

Draft Minutes 29 March 2021

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA)
Monday, 29 March 2021 3:15 pm
The meeting was held via Zoom because of the COVID-19 Shutdown

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

Absent:

Guests: Vice President Harmon, Vice President Kolb, Professor Cervetti, Professor McComas, Professor Richstone, Librarian Rivera, Vanita Seed, *The Michigan Daily*, Ann Zaniewski, *The University Record*

3:15: Call to Order/Approval of the Minutes/Approval of the Agenda

Chair Conway called the meeting to order. The minutes from March 22, 2021 were approved.

3:20: Faculty Senate Office and SACUA Chair Updates

Chair Conway drew SACUA's attention to the Standard Operating Procedures for electing a SACUA chair and Vice Chair. She asked candidates for Chair and Vice Chair to declare their intention on April 5 for the election on April 12. Results will be announced in SACUA on April 12th and shared at the April 19 Senate Assembly meeting.

Chair Conway said SACUA will develop questions for future guests Vice President for Research Cunningham, Athletic Director Manuel and Dean of Libraries Hilton at the end of the meeting.

Chair Conway said new SACUA members are invited to begin joining SACUA meetings on April 5. They will not be voting members until May. Dr. Banasik said the orientation for new SACUA members will take place on March 31 and that the new SACUA handbook is ready.

3:25: SACUA Committee Nominations Standard Operating Procedure

Chair Conway introduced the revised Standard Operating Procedure for nominations to University committees. The text is as follows:

Periodically in the year SACUA is asked by Administration to suggest faculty for consideration on University or Unit level committees, working groups, task forces, etc. Given that these requests are often sought on short timelines these standard operating procedures outline the most expeditious process that includes SACUA contact to potential candidates. The entire process will be handled via email. The process will take a minimum of 4 days.

1. The SACUA Chair will contact SACUA as well as appropriate Senate Assembly members to ask for suggestions for said committee. (Day 1)

2.The FSO Director or the SACUA Chair will contact suggested faculty to ask if they are willing to have their name put forth for consideration.(Day 2)

3.The FSO office will share the list of willing faculty to SACUA with an Electronic Voting survey to rank the candidates.(Day 3)

4.The ranked list will be returned by the FSO Director or SACUA Chair to the Administrator asking for suggestions.(Day 4)

In the event that a shorter timeline must be followed, the procedure could be cut by two days if the candidates are not contacted and if SACUA does not vote to rank the candidates. However, it is important to consider that it is typical to contact 3-4 faculty before finding one who is available to serve. In addition, if SACUA has not had a chance to consider and rank the candidates, then the list would not be a “SACUA Nomination” but merely a list of names suggested by some members of SACUA.

Chair Conway will send the document to Provost Collins and Special Counsel Gerdes. Professor Potter suggested that the document also be sent to President Schlissel.

Professor Dinov raised the issue of the process for finding a new Senate Secretary as Professor Potter’s term is ending. Chair Conway said the process will begin on April 12. Professor Toyama asked who would be eligible? Dr. Banasik replied that any Faculty Senate member (including retirees) is eligible. Chair Conway said that SACUA should aim to present a name to the Faculty Senate meeting in the Fall term. Dr. Banasik noted that SACUA could appoint an interim who would serve if a quorum was not obtained for a Faculty Senate meeting.

3:30: Vice President Harmon and Professor Cervetti, Chair of the Student Affairs Advisory Committee (SRAC)

Chair Conway invited Vice President Harmon to provide an overview of the activities of the Office of Student Life in the past academic year. Vice Harmon thanked Professor Cervetti for her work with SRAC, and said he will begin his ninth month in his position on April 1.

Vice President Harmon said he has spent twenty-six years in higher education administration, mostly with the University of Toledo, though he also worked at Cincinnati State Community College, was Dean of student development at Rhodes State College and Dean of admission, retention and student life at Washtenaw Community College, before moving to Iowa State University in 2010; he became Vice President for Student Affairs at Iowa State in 2016.

Vice President Harmon said his goal for the Fall Semester of 2021 is to get back to a residential experience that is as close to normal as possible, though there will be safety measures in place (masking and testing), and housing will be filled to 77-80% capacity. This scenario is based on the expectation that 50% of students wishing to live in university housing will have been vaccinated. This is the middle scenario presented by the University’s public health experts. In keeping with that scenario, the University will need to hold space for quarantine and isolation, and need to have more single occupancy rooms than normal because students may not want to have a roommate who is not vaccinated. Housing capacity will expand if a higher percentage of students is vaccinated. Working with this scenario will accommodate first year students who want to live in University housing (a number estimated at between 6,700-6,800 of the roughly 7,000 who will enroll).

Vice President Harmon said that with a higher level of vaccination, there will be dine-in options as well as meals to go. There will also be more opportunities for student organizations to meet in person. It is his intention to maximize safe in-person activities to build community with new and returning students while providing hybrid experiences for student who want it.

Vice President Harmon said that students who responded to a survey in the fall term indicated they were feeling lonely, isolated, and exhausted from online learning, suggesting that Student Affairs needed to do something to increase student engagement. To that end he established a task force lead by Will Sherry, Director of the Spectrum Center (<https://spectrumcenter.umich.edu/profile/will-sherry>) to explore ways in which students could make better connections. The task force developed the Find Community page (www.studentlife.umich.edu/find-community) which includes a “resource navigator” to help students make connections. He noted that there is still work do be done as a majority of students are unaware of the available resources, and said he will engage with SRAC to develop information for students

Vice President Harmon said Student Life has concentrated on engaging students in connection with their mental health, and promoting a range of support for students. He drew attention to the Faculty Toolkit which offers advice to faculty on creating a classroom/lab/studio environment that is supportive of student mental health, and tips on how to identify and help a student who may be struggling with their mental health (<https://caps.umich.edu/article/faculty-toolkit-0>). He also drew attention to the faculty and staff town hall at noon on April 1, hosted by the Student Mental Health Innovative Approaches Review Committee, which is committee staffed by his office and that of the Provost (<https://record.umich.edu/articles/committee-seeks-input-on-improving-student-mental-health/>).

Vice President Harmon said Student Life is looking to leverage strategies from Winter Term 2021 to enhance student experience in Fall Term 2021. Acknowledging the difficult experience students have had in 2020/2021, Student Life is looking to get students engaged, and will work with second year students so they can experience traditions they did not participate in this year. He said there are concerns about the number of returning students who want to live on campus (600-700 will be housed but the demand may be higher than that), and, in the event of a shortage of space, priority would be given on the basis of need. Priorities include safety, financial concerns, and connection to a learning community.

Professor Cervetti said that it has been a challenging year, but that she is excited about the work around mental health.

Professor Liu asked if there were metrics to measure the increase in student contact with mental health support. Vice President Harmon replied that at one point there was a 30% increase in calls for services around mental health in Fall 2020 as compared to a normal year. He added that Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS)(<https://caps.umich.edu/>) offers a variety of services beyond one-on-one counselling, which can reduce the need for in-person appointments, and that recreation is a form of support for mental wellbeing.

Chair Conway asked if there were steps faculty governance could take to assist Student Life. Professor Cervetti said it is important to think beyond the pandemic, noting challenges around traumas that the country has experienced (e.g. anti-Black and anti-Asian violence), none of which are lost on our students, and need to be faced when creating a cohesive community in Fall 2021. Vice President Harmon agreed that the more faculty and Student Life can work together to address the traumas Professor Cervetti mentioned, to address them not as “Student Life issues” or “faculty issues,” the better the University community will be able to address the multiple challenges that it faced in academic year 2020/2021. Chair Conway suggested the Committee on Anti-Racism (CAR) work with SRAC. Professor Cervetti replied that SRAC was looking at ways to deepen connections between academic and student life.

Dr. Banasik said SACUA had received inquiries about academic integrity, and asked if this was an issue for Student Life. Vice President Harmon said he couldn’t articulate major initiatives around the issue though he noted that the Office of Student Conflict Resolution (OSCR) (<https://oscr.umich.edu/>) has seen an uptick in issues around academic integrity, and that it might be a topic for SRAC next year. Librarian Spencer said CAR is looking at faculty

interactions with students because faculty serve as role models for students, and drew attention to library resources. Vice President Harmon replied that he had not had the opportunity to engage with the library.

Chair Conway told Vice President Harmon that he is always welcome to bring issues to SACUA.

4:00: Vice President Kolb, Librarian Rivera, Chair Government Relations Advisory Committee (GRAC)

Ms. Rivera said GRAC has focused getting to know Vice President Kolb. Vice President Kolb said he has strong connections to the University, where his parents met, that he was born at University hospital, and grew up in Ann Arbor. He said he had served on Ann Arbor City Council before he was elected to the Michigan House of Representatives where he served three two-year terms. He had then headed the Michigan Environmental Council (<https://www.crainsdetroit.com/article/20081215/FREE/812150271/ex-state-representative-to-lead-michigan-environmental-council>) for ten years before serving as Governor Whitmer's budget director for two years. He said he has spent the last two months meeting people, working with the state legislature on the budget, with local government on COVID issues, and starting to work on the University's connection to Detroit. He is learning how his office interacts with other parts of the university. He added that he had known former Vice President Wilbanks since he was on Ann Arbor City Council, and that she was always a person he often checked in with.

Chair Conway asked if Vice President Kolb could say more about his interactions with different governmental bodies. Vice President Kolb said his office oversees all university interactions with governments from the federal to local level, and with other state universities as well as the Big Ten. He noted that it is difficult for a single entity to get attention in Washington DC, making it important to be part of a coalition. He added that this is also true at the state level. Issues with over which the University interacts with the federal government include research spending, immigration and intellectual property.

Professor Potter asked about interactions with the Washtenaw County Health Department. Vice President Kolb said the University has weekly meetings with the County Health Department and that the county was concerned about the spread of the B117 COVID-19 variant. He added that Michigan's public health structure is a hybrid in which power is shared between the state department and the local public health agencies (other states have a state department or a county health department). He said the University often works the Jimena Loveluck Director of the Public Health Department, whom he has known for several decades, to address issues, and that the University can have a big impact on the community as health issues spread rapidly between the campus and the community.

Professor Gallo asked Vice President Kolb what his three biggest challenges other than COVID will be? Vice President Kolb said the current pandemic will not be the last, and that it was important to be prepared for climate-related issues. The lack of preparation for the COVID pandemic revealed what could happen when there was no procedure to handle crises. His other three priorities are, firstly, the decline in support for higher education at the state and federal levels, and the need to address perception that higher education is luxury, elite and detached from communities. There is a need to come up with a way to communicate benefits of higher education more effectively. He noted that, in the context of early childhood education, advocates stressed the return on investment, using economists and others to amplify the messaging. He saw this approach work in the Michigan Legislature in 2007/8, with the result that there was bipartisan support for new funding for early childhood education. There is a need to discover the right frame and the right messengers for investment in higher education. The second priority is to

communicate the positive impact the University has on people's lives; when the University matters to the state's residents then it will matter to the people who represent them.

Chair Conway asked about the public comments made by Regent Weiser (<https://www.freep.com/story/news/education/2021/03/26/u-m-regents-ron-weiser-witches-comments/7018280002/>). Vice President Kolb said people are all aware of comments made by the chair of the State Republican party, who is also a regent. He will let the statements by the president and other regents speak for themselves (<https://publicaffairs.vpcomm.umich.edu/statements-regarding-u-m-regent-comments/>). He said that all people who represent the University know their words will have impact and know they need to be careful. Regent Weiser's comments do not represent the values of the University of Michigan. He noted that while there are brands, it important to be careful about what one says. The impact in this case is not positive. Regent Weiser had apologized and acknowledged the impact of his statements, but he always knew that he could not say whatever he thought. Vice President Kolb said he knows he needs to be careful to make sure that what he says in the press is something he would be proud of.

Chair Conway invited Vice President Kolb to call on SACUA when he needed faculty input.

4:20: Professor Richstone, Chair, Financial Affairs Advisory Committee (FAAC)

Chair Conway introduced Professor Richstone. Professor Richstone said the search for the new Vice President for Financial Affairs is going well, but he cannot provide further information about it.

The committee opened the year by having a discussion with then Vice President for Financial Affairs Hegarty about issues the committee wanted to discuss, and to ensure sure that Business and Finance could use the committee as a sounding board. The result of that conversation has been a very good working relationship. The issues the committee has discussed included the University's general investment strategy (25% of activities), questions relating to personnel matters in general, and, in particular, extensive discussion in the context of the WilmerHale report about how to improve hiring, keeping track of information, and avoiding problematic hires. The expectation is that there will be communication with units about hiring faculty.

Professor Richstone said the office of the Vice President for Finance is looking at what can be learned from the period of the pandemic to create better practices for the future, to determine what services can be provided remotely, and who faculty need to have at hand for support purposes. Professor Richstone said this provoked vigorous response from the committee, because faculty does not like teaching online, have low confidence in evaluation in distance learning situations, and misses personal contact. The office of the Vice President understands that the faculty want to be back in their offices, but is still interested in determining what staff can be off campus (it will help to manage parking better if there are fewer people who need to be on campus) and creating more flexibility for employees without reducing the services they provide for faculty.

Chair Conway noted that 2020/2021 is the first year in which the former committee on buildings and facilities was merged with FAAC, and asked if this was a reasonable pairing. Professor Richstone replied that it might be good for FAAC to have a sub-committee to discuss facilities. He said discussions of facilities were neglected this year, but that FAAC will be more interested in the subject next year.

Professor Marsh asked Professor Richstone to give SACUA a sense for the post-COVID status of the University, and if there will be a system of working remotely. Professor Richstone replied that FAAC is working with Krista Farmer (<https://lsa.umich.edu/lsa/faculty-staff/office->

[of-the-dean/dean-s-office-directory/budget-and-finance-staff/kfarmer.html](#)), who is chairing a committee, that currently is reviewing 100 recommendations. It is anticipated that there will be reduced local support in the future, and that the remote support will cover the gap. He noted that the committee is skeptical that this will work well, but he also observed that the current Business and Finance office transformed Shared Services from a disaster to something that worked. Professor Richstone said that he was tremendously heartened to learn that Vice President Hegarty did not need to take out the billion-dollar loan that he took out, and that the University's overall financial situation is good. Professor Dinov agreed with this assessment.

4:30 Professor McComas, Chair, Committee on the Economic Status and Well-Being of the Faculty (CESWF)

Chair Conway introduced Professor McComas.

Professor McComas said this is her third year as chair of CESWF; in the first two years there were, she noted, some roadblocks top the committee's work, then the pandemic hit. This year, CESWF launched a comprehensive survey of all faculty (including lecturers) on all three campuses to which there were over 3000 responses (95 from Dearborn, 70 from Flint). The committee is currently in data analysis phase, and, given the approaching end of term will possibly need an extension for the committee report given the amount of information. The report will include financial data comparing the University with peer institution, look at what went well and what departments can do to help faculty better—where did faculty have support and where they need more support?

Chair Conway asked Dr. Banasik if there was a way that the Faculty Senate Office could assist with data analysis. Professor McComas said that at the present time, one faculty member (Professor Kabo) is doing everything on his own. She noted that the response to the survey from Medical School was overwhelming, and that the Medical School's faculty's issues are different from those other faculty. Chair Conway said that even if the report is not ready on May 10th, Professor McComas should feel free to offer an outline of the committee's activity.

4:41: Future Meeting Planning

Executive Session

5:07: 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 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.”