

Government Relations Advisory Committee Meeting
Friday, November 8, 2019
3:30 – 4:30 p.m.
6039 Fleming Administration Building

In attendance:

Ellen Bauerle, UM Press, Chair
Kara Charbarneau, Michigan Medicine
Diane Giannola, Michigan Medicine
Vincent Glud, ITS
Justin Hodge, School of Social Work
Erin Kahle, Nursing
Andrea Lewis, Government Relations (Staff)
Daniil Manaenkov, LSA
John Mansfield, Engineering Emeritus
Dorene Markel, Michigan Medicine
Renee Nguyen, ISR
Alexandra Rivera, UM Library
Lucca Henrion, Rackham Student Government Representative
Cynthia Wilbanks, Vice President for Government Relations

Absent:

Morgan Beeler, SEAS
Karen Downing, UM Library
Annalisa Manera, SACUA Liaison
Brett Zaslavsky, Central Student Government representative

Introductions and Announcements

VP Wilbanks welcomed Committee members to the new academic year, with brief explanation of the Committee's purview and her office's structure, with offices that are local, in Lansing, and Washington, DC. Her office's goal is to be attentive to governmental issues that are of national, state, and local interest.

The Committee can provide useful feedback from staff and faculty positions, offering feedback and information from diversity of campus perspectives.

Committee members briefly introduced themselves and mentioned why they think this committee is interesting. A majority of members have an interest in or personal/professional background in public policy.

A. The South Fifth Avenue Site – Status Update

VP Wilbanks notes that the majority of former Fingerle buildings on this site have been removed, with the exception of a few brick buildings that have temporarily been left in

place. The cleaned/leveled/striped surface has been flagged as a Yellow lot and is being used for “surge parking” for nearby events as well as alternate staff parking while the slow-moving 950 Greene St. construction project has been going on.

Currently, there is discussion going on about what use to make of the South Fifth site.

There is a discussion also going on about one or more North Campus dormitories and housing units that are in need of refurbishment or replacement. The South Fifth Avenue site might could include student housing, but no decisions have been made.

VP Wilbanks noted that the Regents are committed to improving housing opportunities for students, and making best use of options that might arise. VP Wilbanks mentioned that University housing continues to be in high demand, despite construction of several large apartment buildings or condos around town. VP Wilbanks also mentions UM’s commitment and contribution to important projects around town, such as a large contribution to costs of reconstructing East Hoover St.

Committee members mention the ongoing challenges of parking on North Campus, and the general lack of amenities on South Campus even as it grows in density; possibly the eventual South Fifth Avenue site might offer improvements in either parking, amenities, or both.

B. UM Budget in Lansing

VP Wilbanks provided an update on the state’s funding for higher education this FY, for UM as well as for other public colleges and universities. She provided some sample documents (copies attached) that shed light on the budget process, vetoes by the Governor, and assignment of funding to public universities in Michigan. Committee members expressed their appreciation for these details.

A budget has indeed been passed for this FY, as of 1 October. UM received a .05 percent increase for higher education this year. While this year’s allocation is the smallest increase, funds allocated for the 8 previous years has been done via a funding formula, which includes various metrics such as efficiency, research and development, graduation rate, etc.

Legislators are currently on break; there are still budget item differences to be addressed when they return, but time is running short, as the focus will soon turn to the FY21 budget rather than details of the just-passed legislation.

A committee member asked about how money is sorted out for students, whether in- or out-of-state, international, and so forth.

A second committee member asked how state apportionments compare to those from other states: do Michigan universities do better or worse than other states.

VP Wilbanks addressed both questions but we ran out of time for final wrap-up on the budget discussion.

Closing Thoughts/Wrap Up

We agree that topics for the next meeting will include additional budget discussion, and community reaction to UM hosting one of next year's presidential debates.

Next Meeting

Friday, December 6, 3:00 – 4:00 PM