

AAAC Meeting Minutes for October 2, 2019

AAAC members present: Ketra Armstrong, Lola Eniola-Adefeso, Elena Gallo (SACUA liaison), Enrico Landi, Chris Liu, Elissa Patterson, Michael Mendez (graduate student representative), Rebekah Modrak, William Schultz, Kanakadurga Singer, Chitra Subramanian, Hsiao Hsin Sung Hsieh, Kentaro Toyama (chair), Sergio Villalobos Ruminott.

Guests: Joy Beatty (SACUA Chair), MaryJo Banasik (Faculty Senate Office Director)

Absent: Michael Hess

This was the AAAC's first meeting for the academic year. It was a two-hour meeting (8-10am), with Provost Martin Philbert appearing for the middle hour (8:30-9:30am). From 8:30-9am, Special Counsel Christine Gerdes and Jim Burkel were present. From 9-9:30am, Michael Solomon, Dilip Das, Mary Boyce.

Prior to the provost's arrival, there was a round of member introductions, the chair provided a brief introduction to the AAAC and reviewed the committee's charge for this academic year, and the committee voted on what they felt were the most important items on the charge.

Introduction to the AAAC:

- We are advisory to the provost, who oversees academic and budgetary affairs on the U-M Ann Arbor campus – basically, everything but the athletic program. The Dearborn and Flint campuses have their own provosts, but the Ann Arbor provost has significant influence on those campuses, as well. “Advisory” means we can provide input to the provost, but we have no formal administrative power; the provost is only obligated to meet with us.
- We are appointed by the Senate Advisory Committee for University Affairs (SACUA), which is the elected, executive body of the Faculty Senate and Senate Assembly. These bodies and their roles are mandated by the Regents' Bylaws.
- We are primarily concerned about representing the faculty perspective to the provost, but our student members help us keep the student perspective in mind.

Review and prioritization of the charge from SACUA/Faculty Senate. Items on the agenda for this year (in rough decreasing order of importance to the committee, based on a committee vote held in the last 30 minutes of the meeting):

- 1) Evaluate faculty representation in searches/hiring of administrators.
- 2) Provide input into changes to Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) processes in response to a recent [third-party review of OIE](#).
- 3) Provide input into potential amendments to Regents' Bylaws 5.09 and 5.10 on demoting or removing tenured faculty.
- 4) Ask about the nature and impact of the approximately 50 lines hired to buttress U-M's DEI efforts.
- 5) Review policies around faculty obligations to writing letters of recommendation.
- 6) Work with SACUA to improve communication between faculty governance bodies and other faculty.

- 7) Contest, or review impact of, last year's changes to SPG 601.22 on faculty-student relationships.
- 8) Contest, or review impact of, last year's changes to SPG 601.38 on mandatory felony disclosures.
- 9) Evaluate whether Michigan Press is operating in alignment with Regents' Bylaws concerning its governance.
- 10) Review university structures supporting study abroad programs for students, especially with respect to whether there is redundancy.

Once the provost arrived, we discussed three topics: (1) process for potential amendments to Regents' Bylaws 5.09 and 5.10; (2) updates to search for new OIE director, and ongoing changes to OIE policies/processes; and (3) the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) accreditation of U-M.

Regents Bylaws 5.09 and 5.10 have to do with the removal of tenure. Bylaw 5.09 outlines processes that could lead to ultimate removal of tenure of a faculty member who has tenure. Bylaw 5.10 is a provision that provides compensation and benefits for one year after a tenured faculty member is terminated by the university.

- Bylaw 5.09 and 5.10, as written, require the university to provide full compensation and benefits to accused faculty members for the duration of the 5.09 proceedings, and then for another year afterward in the case of termination, regardless of the evidence against them. In cases where the evidence is overwhelming and the faculty behavior was egregious, this is a poor use of public funds and reflects badly on the university.
- Provost Philbert was emphatic in noting that the Regents, as well as the administration, understand, value, and wish to protect the institution of tenure. Nevertheless, they would like to find a way to allow for expedited proceedings in cases of "manifestly egregious misconduct."
- A faculty committee is considering the issues and will provide recommendations on whether and how Bylaws 5.09 and 5.10 should be amended: <https://record.umich.edu/articles/faculty-group-to-consider-changes-to-tenure-removal-bylaws/>. AAAC Chair Toyama is on the committee, along with SACUA member David Potter. A report back to the Regents will occur mid-November, 2019, and a final set of recommendations are due February, 2020.
- As the committee's thinking evolves, the AAAC will provide its input.

The Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) is the university group that handles allegations of sexual and professional misconduct.

- The OIE is currently undergoing a national search for a new director (<https://www.spelmanandjohnson.com/position/associate-vice-president-for-institutional-equity/>), who will report directly to the Provost. (This is different from previous practice.) The administration hopes to have the director in place as soon as possible. SACUA Chair Joy Beatty is on the search committee: <https://record.umich.edu/articles/oie-undergoes-operational-changes-launches-leadership-search/>.
- The university recently commissioned a third-party review of OIE and the university's policies for handling cases of sexual misconduct. This was completed this past summer and a report was issued: <https://president.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2019/04/HMBRUM-report.pdf>
- Meanwhile, the administration released a draft umbrella policy for handling cases of sexual misconduct: <https://sexualmisconduct.umich.edu/umbrella-policy/>. The AAAC will review this policy and provide feedback in its November, 2019 meeting.

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) is the regional entity responsible for university accreditation. U-M will be seeking re-accreditation with the HLC this academic year. Rackham Dean Michael Solomon, Assistant Vice Provost Mary Boyce, and Assistant Vice Provost Dilip Das presented on this topic.

- A team has been working for ~two years to prepare materials for the accreditation process. The process is intensive both in the amount of material compiled, as well as in seeking input from all units on campus.
- HLC accreditation has changed recently so as to focus the accreditation process on five pillars. U-M has chosen to focus on an “argument” that highlights its strength in balancing centralization and decentralization, as well as its commitments to continuous improvement of learning goals.

After the Provost left, the committee spent some time prioritizing items on its charge for the year, as indicated above.