

Draft Minutes 5 October 2020
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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA)
Monday, 28 September 3:15 pm
The meeting was held via Zoom because of the COVID-19 Shutdown

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

Absent:

Guests: Provost Susan Collins, Christine Gerdes, Special Counsel to the Provost, Amir Fleischmann, Graduate Employees' Organization (GEO) Secretary, Kaitlyn Luckoff (*The Michigan Daily*), Ann Zaniewski (*The University Record*)

3:16: Call to Order/ Approval of Minutes

Chair Conway called the meeting to order, and thanked Ms. Zaniewski for the *Record* article about the upcoming Regents Forum that will take place from 10-11:30 on October 9. Chair Conway added that she has sent invitations to Senate Assembly members and members of Senate Assembly committees asking for questions, that 53,000 people were included in the invitation to the Forum, and that the "chat" will be closed.

Chair Conway said SACUA will make its decisions on the membership of the COVID-19 Faculty Council on October 19. She asked SACUA members to be available past the usual meeting time on that day.

3:20: Faculty Senate Office and Chair Updates

Dr. Banasik said she is currently populating the Senate Assembly Electronic Meeting Rules Committee and consulting with representatives from Information Technology Services (ITS) and the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE), to develop rules for electronic Senate Assembly meetings.

Dr. Banasik said that SACUA office hours (or "open mike" so as not to give an undesirable impression of a power differential), will be announced at the next Senate Assembly meeting and be implemented in the near future, which will allow Senate Assembly members to reach out to SACUA on a regular basis. Chair Conway said that a number of Senate Assembly members have written to applaud the idea. She added that the invitation present nominations for the COVID-19 Faculty Council, which she, Dr. Banasik and Professor Dinov discussed earlier in the day with President Schlissel, will go out on October 9.

Chair Conway said questions have arisen about Bylaws for faculty governance at UM-Flint and that the Flint Faculty Council had indicated that it did not require assistance on the issue from SACUA. She has met with Professors Marsh and Finlayson to discuss the issue.

Chair Conway said the roster for the Committee on Anti-Racism is in development and that members of the Committee for Fairness, Equity and Inclusion (CFEI) have indicated they are interested in joining the committee.

Librarian Spencer has been elected as chair of the Library Ad hoc committee. Librarian Spencer said the Library ad hoc committee charge reflected cost of open access publishing to

STEM, but one committee member who had published a book with the University of Michigan Press had indicated that the University of Michigan Press had billed her for production costs that were atypical of Humanities publishing. The committee would also would like to address open access in the age of COVID. She said that representatives from the University of Michigan Press would like to meet with the committee at its next meeting.

Chair Conway said that work of staffing the ad hoc committee to review the WilmerHale committee is ongoing and that Professor Anderson from Sociology has agreed to serve. There are three nominations from Senate Assembly and the Faculty Senate Office is looking to recruit a member of the Law School faculty.

3:30: Provost Collins

Members of SACUA introduced themselves to Provost Collins, and Special Counsel Gerdes introduced herself to SACUA. Chair Conway said SACUA is particularly interested in discussing planning for the Winter Semester and the work of the COVID Advisory Committee.

Provost Collins said she is looking to find ways to work together with SACUA. Professor Toyama asked about the financial health of the University. Provost Collins responded that a number of steps have been taken to stabilize the financial situation, that the budget is balanced, and that some uncertainty has been eliminated. Key pieces of uncertainty had been the state appropriation, which will be unchanged for the present (this assumption was built into the original budget) and that enrolments, for which a small decline was projected, are on track to meet projections. Although things have stabilized for the Fall Semester, there is uncertainty about winter-term enrolments and, in the longer term, for the state appropriation. She said discussion of the budget will continue in future weeks.

Provost Collins said decisions about the Winter Semester will be made in early November. She noted that the University has completed week five of the Fall Semester and that leveraging experiences of the Fall Semester—with 22% of classes hybrid or in person—is an important component of the planning process. She said there are some programs that would be compromised if the University went fully remote.

Provost Collins said that faculty input will be a key factor in planning for the Winter Semester, and asked what questions should be asked of faculty. Professor Manera said that, given the fact that some peer institutions had gone the route of limiting the number of students on campus, the question is who does the University have back in the winter, and if there is thought about limiting the number of people who are coming back. Provost Collins said limiting the student population for the Winter Term is a possibility that has been, and will be, considered. She added that the Provost's office is consulting with Student Life. Data from Student Life indicates that most students stayed in town after in-person classes ended in the Winter Term of 2019/2020, and that it may be easier for the University to engage with students if the residence halls remain open. Provost Collins said there is no decision about appropriate density in residence halls.

Chair Conway said the timing of this issue is very important, and that faculty must have sufficient information upon which to base decisions about the way they will teach in the Winter Term. Provost Collins replied that she recognized this as an issue, and is working with deans on messaging to faculty. She noted that there is some "wiggle room" as students don't start registering until November 18.

Professor Ahbel-Rappe asked about community thresholds about the transmission of the virus in Ann Arbor that could result in a change of instructional planning. She observed that, nationally, the presence of college students is leading to a substantial growth in infection, and asked how the decision process for the Winter Term will differ from that for the Fall Term. Provost Collins said a number of groups with expertise on public health are focusing on these issues, that information about the spread on campus and in the broader community is very

important with respect to the decision making, and that public health will dictate what happens. She added that she would like to reframe this issue, exploring the possibility that if there are no students in residence halls, and all instruction is remote, that the situation in Ann Arbor would be very different from the situation at present. Her sense is that this would not be the case: if no students are in residence halls and instruction is remote, there will still be a substantial number of students in Ann Arbor meaning that the distinction between being “open” and “remote” is much smaller than is often suggested.

Professor Ahbel-Rappe, said that, considering the behavior of fraternities, she finds it incredible to imagine that it would not make a difference if those students were not in town. Provost Collins replied that most of the students who are in the Greek system would be in Ann Arbor anyway.

Professor Finlayson said there has been wide-spread faculty concern about the metrics the University is using to evaluate the safety of the community. She said that it was unclear why there would not be a difference if the residence halls were closed. Provost Collins replied that in the summer most students are not taking spring/summer classes, hence the population was lower. Conversely the significant majority of students have said they had signed leases for the Fall and Winter terms with the result that, if the University had no students in residence halls, the vast majority of students would be in town, and that most students who would have been in residence halls, would be staying with friends in Ann Arbor. The University would still be responsible for the behavior for these students, and the fact that residence halls are open makes it possible to sponsor more programming to help better manage off-campus students, that having students in a more controlled environment on campus is a positive, meaning the trade-offs between remote and in-person instruction may be quite different to the way they are portrayed.

Professor Finlayson said child care is problematic for many faculty members, that there has been very little information about the possibility of supplemental childcare, and that Ann Arbor Public Schools (AAPS) cited the University’s opening as the reason it is not holding in-person classes. Given that many faculty members will have children at home during the winter, they are constantly concerned about getting through the year without any childcare assistance.

Provost Collins said that she is concerned about child care as a significant, multi-dimensional issue. But she is also uncertain about what can be done effectively and at scale. In the case of junior faculty on tenure track, it might be helpful to stop the tenure clock, but that would not address the issue for staff members. She said it was not clear what might change the behavior of AAPS.

Professor Manera said that extrapolation from the experience of Winter Term 2019/20 for 2020/2021 might be inaccurate because, in March 2020, the students who stayed in town, were doing just that, staying, rather than moving back.

Chair Conway said that, in staffing the COVID council, SACUA is looking to have six spots for members of the Lecturers’ Employee Organization (LEO), archivist/librarians, and clinical faculty members (two from each group) and ten spots for tenure track faculty. Provost Collins expressed a desire for the group to represent diversity along many different dimensions to provide input reflecting the breadth of experience across campus.

Chair Conway said SACUA will be making up a sub group to work with Provost Collins’ office on a survey of faculty views about the winter term.

Provost Collins thanked SACUA for its work.

Chair Conway asked that SACUA members who are interested in working on the survey should let her know by noon on October 7.

4:01: Amir Fleischmann

Mr. Fleischmann, third year graduate student in political science who is the secretary of the Graduate Employees' Organization (GEO), joined the meeting. He said he wished to thank faculty who participated in the GEO strike.

Mr. Fleischmann said GEO is strong and energized after the strike, through which progress was made on a number of issues. But, he said, he did not think that was sufficient as there remain innumerable problems connected with health and safety—that some undergraduates, for instance, are afraid to get COVID tests because of housing fears—and that there is a troubling lack of transparency about university connections with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). He said that GEO's good faith efforts to engage with the administration had been ignored and he regretted the University's decision to rely on labor laws to end the strike. In his view the university is focused on protecting the endowment rather than the community's health and safety. He said the University's administrators are disconnected from the University community and that the strike was the beginning of an effort to "take back" the University for students, faculty and staff. He noted the Faculty no-confidence vote in President Schlissel on September 16, and the success of the motion urging greater consultation between the administration and the faculty. He urged the faculty to act against the Regents, and to organize in support of possible future job actions, noting that LEO will be negotiating its contract in the winter term.

Professor Dinov said that faculty, students and staff agree about the need to work together.

Professor Ahbel-Rappe asked Mr. Fleishmann what faculty could do to help graduate students, drawing attention to conversations with the Rackham Graduate School to extend funding in the face of the collapse of the academic job market stemming from the COVID outbreak. Mr. Fleischmann replied that tenure track faculty should engage with the all-campus Labor Council and think about withholding their labor.

Librarian Spencer asked if GEO favored a Green Party candidate for regent. Mr. Fleischmann said he thought that a Green party candidate would be preferable to regent Bernstein.

4:16: Executive Session

5:09: 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.”