or hot public policy issues to inform policy makers, other stakeholder groups, and alumni in and around the State Capitol.

Among possible topics for this committee to discuss today

- the effects of recent elections on Ann Arbor's government, and the probability of additional changes coming from the mid-term elections that are on the near horizon. We agree that the December meeting might be a place initially to discuss those potential changes.
 - a) Locally: changes will occur as a result of the local election and the work of the city council. Given the campaign platforms of the primary winners, it appears that new council members will be focused on essential city services, road improvements, and neighborhoods. There was a brief discussion about the prospects of a Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) program and its possible effects.
 - b) State legislature: There will be 31 (out of 38) new members in the Senate in January. While the Republican majority may shrink, it is unlikely that the Democrats will flip the Senate. Democrats will likely gain seats in the House of Representatives. Michigan will have a new governor due to term limits. There was a brief discussion of the state's financial support of UM, how it has changed over the years. UM currently has a \$320 million appropriation that is the same amount received in 2010. In 2010, this sum was about 20% of UM's General Fund budget, now about 16%.
 1. Cynthia observed that traditionally, the Legislature has focused on undergraduate education. The Governor's Marshall Plan has recently put more attention on career and technical education.
 2. Question raised regarding ongoing concept of privatizing UM. While the topic could continue to be raised, there is no momentum along these lines.
 - c) Examined the website for the Michigan Impact newsletter, intended to illustrate at a county level how UM contributes to the state of Michigan: <https://impact.govrel.umich.edu/>

Group judged this site very attractive, informative, excellent outreach on part of Gov. Rel. office and staff. Comment: "It's very digestible information." The newsletter is sent to UM alumni in the state, as well as policymakers. Open rates of the newsletter have been consistently positive, and interestingly the newsletter gets a lot of "views" from northern Michigan counties.

- d) Discussed relationships among other Michigan institutions of higher education, including a discussion about the viability of three universities in the Upper Peninsula, notably Lake Superior State University, Michigan Tech, and Northern Michigan University, and whether a merger of one or more of these institutions is a topic of conversation.
- e) Discussed overall decrease in number of HS grads in Michigan, which poses challenges for university enrollments. Many universities are encountering enrollment issues, with the exception of GVSU, MSU, UM, and Oakland. 30% of Michigan HS students don't go on to college. There are ongoing efforts to encourage students to pursue post-secondary education, whether at a 2 or 4-year institution.
 1. Question: from a financial standpoint: has higher education had more leverage w/ one large system w/ satellites, or with one big system? CW responded that one of the features that enable the University's excellence is the autonomy granted by the Michigan constitution.

■ Below are some *general discussion* items toward end of meeting

- *Mechanism of the appropriation bill.* Cynthia explained that each of the 3 UM campuses has their own appropriation line. GRAC members wondered what such a bill looked like; Cynthia will bring a state budget proposal in the future. She explained the budget bill is not very complex, a line-item appropriation for each institution, followed by a number of boilerplate provisions that can change from year to year.

- *Changing demographics in state of Michigan*, and what effects it could have on universities. Cynthia responded that recruiting continues to be both local and national; the ongoing national immigration discussion could potentially have an impact on future international enrollments.
- *Legislature's upcoming lame duck session?* What might that look like? Cynthia responded that it depends upon the outcome of the midterm elections; the state relations team is alert to any opportunities or challenges that might emerge for higher education. UM has several priorities, including gaining approval of a new capital outlay project and additional general fund support.
- *Unemployment insurance remedy*: response from GRAC member Steve Gray reported that a specific Court decision is anticipated, but monetary awards granted by the decision may still be insufficient.

Meeting wrap-up:

Next meeting 13 December, 1-2 pm, 4025 Fleming.

Possible topics (alluded to at October 25th meeting, but not discussed):

- National science policy
- Poverty and social justice (both local and national)
- Developing a stronger communication policy for UM, especially for local issues, as a way of getting UM's view better known
- What other SACUA committees are discussing, getting a better sense of what other committees are doing, making sure that information is flowing easily to and from SACUA
- Federal advocacy for graduate students, e.g., federal funding for research, mental health issues