

Government Relations Advisory Committee Meeting
Friday, April 17, 2019
3:30 - 4:30 p.m.
Remote meeting via Zoom

In attendance:

Ellen Bauerle, UM Press, Chair
Kara Charbarneau, Michigan Medicine
Karen Downing, UM Library
Diane Giannola, Michigan Medicine
Vincent Glud, ITCS
Justin Hodge, School of Social Work
Erin Kahle, Nursing
Andrea Lewis, Government Relations (Staff)
Daniil Manaenkov, LSA
Annalisa Manera, SACUA Liaison
John Mansfield, Engineering
Dorene Markel, Michigan Medicine
Renee Nguyen, ISR *phone*
Alexandra Rivera, UM Library
Cynthia Wilbanks, Vice President for Government Relations

Absent:

MaryJo Banasik, Director, Faculty Senate Office
Lucca Henrion, President, Rackham Student Government
Morgan Beeler, SEAS
Brett Zaslavsky, Central Student Government representative

Announcements

Minutes from the December meeting of the Committee were examined and approved, with one minor change of wording. Chair Bauerle will correct and send them to the Senate Assembly office.

The Committee did not hold a March meeting. The planned date was interrupted by the University's preparations for temporary closure as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

All topics on today's agenda were overshadowed by the current and ongoing coronavirus pandemic. The state of Michigan – including its legislature and the University of Michigan – is currently operating under a gubernatorial shelter-in-place order.

A. Legislative Update

The normal sequence of events in the appropriation process is currently on hold, including FY21 budgetary discussions, and revenue estimates. It is unknown when these might resume. Economic challenges lie ahead as a result of state-wide shortfalls in revenue (between \$1-3 billion), stemming from lost sales tax and income tax resulting from considerable under- or unemployment.

Committee member Manaenkov observed that the previously scheduled 15 May revenue conference is now being held in order to satisfy statutory requirements; a more informed conference will likely be held in August.

VP Wilbanks noted that the state does have a “rainy day” fund for this type of situation, but it is unclear if or in what manner it will be used. There has not yet been discussion about a reduction in funding for universities; however, it may be unavoidable in the coming months. In March, Congress passed the CARES Act which provides funds to universities- 50 percent used to support students (financial aid) and 50 percent to the university.

Committee member Markel observed that cancellations of elective surgery means Michigan Medicine is not receiving its usual stream of revenue and the picture is bleak.

B. Preparations for the Presidential Debate at UM (update)

University administrators are uncertain what the fall semester may look like; the presidential debate is part of the fall semester. Decisions about how or whether to hold the debate on-campus will be made on the basis of informed public health guidance.

Committee member Hodge commented that campus groups that are planning events leading up to the debate are considering how best to keep students safe. An array of events in varied locations are being considered, including locations on and off campus. No final conclusions have been reached.

VP Wilbanks noted that John Seto, Director of Housing Security, is on the DPSS leadership team for the debate and is fully involved with decisions regarding safety.

C. South Division Site (update)

VP Wilbanks informed the committee that university administrators have reviewed all capital projects in light of the Stay Home, Stay Safe order. Those not yet begun are now on hold; this group includes the South Fifth site. Projects that have started were shut down by state order unless they were deemed essential. This group presumably could resume when the state order is lifted, but nothing is certain at this time.

D. Public Perception of Management Changes in Provost’s Office

UM was proactive in communicating with its legislative delegations at federal and state levels about the departure of Martin Philbert and the arrival of Interim Provost Susan Collins. The University's investigation likely will wind up by the end of May.

E. Legislature's Perception of Anderson Case

UM is currently investigating events involving deceased physician Robert Anderson. Outreach to those potentially affected is underway, although the statute of limitations affects the situation. A report will be issued at a later date. We have had little feedback from legislators on the Anderson case.

F. Coronavirus

The urgent and university-wide discussion regarding the viral pandemic has put many other UM conversations on hold. At the moment, discussions have particularly included the provision of PPE for appropriate personnel. Both Michigan Medicine and the School of Public Health have played important roles in advising Governor Whitmer and her team. Information from these resources has been provided to state government officials to support well-reasoned, evidence-based, scientifically sound decisions.

VP Wilbanks advised the committee that President Schlissel is intensively involved in committees that are addressing the response to the virus, including groups of business leaders, health care professionals, and other groups involved in addressing and analyzing the pandemic and proposing a framework to help restart Michigan's economy.

Other units within UM are also providing feedback to the President, and attending to issues specific to their areas, including Vice President Cunningham, the Provost's Office, and the Office of Student Life.

Committee member Hodge directed the committee's attention to an online resource developed by the Poverty Solutions Team. It presents information on COVID-related issues impacting individuals, families and businesses, including guidance about the forthcoming federal stimulus checks:

<https://poverty.umich.edu/stimulus-checks/>

VP Wilbanks drew the committee's attention to a video developed by the School of Public Health that provides coronavirus information and updates in easy to understand terms.

<https://youtu.be/gJMpqiShlYs>

Committee member Hodge also drew the committee's attention to a cumulative Google document, titled "Michigan COVID-19 Pandemic Resource Guide," also from the Poverty Solutions Team.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-r9zam_Gh8Up-msqb4T0BRirLzV5obyuZA91Csbcqb4/edit#heading=h.an3oh59d7wsg

The guide's introduction states: "This guide provides information on how to access programs aimed at supporting Michiganders during the coronavirus outbreak. The programs in this guide are supported by the state and federal government, private companies, and nonprofits that serve the majority of Michigan residents, plus there is a special section for programs serving Detroit residents and links to local resources in other areas of the state."

Committee member Mansfield inquired whether plans for repurposing the South Campus indoor track as a field hospital were continuing. VP Wilbanks replied that plans to activate that facility were currently on hold, based on beds currently needed. The "load balancing" system of apportioning patients among regional hospitals is ongoing

Committee member Mansfield inquired what might be the effect on the total population of graduate students, especially international students; might it be the case that some wished to return home and couldn't, or some wished to attend UM but couldn't get visas. VP Wilbanks replied that the Provost is currently looking at this question, which chiefly concerns graduate students, but nothing has been decided yet. One complexity is that the State Department has ceased processing visas which will cause a backlog when they resume.

Closing remarks and observations.

Chair Bauerle noted that this is the last meeting for the committee during this academic year, and she thanked all committee members for their lively and helpful participation. She noted that the Senate Assembly office is in the process of reaching out to those committee members whose terms are coming to an end, to gauge their interest in future activities.

VP Wilbanks thanked committee members for their participation during the year. She remarked that these are unparalleled days, and that she appreciates input from all committee members on issues they see in their own units and departments in the next few months.

The meeting adjourned at 4:35.