

Committee Report

To: Colleen Conway, Immediate Past Chair, SACUA, 2020-2021

From: Gina Cervetti, Students Relations Advisory Committee (SRAC)

Subject: Report on Activities of Students Relations Advisory Committee (SRAC) for 2020-2021

Members: Gina Cervetti, Harish Ganesh, Helen Look, Jeannie Moody-Novak, Judith Beck, Mariah Fiumara, Yaacov Ritov, Amanda Peters, Kentaro Toyama (SACUA Liaison), Jill Esau, Cindy Leung, Dunham Clark, Noah Zimmerman, Vincent Alessi, Charlie Koopman

Meeting Dates:

| <u>2020</u> | <u>2021</u> |
|-------------|-------------|
| Sept. 25 | Jan. 22 |
| Oct. 23 | Feb. 26 |
| Nov. 20 | Mar. 26 |
| | Apr. 16 |

The topics of focus for the year included:

Covid-19 Pandemic: SRAC consulted with Student Life staff on many issues related to the pandemic. These included the following:

SRAC members consulted with Martino Harmon, Vice President for Student Life, and Jennifer Schrage, Interim Associate Vice President for Student Life, on a variety of plans and programs related to the Covid-19 pandemic, including the University of Michigan’s COVID testing program for students, the monitoring of social activities in and around campus, and quarantine housing.

SRAC members were particularly interested in efforts designed to combat isolation and disruption by helping students develop connections to the university, access resource, and develop supportive peer groups during the pandemic year. In the fall, a survey of student revealed high levels of concern about mental health, isolation, and loneliness among students at all levels. SRAC subsequently consulted with Will Sherry (Project Lead manager, Student Life about plans for strengthening student engagement in the winter term, building on the Thriving in the First Year Initiative. In spring, members of SRAC also consulted with Dean Solomon of Rackham Graduate School about Rackham initiatives related to academic disruption, health, and wellbeing during the pandemic.

Throughout the year, SRAC received reports regarding COVID-related initiatives, including a presentation from Rob Ernst (Executive Director of University Health Service; Associate Vice President of Student Life for Health and Wellness) about the mandatory COVID testing program.

Toward the end of the year, we consulted with Dr. Harmon and other Student Life staff about emerging plans and needs for a successful re-entry to the more residential campus experience in the fall.

National Elections: The SRAC consulted with Mary Jo Callan (Student Life Strategic Partnerships Lead and Director of the Ginsberg Center) in the lead up to the 2020 election. Topics included the challenge of misinformation and campus efforts to provide accurate and timely information; awareness of the potential for civil unrest and campus safety; emotional and mental health; and voting engagement.

Wellbeing and Harm Reduction: The SRAC consulted with Dr. Harmon, Ms. Schrage, and other Student Life staff as they initiated plans for a new mental health and wellness program using a comprehensive, prevention- and intervention-focused approach. The series of discussions across the year included a meeting with the Student Life Student Health and Well-Being Collective Impact Leads Mary Jo Desprez (Director of Wolverine Wellness), Todd Sevig (Director of Counseling and Psychological Services), Lisa Shea (Associate Director of Rec Sports – Programs), and Divya Manikandan (Vice-Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, LSA Student Government). The discussion focused on available resources and gaps that need attention. In spring, we also consulted with the UM Student Mental Health Committee team on their recommendations for a mental health and wellness plan.

LSA Revision to the OSSD Syllabus Statement: The SRAC worked with LSA student government leadership on their development of a proposed revision to the OSSD syllabus statement regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. The revisions were intended to be more welcoming to students, to portray faculty as a partner in identifying accommodations, and to provide greater flexibility to students in terms of when they approach faculty about the need for accommodations. Following our conversation, which resulted in small revisions, the SRAC voted to endorse the revised statement.

Addressing the Needs of Underrepresented Students: Students as Caregivers: Continuing the SRAC's commitment to shining a spotlight on students who may have unmet needs, we consulted with Nicole Banks (Associate Dean of Students) regarding programs and resources for students who serve as caregivers to family members as they study at University of Michigan.