



SACUA / SA Newsletter

September 2021

Allen Liu, Faculty Senate Chair

SACUA update: SACUA met bi-weekly over the summer and conducted polls in July and August on vaccination and in-person instruction. Through numerous discussions with the administration, SACUA was effective at guiding the university's decision on a vaccination mandate for students, faculty, and staff as well as an indoor mask mandate, and ensuring equality across the three campuses in terms of COVID policy. SACUA continues to bring concerns raised by the faculty on in-person teaching and COVID-related policies to the administration, and the leadership continues to take our recommendations under advisement.

SACUA held an in-person retreat late August and developed a list of opportunities for the upcoming year, including improving communication with faculty senate while building diversity on SACUA and SA as well as focusing on Office of Institutional Equity (now Equity, Civil Right, and Title IX office; ECRT) reform/oversight.

SA meeting summary: At the first SA meeting of the academic year, I shared with SA an overview of our faculty governance structure and topics of interest that SA members have raised during my small group meetings with them this summer. Four topics that were raised were: 1) **Transparency:** How are decisions made, and what process is followed to hire administrators? What role does faculty expertise play in decision-making?; 2) **Handling misconduct on campus:** How can misconduct be reported and handled without fear of retaliation?; 3) **Changing budget needs:** What changes in spending are occurring, such as by the reduced need for resources for parking, and through changes in hiring? Is the university's funding model sustainable with increasing tuition?; 4) **Online learning:** How does open access come into play with online learning? How has technology impacted online homework, exams, and academic integrity? Other topics that were brought up as potential interest for SA include questions about the election procedures for unit level Executive Committees and the role of the Dean in approving such positions; discussion on the recent ADVANCE report on reasons for faculty departures from UM-Ann Arbor; and, looking into the University's investment in socially responsible areas that reflect our sustainability efforts.

SA discussed in small breakout groups faculty reactions to in-person instruction and current COVID-related policies and shared the highlights of these discussions with the larger SA group. We also voted and passed an amendment to our University Senate Rules in Section 6, Voting, for Faculty Senate Meetings (see [SA meeting minutes](#) from May and from September when available for details). As a prelude to a future meeting topic, Past Senate Chair Colleen Conway provided some updates regarding sexual and gender-based misconduct policies on campus and shared updates on the work SACUA and SA did with Guidepost Solutions this past year.

SA looking ahead: I will be looking to invite Tami Strickman, Executive Director of ECRT, to visit our October SA meeting on October 11. We will begin discussing issues related to sexual and gender-based misconduct at Michigan and also the topic of transparency on decision making and how administrator hiring/reappointment decisions are made.

Please feel free to reach out to your SA representatives if you have any questions, concerns, or feedback! [The roster is available on the Faculty Senate Office website.](#)