

Government Relations Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, 18 April 2019
3:00 – 4:00 p.m.
5075 Fleming Administration Building

Attendance:

Present:

Ellen Bauerle, UM Press, Chair
Julie Gales, Government Relations Staff
Diane Giannola, Michigan Medicine
Steve Gray, Law School
Vincent Glud, ITCS
Jacob Pollitt, CSG
Justin Hodge, School of Social Work
Lucca Henrion, Rackham Student Government representative
Dorene Markel, Michigan Medicine
Cynthia Wilbanks, Vice President for Government Relations

Absent:

Kara Charbarneau, Michigan Medicine
Colleen Conway, SACUA Liaison
Karen Downing, UM Library
Mark Kushner, UM Engineering
John Mansfield, LSA emeritus

Topic 1: Committee members briefly noted that construction seemed to be underway shortly on the land previously occupied by Fingerle Lumber on South Fifth Ave., and looked forward to an update on the project when available.

Topic 2: Committee members commented on the recent campus lockdown, caused by some students popping balloons in a public area. The noise unfortunately caused people to conclude that there was an active shooter in the area, though there actually wasn't one. Security in the meantime had been summoned and the area was locked down.

Committee members were interested to see the speed and extent of response from campus and other security officers. Questions were raised by committee members about how alerts are distributed – what networks are used to alert community members. Committee member Justin Hodge noted that campus community members who are part of multiple networks received messages in incorrect (and therefore confusing) order.

Committee member Lucca Henrion noted that Rackham graduate students do not currently receive “Run / Hide / Fight” training, but he reported that the head of DPSS had recently attended a meeting at Rackham dealing with this question, and also that Dean of Rackham Michael Solomon is working on making it be a regular part of GSI training.

Coincidentally, four state legislators were present on the Diag for another event, and were able to observe first-hand how UM responds to such events. The response included officers from Ann Arbor's police

department, the Michigan State Police, UM DPSS, and the FBI, in a matter of a few minutes. Committee members felt that the nature of the response was ultimately adequate.

Member Vince Glud mentioned the existence of the Police Oversight Committee, and we wondered whether its members are faculty only, or whether staff / students are also included.

[Further research by Chairperson Bauerle reveals the committee consists of two student members, two faculty members, and two staff members: <https://hr.umich.edu/working-u-m/workplace-improvement/police-department-oversight-committee>]

Topic 3: VP Wilbanks presented information to the Committee on the appropriations process followed by the state legislature. Before beginning, she drew members' attention to a link on the main UM home page, at the bottom, titled "Transparency Reporting," <https://obp.umich.edu/mandatory-reporting/budget-transparency/>, where considerable information is presented about UM's budget, capital projects, and requirements about financial reporting. Committee members expressed interest in this information.

VP Wilbanks explained some of the standard elements of the budget process: some minor changes in terminology from one gubernatorial administration to another, and so forth.

She explained that the Government Relations staff typically seeks changes in the overall percentage granted to UM, rather than lobbying on an item-by-item basis. The Legislature in turn grants funding in blocks, and leaves it up to the universities to decide details, such as how many students to admit, given a projected budget of X dollars. The Legislature does not grant funding direct to specific programs or educational units.

Committee members noted the academic affiliations of past governors, and wondered whether there tended to be a financial bias toward a given governor's alma mater; VP Wilbanks said that there was not such a bias at gubernatorial level.

She did mention that individual legislators on rare occasions will support a given project or school, but as a rule were even-handed in their actions and proposals: they might for instance be an alum of School A but represent a district that contained School B, so they did not typically privilege one school over another.

Interest was expressed in the upcoming 2019/20 budget, which was scheduled hopefully for completion by 30 June 2019. Historically there have been a few budgets that were held up by the Legislature, but in general details about the budget are available on the state's website.

The meeting closed at 4 o'clock. Chairperson Bauerle thanked committee members for their enthusiastic participation this year, and expressed a hope that members would be continuing for the 2019-2020 year. Several members indicated they were, including Diane Giannola, Vincent Glud, Justin Hodge, and Lucca Henrion.