

Minutes 6 April 2020
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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA)
Monday, April 6, 2020 3:15 pm
The meeting was held via Bluejeans because of the COVID-19 Shutdown

Present: Ahbel-Rappe, Beatty (chair), Conway, Dinov, Finlayson, Gallo, Liu, Malek, Manera, Marsh, Potter, Spencer, Toyama, Banasik, Snyder

Absent:

Guests: Interim Provost Collins; Members of the Press

3:16: Call to order/ Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Chair Beatty called the meeting to order. The agenda was approved.

3:19: Announcements and Introduction of new members

Chair Beatty asked candidates for SACUA Chair and Vice Chair to submit their names to the Faculty Senate Office by Thursday April 9. Candidates should also prepare statements discussing the way they envision serving in these positions. The election will open after the April 13 meeting and close at 9:00 am on April 14.

Chair Beatty said she will be meeting with President Schlissel on April 13 and asked SACUA members to send her questions for President Schlissel by Friday, April 10.

Chair Beatty said the ombuds will be joining the SACUA meeting at 4:00 pm on April 13. She asked if SACUA members had received the mass email from the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) concerning stop work orders from private sponsors. Professor Manera said her lab has had a stop work order.

Chair Beatty asked new and current SACUA members to introduce themselves. Professor Finlayson introduced herself as Associate Professor of English at UM Dearborn who has been on Senate Assembly for three years. Professor Liu introduced himself as Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Biomedical Engineering saying that he runs a lab with eleven researchers. Professor Toyama introduced himself as W K Kellogg Professor of Community Information and Professor of Information, with three years of service on Senate Assembly and four years on the Academic Affairs Advisory Committee, of which he is currently chair. Current SACUA members introduced themselves to the new members.

3:30: Interim Provost Collins

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Interim Provost Collins introduced herself and addressed questions sent to her by SACUA prior to the meeting. Noting that SACUA had asked about ongoing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) efforts in light of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the University, she said the University's commitment of DEI will continue since its central to its core mission. She

added that, while much has been accomplished in the area of DEI, there is more work to be done, that current initiatives will continue, and there is planning for DEI 2.0, although no specific details have been announced. As an international economist, professionally, and, personally, as a Jamaican who grew up in Manhattan, she has a long-standing interest in the way policy influences living standards, and issues of inclusivity are fundamental to the way she thinks both about research and the environment for students. Her approach to these issues in her research has been empirical; as a member of the Board of Directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, her perspective is also policy-oriented and theoretical. She spent a number of years on Committee on the Status of Minority Groups in the Economics Profession (<https://www.aeaweb.org/about-aea/committees/csmgep>) to support programs for junior economists; as Dean of the Ford School, one of her four key goals was to advance the school's DEI initiative. She intends to continue this focus as Interim Provost.

Interim Provost Collins opened her discussion of a question from SACUA about the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for the academic side of the University, by noting that the situation is changing very rapidly, requiring decision-making with atypical rapidity for the University. She is committed to protecting health and safety of faculty, students and staff while carrying on the University's core mission with collaborative input from around campus, working with faculty experts to leverage all relevant information. The key decisions that have been taken so far include the change to distance learning, bringing students back from abroad—though some graduate students who could not readily return were allowed to shelter in safe places with a safety plan—providing housing to students for whom Ann Arbor is the best place to stay (this includes approximately 300 undergraduate and 1800 graduate students), the modified grading system, and adding flexibility to tenure and promotion processes. Challenges that will continue to have an impact on students include ramped down research, which is consistent with health and safety, changed building access, and reorganized staff work. She said her office is about to roll out changes to course evaluations, adding new questions that reflect the unusual circumstances of the Winter Term. The purpose of the new evaluation questions, which should not be used for promotion and tenure reviews, is to gather input on distance learning, which is important for planning purposes and teacher development. She said that SACUA had provided helpful input to her office's deliberations as they developed the questions.

In response to a question from SACUA about how things are going in the COVID-19 response, Interim Provost Collins said people have rallied in amazing ways, that remote instruction was going surprisingly well, and that the faculty had shown wonderful creativity and initiative. At the same time, she noted some kinds of instruction (e.g., labs) are very difficult and that many students, especially the most vulnerable students, are facing hardships. She drew attention to the initiative by the College of Literature, Science and the Arts (LSA) for a "Roll Call" initiative to contact all LSA students. Given the uncertain situation she said the search for a new director for the Institute for Social Research (ISR) had been paused, and that Spring/Summer instruction will be online.

Interim Provost Collins said, in planning for the fall, that her office was looking at potential changes, both in terms of things that could be stopped and creative new things that could be initiated. Her office has started to think about how to make decisions about the fall, but that more information on the public health situation will be needed before they can be made. She could not, at this time, commit to a time frame for when a decisions will be made.

In response to a question from SACUA about mental health issues in the University community, Interim Provost Collins said the Faculty and Staff Counselling and Consulting Office (FASCCO) is providing telephonic consultations and virtual support groups for faculty and staff (<https://hr.umich.edu/benefits-wellness/health-well-being/mental-emotional-health/mental-health-counseling-consultation-services/faculty-staff-counseling-consultation-office-fascco>), and drew attention to M-Healthy's guide to wellbeing (<https://hr.umich.edu/benefits-wellness/health-well-being>)

being/well-being-u-m/guide-well-being-during-covid19-pandemic). For undergraduates, Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS), is still open and has conducted over 900 sessions; there is also some availability for in-person meetings in crisis situations (<https://caps.umich.edu>). The College of Engineering has partnered with the Depression Center to develop some online activities, and more information about this will be shared with the university community soon.

In response to a question about graduate education, Interim Provost Collins said that while there was short-term uncertainty, with the result that some students may have to forgo some plans, long term fundamentals are driving educational decisions. She noted international students may have new challenges, and that the economy may have an impact on graduate enrolments. Her office is engaging schools and colleges to explore ways to handle deferrals of admission and related issues.

Responding to a question about the way the University will manage costs, Interim Provost Collins said that while the COVID-19 pandemic presents many challenges, the University is, and has been, in a healthy financial position. She does, however, foresee increased pressures on the budget, and her office is working with that of the Chief Financial Officer to model the effects of the pandemic on revenues and costs. She anticipates that there will be difficult decisions, and, in making those decisions, the approach is to look at all contingencies and possible responses. She will keep SACUA informed as situations arise.

Professor Conway asked what language would be used in conveying information to the faculty about course evaluations, about the additional questions to be added to the forms, and latitude at the unit level in using of the evaluations in tenure and promotion processes. Interim Provost Collins, said the message about the course evaluations and their use would come both from her office and the unit level. In her view, while it is valuable to get feedback, using the evaluations to assess teaching does not make a lot of sense. The message connected with the release of the forms will be consistent with this view. Librarian Spencer asked whether the reportedly more severe impact of COVID-19 on communities of color was spilling over into the University population. Interim Provost Collins said there is no data relating to the University population, but there is information from Michigan Medicine, which is accepting transfers of patients most in need. Many of those patients are people of color from Detroit and elsewhere, and that further data is being collected

Professor Manera said that several Principal Investigators had received stop work orders from grant sponsors meaning that students, postdocs, and research staff can no longer be charged to these grants.

Interim Provost Collins said the policy with respect to these grants is in the process of development, her office is currently looking at ways to help graduate students on a case-by-case basis, and more information will be forthcoming about sources that can be used to support people. Professor Gallo asked if there is an approximate timeline for rolling out this information, as the situation is a source of enormous stress for graduate students. Interim Provost Collins said that while this is a front-burner issue, she can't give an approximate deadline at the present time. She added that her office is in a place where it can start to be thoughtful about prioritizing issues that have not been dealt with so far. She said it is increasingly important for SACUA to be eyes and ears across campus.

Professor Liu asked about the process for opening labs. Interim Provost Collins replied that the answer depends on what happens in the public health context. The University is doing all it can to analyze the data, but there is not a lot of historical experience that can guide decision making. She added that while health and safety are the main priorities, the core mission of the university includes its research. She will try to balance those factors when the University is in a position to start returning to normal activities.

4:00 COVID-19 Response Items

Chair Beatty said she and Professor Conway were very impressed with Interim Provost Collins' accessibility in their prior contact with her, and that she requested an extra meeting with them in April to keep lines of communication open during the COVID-19 situation.

Professor Malek said there are currently 200 COVID-19 patients in the University Hospital, which is running at 70% capacity, down from the usual 90% as a result of the cancelation of elective surgeries. He noted that while Michigan, especially Detroit, is a hot spot for the virus, there is an enormous problem with the available data because testing is restricted to severe cases, there is no test for immunity, and the actual mortality rate is unknown; though, from what data there is, it appears that the mortality rate is 3-4%, that 20-30 year-olds do not die from the infection, and that people with underlying conditions are at highest risk. He said there is a great deal of anxiety in the Medical Center, that an overflow field hospital has been established in the Track and Field Stadium, that there are ongoing issues with the supply of personal protective equipment, that Emergency Room personnel are at the frontline when the system gets to capacity and that meticulous attention to detail is complicated under those circumstances.

Professor Marsh said he had seen a great deal of modelling about patient numbers exceeding the Medical Center's capacity. Professor Malek said that only time will tell if these models are accurate.

Professor Marsh said that faculty in the Chemistry Department teach lab courses by making videos of themselves doing experiments and asking students questions about those experiments. They will continue to do this in Spring and Summer courses. Professor Manera said this is also the practice in her department (Nuclear Engineering and Radiological Sciences).

Professor Ahbel-Rappe asked if it was possible to get information about enrolments for Spring/Summer terms by the end of April, as this information could make it possible to get an idea how the general population is reacting to distance learning.

Professor Malek noted that there are health systems furloughing people. Such furloughs have not been discussed in the University Health system, but that SACUA should be attuned to the issue. He said the cancellation of elective procedures had potentially severe economic consequences for the medical system.

Librarian Spencer asked SACUA members for COVID-19 questions for the library, since a library staff meeting would be occurring soon. Professor Ahbel-Rappe said she has made extensive use of Hathi Trust resources.

Dr. Banasik, said the Faculty Senate Office was looking to receive more nominations for the Librarian Achievement and Recognition Awards (<https://facultysenate.umich.edu/about/awards/university-librarian-achievement-award/>; <https://facultysenate.umich.edu/about/awards/university-librarian-recognition-award/>).

4:25: Retreat Ideas for Fall 2020

Chair Beatty asked SACUA to think about a possible retreat in the Fall, and the topics that could be discussed. Professor Conway asked retiring SACUA members to provide their input. Professor Conway mentioned revisiting FOIA and press relations as possible topics. Professor Toyama asked what happened in the 2019 Retreat, as a frame of reference. Chair Beatty said there had been a four-hour meeting for visioning around themes for the coming year, starting with an exercise in which SACUA members were asked to imagine what a report about the success of the faculty senate five years in the future would discuss. The outcome of the exercise was a decision to focus on engagement with the broader university to improve visibility, improving Senate Assembly meetings, and supporting committee activity. Professor Conway

drew attention to the forthcoming vote by the Regents on the new 5.09 process, which, if passed would result in the need for SACUA to create a Judicial Hearing Board as well as understand the new processes. Professor Malek said that people should be able to meet in person by August, even though there would not be a vaccine by then, and that the current shutdown is driven by lack of resources rather than a deep understanding.

4:32: Executive Session

4:59 Adjourn

Respectfully submitted,
David S. Potter
Senate Secretary

University of Michigan Bylaws of the Board of Regents, Sec. 5.02:

Governing Bodies in Schools and Colleges

Sec. 4.01 The University Senate

"...[t]he Senate is authorized to consider any subject pertaining to the interests of the university, and to make recommendations to the Board of Regents in regard thereto. Decisions of the University Senate with respect to matters within its jurisdiction shall constitute the binding action of the university faculties. Jurisdiction over academic polices shall reside in the faculties of the various schools and colleges, but insofar as actions by the several faculties affect university policy as a whole, or schools and colleges other than the one in which they originate, they shall be brought before the University Senate."

Rules of the University Senate, the Senate Assembly and the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs:

Senate: "In all cases not covered by rules adopted by the Senate, the procedure in Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed."

Assembly: "The Assembly may adopt rules for the transaction of its business. In appropriate cases not covered by rules of the Assembly, the rules of the University Senate shall apply."

SACUA: "The committee may adopt rules for the transaction of its business."