

**UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
STUDENT RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

Circulated: October 23, 2020  
Approved: October 23, 2020

**Friday, September 25, 2020  
1:00 PM - 2:15 PM  
Virtual via Zoom**

**Invited:** Gina Cervetti, Harish Ganesh, Helen Look, Jeannie Moody-Novak, Judith Beck, Mariah Fiumara, Yaacov Ritov, Amanda Peters, Kentaro Toyama, Jill Esau, Cindy Leung, Dunham Clark, MaryJo Banasik, Noah Zimmerman, Vincent Alessi, Jennifer Schrage, Martino Harmon, Charlie Koopman

**Administrative:** Robyn Snyder, Pam Morris

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**1. Call to Order/Welcome/Intro to the Year/Introduction of new VPSL**

Chair Cervetti called the meeting to order. She welcomed the committee and thanked them for their work and commitment, commenting that the purpose of the committee and diverse membership is to bring perspectives from our students to Student Life. Chair Cervetti invited the membership to [view last year's work on the SACUA website](#) and asked the committee how we can continue to work with Student Life.

**2. Group Introductions**

Welcome to new members and welcome back to our returning members.

**3. Dr. Martino Harmon, VPSL Introduction & Background/Overview of SL Core Work and 2020 Priorities/Updates on SL Pending Issues**

Dr. Harmon thanked the committee for their commitment to membership and their work going forward. He introduced himself and spoke about his experiences and career regarding, in part, work with student success programs, financial aid, academic success and health and wellness initiatives.

Jennifer Schrage, J.D., Interim AVP for Student Life spoke regarding Student Life's core work and priorities. She spoke about the role of Student Life in terms of offering broad and various student support. This support includes both housing and dining, but also supports identity-based units including MESA, Spectrum Center and Trotter. [Link to Student Life Mission and Core Work.](#)

Dr. Harmon continued to discuss the strategic priorities and commented that the core work spans the entire student experience. He outlined the newly evaluated and updated Student Life 2022 Strategic Priorities and Goals that includes the following examples:

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1. DEI through partnership, assessment and engagement
2. Wellbeing and Harm Reduction including the supporting the Wolverine Culture of Care by positive role modeling, expectations and accountability
3. Adaptable Talent Management – asking staff and units to be nimble/flexible – cross-train staff and provide a safe workplace including contingency plans
4. Understanding, Demonstrating and Improving Impact through informative assessment of programs/events/workshops/etc.
5. Integrative Partnerships for Synergy including collaboration with units, offices, schools and colleges to cultivate and maintain high-impact partnerships

Dr. Harmon discussed COVID-19 testing and commented based on other institutions we are, so far, doing well, but warned not to get comfortable in that status. We must all realize that it can change at any time. Continue to monitor and research hot spots including FSL, football games, and students tending to gathering inside when it's getting colder. Dr. Harmon also updated on the RA's recent work stoppage commenting that much of the contention came from fear of being on the frontlines. Student Life is responding to demands and concerns regarding the fear and putting together an action plan to address the demands.

Quarantine/Isolation housing – Dr. Harmon commented that they lost consistency as demands for assistance ramped up. They changed their approach to more of a hotel mentality by providing personal necessities and microwaves to students that moved to quarantine housing. In addition, housing is looking to hire 2 case managers to work between housing and students when students need to go into quarantine/isolation housing. They have also added a dedicated phone line for students to call 24/7 for support.

Wolverine Culture of Care – Dr. Harmon explained that the Michigan Ambassador's program served its purpose in the first couple of weeks to educate and encourage others to practice the appropriate safety measures. Also launched, is a dedicated COVID-19 phone line to be used by the campus community and Ann Arbor residents to report non-emergency compliance issues. Students were also asked to opt-in to a voluntary address registry so they can receive updates from and ambassador giving them the opportunity to address the situation.

Dr. Harmon also mention that they are monitoring the general campus climate with growing concerns regarding upcoming elections and civil unrest. Mary Jo Callan and Will Sherry are focusing on the democratic process through programming from the Ginsberg Center.

Mental health and wellness is an on-going focus, but the solution is not more counselors – won't fix the problem, Dr. Harmon stated. There needs to be a broader approach to prevent students from needing one-on-one counseling. There must be more work in a

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preventative way. Opening the Rec Centers to assist in stress reduction is one way, but we must think holistically.

**4. Discuss SRAC Priorities for 20/21 Academic Year**

Chair Cervetti invited the SACUA Liaison Kentaro Toyama to share the priorities for SRAC. Given 3 high level charges from SACUA.

1. Mental health needs
2. COVID related issues including financial, personal and family
3. Maintain collaborative relationships

Chair Cervetti opened to floor to collect ideas on where SRAC should focus for the 20/21 year should be. Suggestions included:

- Challenges in mental health due to lack of peer support groups. Students are finding each other themselves without university support.
- Program to identify and support students with health issues.
- Cultural sensitivities focused through CAPS – xenophobia/international students/Asian student support
- Faculty are first line/safe for students, but are not usually equipped/prepared to help other than providing a referral. Provide faculty with training and strategies about equipping faculty to be that supportive first line for students.
- Conservative students are feeling less than – not feeling respected in class/by other students/professors
- Administration dealing with the big parties – No tailgates, but not able to police inside parties, encourage peers to “do the right thing” i.e. accountability for both individuals and groups. Relying on students to help.
- Ginsberg Center – how to have difficult conversations – advance trainings for faculty
- Students looking for more experiential opportunities in a safe environment
- What does SL want from SRAC? – Focus on SL core work in offerings and to strengthen the partnership
- Might want to think about our work from the health and wellbeing lens as it is a running theme
- When prompted to hear from our student members, Noah agreed that providing resources to faculty to be better prepared to be the first line for students is very welcomed
- Focus on some social interactions as many students are lonely

**5. Adjournment**

Mariah Fiumara made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kentaro Toyama seconded. All in favor.