

Government Relations Advisory Committee (GRAC)

Minutes of November 10, 2020

Present: Alexandra Rivera (Chair), , Marisa Conte, Justin Hodge, Vincent Glud, Renee Nguyen, Michael Thompson, , Kara Charbarneau, John Mansfield, Daniil Manaenkov, Cynthia Wilbanks, Andrea Lewis, MaryJo Banasik

Absent: Anna Ceballos, Erin Kahle, Morgan Beeler, Sara Ahbel-Rappe

1:02: Chair Rivera called the meeting to order.

Chair Rivera asked if there were any additions to the agenda. There were none. Chair Rivera reviewed the agenda. She noted that more emphasis would be spent on the federal budget because the state budget has already been discussed.

1:05: Chair Rivera requested that members review the minutes for the September 15 and October 13 meetings, and to let her know by next Monday if there are any changes. If she does not receive any changes, the minutes will be approved.

1:05 Budget Updates

Vice President Wilbanks noted that now that the election is over, attention will turn back to the lame duck session of Congress. Many are expecting a renewed effort on a CARES Package III or a Stimulus 3. It is not clear if Congress will take this up before the end of November, or in December. The rest of the federal budget is likely to be wrapped into a continuing resolution into next year. The federal fiscal year begins October 1, so federal spending could just continue under a resolution.

There could be influence depending on the make-up of Senate and the new administration. Congress will not be around toward the Thanksgiving holiday, so impacts are not clear yet.

Vice President Wilbanks suggested that she could get a status update from the AAU to share.

Professor Manaenkov discussed the status of the economy. He expressed slight optimism about the economy. He predicted that a slow down in growth is likely, but probably not a sharp contraction. This hinges on not having a stay at home order in populous areas, which would be most likely to occur in first quarter of 2021.

Focus points in the federal budget will likely include assistance to state government and specific requests in higher education related to research. Assistance related to healthcare and PPE will have priority.

Full impacts are most likely to be seen in the 2nd through 4th quarters of 2021.

Professor Manaenkov is going to a conference next week and they will do the national

forecast and the Michigan budget forecasts. This conference generates a widely cited report across the United States.

Vice President Wilbanks stated that there was a flat budget recommendation from the State for FY 20-21. Some constraints are expected for FY 21-22. Proposals are already coming in for the 21-22 budget. Expected expenditures are underway for a budget the governor would present in the first week in February. A month prior to this, the revenue estimating conference will be held where predictions will be made about revenues for FY 21 and FY22.

1:17 VPGR Search Update

Interim update – the search process is nearing the end. Vice President Wilbanks anticipates that the search process will conclude with a recommendation that the Regents may vote on in their December meeting. The search process has moved to individual opportunities for executive leaders to interview the finalists. Vice President Wilbanks is cautiously optimistic that come January someone will be filling the role. She appreciated meeting the prospective candidates. She expressed feeling fortunate about being able to serve in this role. She expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work in her position. She has let candidates know that they will have regular opportunities to engage with faculty through GRAC.

After a final candidate is selected and announced, Vice President Wilbanks expressed that her office can send background information and a report on the final candidate to the committee.

A committee member inquired about Vice President Wilbanks' continuing involvement with the University after her retirement. Vice President Wilbanks indicated that she is looking forward to enjoying a slower pace. However, she expects to remain in the area for a while, and she is willing to offer support and guidance if requested by her replacement. This will be up to the new Vice President, but she is open to playing an advisory role if desired.

1:25 Election results

Vice President Wilbanks gave insights to the group about recent election results. The election results have been stated at the national level, though some are reluctant to agree. This is creating a lot of initial work. Much work is expected when a transition is taking place, but there is not currently cooperation. Vice President Wilbanks has confidence that President-Elect Biden is an experienced member of government. Transition teams will be announced soon as well as specific tasks. There is a set of issues that needs to be addressed before inauguration. Georgia is having a run-off. The race will determine who will hold the majority in the Senate. The House of Representatives have had a modest shift. The State of Michigan congressional delegation has also had some minor changes.

Vice President Wilbanks indicated that after state elections, the state remains 58 52 Republican. State house democrats were not successful in flipping the house. Donna Lesinski (Ann Arbor) would have been the majority leader if the democrats had taken the house. This outcome was not predicted. The State Senate was not up for election so that remains in Republican hands. The more immediate item is to find common ground

with the governor. The governor's executive powers were determined to not be constitutional.

Longer term – census – will be certified and will become the basis for activities that will unfold across the country to redraw congressional districts. This will begin next spring. In Michigan the task of proposing new districts is being handled by the Michigan Redistricting Commission, an appointed board from applicants who requested to participate.

Legislators in the majority have largely had a lot of influence on drawing this lines, but this year it will be the Redistricting Commission. This lies ahead for the 2022 elections.

A question was asked whether any other locality other than Detroit is challenging census counts. There were some concerns in more urban areas Detroit/Wayne County and some communities on the west side of the state with a large immigrant population. Concerns were that people were afraid to complete a census form that could be referenced in immigration cases, for example.

In some areas of the state where there are many refugees there is a fear of refugees to complete the census. It was noted that language barriers can also interfere with the ability of people to complete the census. People also rely on each other for information.

The census impacts resources that come into the community.

Vice President Wilbanks congratulated Justin Hodge as winner of District 5 Commissioner. She noted that UM has had many interactions with county offices, which has been very helpful. She appreciates greatly collaboration with county offices including the Board of Health and others.

Jason Wentworth is the new majority leader. Vice President Wilbanks will be touching base with him next week to express interest in working together in support of higher education. Wentworth is term-limited and this is his final year.

2022 will be a consequential election. Redistricting will apply to the House and Senate. It is anticipated that MI will lose one representative due to a population shift in Michigan.

1:52 Winter Semester Updates

The fall has been challenging. There was a great deal of anticipation for fall semester that was announced in the summer. There weren't as many challenges at that time as what presented later. There was a lot of discussion and deliberation with what worked well, what didn't work as well as hoped, and what didn't work.

The general environment of the pandemic regionally, statewide, and nationally was considered when making the decision for winter semester. There was a lot of engagement, which was handled somewhat differently than fall semester.

The administration is currently waiting to hear how many students will request to stay in the residence halls. The count is about 6400 in fall semester, and this is expected to drop by half. This decision was deliberately considered based on public health guidance and the winter months. There is a diverse set of reactions to these plans. Some people

are quite unhappy with de-densifying the residence halls.

The rationale was laid out in the COVID-19 update. A pre-departure set of protocols are in place including testing for students in the residence halls. The next 10 days before students return are important to manage spread. Messages over the next several weeks will focus on this. Testing protocols are greatly ramped up for winter semester. Surveillance testing will continue but additional mandatory testing will be implemented starting in winter semester.

The majority of students who moved into the residence halls are freshmen. This happened after these students missed opportunities in high school. Parent are disappointed that their students will not be having the experience they had hoped for.

A European college residence model was discussed where students due not reside in a small space with a stranger. It was noted that it was possible to provide space for students outside, but this will not be possible in winter. Students are feeling a sense of loss. Housing contracts will end. People have not been billed for Winter semester. There will be new contracts from January to April.

A member stated that young people will remember the restrictions that are being put on them. A comparison was made to solitary confinement. The hope is that mental health professionals were consulted in making the decision.

A member stated that in the beginning of the pandemic, more students were disappointed by how much of their programs were on line, and now people are happy that their courses were moved online. Graduate students in social work are happy with this change.

There is a diverse reaction among schools and colleges. There are pockets where the experience hasn't been as challenging.

The situation is so unprecedented. At the heart our approach needs to be the extent to which we can message the right key points. Social isolation is a very serious conversation among student life professionals. They are looking to support students who are isolated on campus. This also includes social isolation brought about by going home.

A member stated that there is a possibility that viruses will happen more frequently, so there is a need to know how to manage this kind of event going forward. With the speed of travel and human and animal interactions this is likely to happen. There was a question about whether we will be able to handle this any differently in the future.

At the next meeting the group will touch base on where we are. None of the decisions that were made felt easy, and they have enormous consequences for the university and beyond. They tried to consider all the inputs and decisions were made based on this.

A question was asked about what is known about university's planning scenarios. The national strategy for distribution for vaccine is in order of need, and distribution decisions will go through almost all of next year. The initial distribution will likely be in the order of vulnerable populations, first responders, and then healthcare workers. Vaccine requires two doses delivered three weeks apart (Pfizer vaccine). The Pfizer vaccine has to be stored at low temperature.

It was acknowledged that prior to 2007, R&D for Pfizer was in Ann Arbor. They closed up and moved to Kalamazoo where they are producing the vaccine.

The next meeting is December 10. Please contact Alex with requests for the next meeting.

2:30 Meeting adjourned.