

Minutes 11 May 2020
Circulated 15 May 2020
Approved 20 May 2020

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA)
Monday, May 11, 2020 3:15 pm
The meeting was held via ZOOM because of the COVID-19 Shutdown

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

Absent:

Guests: Members of the Press

3:18: Call to Order/ Approval of Minutes

The agenda was approved. The minutes from April 27 were approved.

3:20 Announcements from Faculty Senate Office Director

Dr. Banasik, said that SACUA's statement on 5.09/5.10 By-law had been sent to Vice President and Secretary of the University Sally Churchill. She will forward it to the Regents. The statement will also be in the faculty governance report for the Regents meeting on May 21st.

Dr. Banasik invited SACUA members to send issues related to the COVID-19 response process to her to share with the Faculty Governance Consortium.

3:25 Announcements from SACUA Chair

Chair Conway expressed appreciation to SACUA members for their work on the statement about the revised By-law 5.09/5.10. She has had communication from the Tenure, Promotion and Professional Development Committee expressing the desire that SACUA make a more public statement. Chair Conway said SACUA should consider the matter in light of its other communications on the topic.

Chair Conway said that Professors Potter, Marsh, and Gallo have been added to committees charged with academic planning for the Fall 2020 Semester. Professor Gallo said she had received an invitation on the morning of May 5 and joined the meeting of the Committee on Graduate and Professional Students held that day. She said other members of the committee were administrators at the sub-dean level from units in which a hybrid approach on online/in person teaching might be viable as well as well as heads of graduate programs for the professional schools, for whom the physical presence of students is essential. She noted that there were a variety of concerns, differing from school, to school, and that the composition of the committee appropriately captured differences in approach. At the present time this group is in data-gathering mode, its' deadlines are flexible and it needs to harmonize its work with other committees. Professor Marsh, said the next meeting of his committee, the Committee on Performance, Studio, and Lab Courses will be on May 12. He had missed the first meeting of the group, which consisted largely of deans and associate deans and some Information Technology people. He noted that, despite having held only one meeting, the group had already drafted a 17-page report, and received substantial feedback from the College of Engineering (COE); he said he

had not seen a survey connected with these issues from the College of Literature, Science and the Arts (LSA). He is the only LSA faculty member in the group. Professor Potter said his group, the Committee on Large and Foundational Courses, had held two meetings, the first meeting was connected with practical issues, the second meeting had been more theoretical, and that it would take some time to arrive at a final product.

Chair Conway said that while SACUA traditionally only meets through May, she had scheduled meetings in June given that there is so much happening with respect to planning for the Fall 2020 Semester. She added that SACUA will only meet in June in connection with the response to COVID-19. When she meets with President Schlissel on May 18, she will let him know that SACUA is available to provide assistance if there is a topic to which it can make a helpful contribution.

Professor Beatty asked about a timeframe for the committees? Professors Potter and Marsh said the goal is to issue reports in early June. Professor Beatty asked if a list of all committee members is available? Professor Potter said he had seen information regarding the chairs of the committees in *The Record* (http://provost.umich.edu/provost_comm/20200501fall_planning.html).

3:33 Faculty Awards

Dr. Banasik said funding for these awards are no longer available, but that the Faculty Senate Office will be receiving nominations until June 1. Given that the nominations can be good for three years, Dr. Banasik said SACUA could roll the nominations over to next year. Professors Finlayson and Liu said SACUA should make the awards if they would be useful to the recipients. Ms. Snyder noted that the SACUA awards tend to be for senior people. Librarian Spencer said that the awards for librarians are determined by librarians who were previous award winners. Professor Potter said that the composition of the committee giving these awards had varied over time, that he had served on the committee while chair in 2008/9 because of an issue with the process the previous year, when it had not been revealed that the letter of support for the successful candidate was provided by the candidate's spouse.

Librarian Spencer said there was interest in the Library about the awards. Chair Conway said the consensus on SACUA was that the awards should be made even though there would not be money attached to them, and that voting will be by email unless there are June meetings.

3:47 Promotion Timeline Extension Policy and Faculty Activity Reports

Professor Toyama said the Academic Affairs Advisory Committee (AAAC) had received a response from Interim Provost Collins about the AAAC's request that faculty be granted a blanket extension of the Tenure Clock. The text of Interim Provost Collins response is:

With respect to the tenure clock, I appreciate your feedback on this important issue. I have worked closely with the deans to reiterate that while we will take a case-by-case approach in accordance with our existing policies, I encourage them to apply these policies liberally to legitimate requests, and to ensure that the process for making a request is simple and straightforward. The deans are supportive of this approach. Like you, I share the goal of ensuring that anyone who needs a clock extension due to COVID-related issues receives one, and that no unnecessary barriers stand in the way. However, research has shown that clock extensions applied automatically to all faculty (e.g., with the birth of a child) do not level the playing field, but may exacerbate inequities. I believe those same lessons would also apply here, and thus I do not assume that a blanket extension is preferable to a case-by-case approach for this COVID situation.

Professor Liu said he had reached out to eight assistant professors in COE and LSA on this topic. Their responses to his inquiries are as follows:

“I feel that it would be in the interest of junior faculty to have the option of asking for a deferral rather than having a blanket extension. Faculty with experimental research may have been significantly impacted by the pandemic and may need the year to ramp up again, while faculty who may be more theoretical are less impacted and may prefer to more quickly have their tenure package considered.”

“I’m very concerned that leadership is going to think that granting a tenure delay will be sufficient to offset all of the extra roadblocks being faced by assistant professors. It simply will not. To give one example among many, a tenure delay will not make up for the extra financial difficulties we are facing, e.g., that we are spending down our startup funds paying students who are 50% as productive as usual, or that, depending on one’s field, that funding from other sources is severely delayed and/or suddenly much harder to come by. It would be very naive, in my opinion, if leadership thinks that, given a tenure delay, assistant professors will be able to put together the same tenure case as if none of this had ever happened. From discussions with other assistant professors, I know I am not the only one who feels this way.”

“Truth be told, I’d prefer to get through the process rather than have to delay it another year; however, I am concerned that procedural issues will unduly complicate the process due to COVID. For instance, I am anxious that letter writers or members in my tenure committee may be overwhelmed with managing the effects of the crisis and as a result may be unable to devote as much time as required to the process (which is completely justifiable).”

“I am in my fourth year. At this point I feel very certain I want to go up for tenure next year. I prefer that the tenure clock does not automatically get extended.”

“... reiterate the differing impact on faculty in different phases of their tenure clock. A theoretician or computationalist may not experience much of a change in operations. A year 2-3 experimentalist with a lab started up could potentially just resume experiments and hit the ground running.”

“I think it (request of 1-year exclusion) is great to have this option, especially if this drags on, or if we get a second wave. But as it stands, I don’t think I’ll need the exclusion.”

“My understanding is people whose work is less affected by the lockdown (e.g. theorists) may not want to have a tenure clock extension—but that was back then (the deadline of April 1 to make such decision) when no one knows how long the lockdown will be. Now given the larger impact it seems, blanket extension or giving another chance (to people who didn’t request for extension before April 1) may make more sense.”

In general terms, faculty who are in the 4th or 5th year on tenure track did not feel that a one-year extension would have an impact on their cases. Younger faculty members were more concerned that a one-year extension might not be sufficient. There was also a question about the April 1 deadline for requesting an extension. Professor Liu noted that a person would have had to have applied for the extension by April 1 to be eligible, that the tenure committee could decide whether or not to grant the request, and that it was unclear if requests would be approved. Professor Toyama said the April 1 deadline was not mentioned in AAAC, and may be a departmental rather than a university rule. Professor Potter said it makes no sense for departments to have an independent calendar for a process that is governed by university rules. Chair Conway said she

would ask Associate General Counsel and Special Counsel to the Provost Gerdes about the status of the April 1 deadline.

Professor Finlayson noted that faculty were turning in their annual reports on the UM-Dearborn campus and questions had arisen as to how faculty could list activities in connection with events (e.g. conferences) into which they had put effort only to find that the event had been cancelled. Chair Conway said there are similar problems with faculty reporting in the School of Music, Theater and Dance. Professor Gallo suggested that SACUA add this issue to a list of issues that could be brought up with Interim Provost Collins at a later date. Chair Conway said that at the present time she would only be making inquiries about the April 1 deadline.

4:00 Executive Session

[Police Oversight Committee]

[Topics for the forthcoming meeting with President Schlissel]

[Topics for the forthcoming meeting with Vice President for Research Cunningham]

4:34: Looking Ahead

Dr. Banasik said the SACUA retreat will be from 8-12 on August 5. Chair Conway said she would like to start generating a further list of topics for the meeting, which so far included discussions at which the Press is present, FOIA guidelines and committee updates. She said that the new Title IX should also be discussed. Dr. Banasik said that General Counsel Lynch has agreed to discuss Title IX with SACUA in executive session.

Professor Potter discussed the Faculty Judicial Committee saying that appointees to the committee should be experienced and have a diversity of backgrounds. He noted that the new committee is modelled on committees at many of the institutions that are participating in the Faculty Governance Colloquium, and that it might be useful to seek advice on the shaping of this committee from institutions that have similar groups.

Chair Conway said that SACUA will discuss the membership of the committee to examine the Press's finances and issues connected with Open Access at the May 18 meeting, and that she will meet with Dean of Libraries Hilton on May 19th.

Chair Conway asked SACUA to consider the draft of a resolution about the pay suspension process that would be circulated electronically before the May 18 meeting.

5:02 Adjournment

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 policies 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.”