Minutes February 14, 2022

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Senate Assembly

Monday, February 14, 2022, Time 3:15

The meeting was held via Virtually

**Present:** Admon, Atzmon (by virtue), Barzilai, Bawardi, Bennett, Braun, Brissey, Brown, Burton, Burzo, Cho, DiFeo, Dinov, Dolins, Duanmu, Evrard, Fossum (parliamentarian), Fontana, Friese, Gallo (by virtue), Girard, Gnedin, Guikema, Hertz, Huang, Hughes, Hyde, Jenkins, Junghans, Kahn, Kazerooni, Ketefian, Kingston (MacLatchy), Korley (Abir), Kovelman, Lagisetty, Lampe, Lepri, Lin, Liu, MacLatchy, Maxim, Mesa, Milewski, Modrak, Pal, Pedraza, Peterson, Pinto, Price, Rickard, Singer (by virtue), Soderstrom, Spencer (by virtue), Stout, Tanielian, Toyama (by virtue), Traynor, Trela, Van Berkel, Wang, Wong, Yi, Zebrack,

**Alternate(s):** Kingston (MacLatchy), Korley (Abir)

**Absent:** Ahbel-Rappe (by virtue), Bridwell-Rabb, Conjeevaram, Conway (by virtue), Finlayson (by virtue), Freeman (by virtue), Garner, Guzdial, Indjejikian, Kaigler, Knoblauch, Lahiri, Lucas, Madathilparambil, Maitra, Mansfield, Morgan, Okwudire, Ramaswamy, Rauterberg, Rosentraub, Subramanian

**Guests:**

Sejal Patil, Michigan Daily; Ann Zaniewski The University Record; Ricardo Alfaro, Professor, French and Mathematics, UM-Flint; Mark Allison, Professor, Computer Science, Engineering and Physics, UM-Flint; Aderemi Artis, Professor, Philosophy, UM-Flint; Susan Collins, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs; Sonja Feist-Price, Provost and Vice Chancellor, UM-Flint; Marilyn Filter, Professor, Nursing, UM-Flint; Christine Gerdes, Special Counsel to the Provost; Douglas Knerr, Professor History, Acting Program Director, Master of Liberal Studies, UM-Flint; Murali Mani, Professor, Computer Science, UM-Flint Quamrul Mazumder, Professor, Mechanical Engineering, UM-Flint; Greg Rybarczyk, Professor, Geography, Planning and Environment, UM-Flint

**3:15**: **Call to Order / Abbreviated Announcements**: The meeting was called to order 3:16pm. A poll was taken to change the agenda to add an item to vote for the temporary replacement of SACUA member Damani Partridge while he is on leave through December 2022. One-third of the body didn’t object to the change, so the item was added to the agenda. Voting took place on the temporary nomination of Professor Silvia Pedraza to fill Professor Damani Partridge’s SACUA position.

After the vote, Faculty Senate Office Director Banasik stated that the Faculty Senate Office extended an offer to a candidate for the part-time Faculty governance coordinator position, who will begin the first week of April. The candidate currently works at Purdue Ft. Wayne and has faculty governance experience. Tonight at 11:59PM is the deadline for submissions to run for SACUA. There were 8 confirmed candidates thus far. Live transcription for today’s meeting is taking place. Vice Chair Finlayson is monitoring the chat.

Chair Liu reminded Senate Assembly members that 4:45 timeslot is scheduled for discussion of the Flint resolution. Any objection to presidential search committee? Professor Paul Fossum will count raised hands. The plan is to vote after the meeting concerning the UM CFEI inclusion language, and the Flint tenure workload document.

**3:20**: **CFEI Update and Definition of Inclusion, Mark Allison, Chair Committee on Fairness, Equity and Inclusion**: The committee recommended and adopted wording of the diversity, equity, and inclusion statement that is more active. Mark Allison noted the need for all three campuses to better integrate resources across campuses. The committee worked to update the definition of “inclusion” and asked how inclusion may be defined to include benchmarks. He and the committee disliked the passive language of the statement and wanted a stronger framework for inclusivity. They tried first to frame the language within the literature. They edited the original UM language so that it would be quantifiable and measurable and still represent UM language. They wanted different perspectives to be respected, and more access to opportunities. There were months of work and discussion. How were they going to measure and obtain data for incidents reported? Where were people in the hierarchy?

The University needs to make its environment welcoming to keep diverse talent**.** This is the most important step.

Professor Vilma Mesa asked if there was discussion regarding listening to and valuing different perspectives? The answer was yes and extended the idea beyond just listening, which includes focusing on the answers to use for metrics and narrowing the scope. Professor Atzmon suggested looking at the objectives, and then including important additions. Professor Rogerio Pinto said “we are committed” is equally passive wording. Professor Pinto went on to say that action verbs are needed. Words are needed that say how to actively do something, “Belonging” was a loss from the previous statement. Professor Allison said we are trying to establish metrics, so we can look at and validate the actions, that are not just “virtue signaling”.

This is effective and this is not. It feels like we left things out of the definition, but we will actively measure the impact of the active words: this word is good. This one isn’t. then wrap up.

**3:30**: **Regent Jordan Acker -- Presidential Search Update**: The Format will be 10–15-minute remarks of interest and about the presidential search. Then Q &A.

He won’t take the full 15 minutes. 1. According to Regent Acker, the dismissal of President Mark Schlissel wasn’t a surprise. The lesson is that this kind of behavior is not tolerable on our campus. We must ensure our campus is safe for all. People must feel safe and comfortable to conduct research. Moving forward the priorities are. 1. President’s search and 2. the provost search. The board is finding a way forward. There is a need for continuity. No five- year commitments at this time. Regarding presidential search, this is a much larger search committee. To create trust in the process, there is representation from the Flint and Dearborn campuses, alumni, undergraduate and graduate students, labor, faculty and staff. In regard to making public the short-listed candidates’ names, It is difficult to balance transparency vs. the need for the candidate’s privacy. Regent Acker wants to hear from as many constituencies as possible. He cannot share more details now but will share when he can, and he encouraged people to email him with questions.

Professor Derek Peterson and Professor Rebekah Modrak raised hands for questions. Professor Peterson represents humanities, social sciences. Medicine is well represented and asked if other disciplines and schools would be represented? Regent Acker said they were dedicated to finding the best candidate and that six members of the committee had degrees in the humanities.

Professors Modrak, Lampe, and Mesa acknowledged for questions. Professor Modrak said the faculty vote of no confidence was not a surprise to the regents. She wants the search to be more open and not confidential.

Among the qualities desired in a new president is the ability to listen and engage more with the campus community. That is an important skill for the next president to have. Professor Lampe asked if one were to ask the previous search committee if they did a good job what would they say? How will this search be different from the last search? Regent Acker replied that the search was too insular the last time. There was no regional representation or students. A sterling academic reputation is good but soft skills are also needed. A labor rep on the committee makes a big difference.

Professor Vilma Mesa said search committees have spent three months developing trust among ten people, so how would one build trust with 26 people? Will there be restorative justice, training for committee members? How is he thinking of this? Regent Acker said there will be listening sessions over February. He encouraged people to submit comments and concerns on the presidential search website. Regent Acker indicated that he takes these concerns seriously but he must maintain confidentiality so there is a limit to what he can discuss**.** Professors Toyama and Hyde said it was sad that this is what happened to Mark Schlissel’s presidency. He was widely unpopular. He looked at Big 10 for guidance on COVID. He doesn’t understand the Big10. We need someone to lead and not follow. Professor Toyama asked, as food for thought, how will things be different? Students at Brown disliked Schlissel’s handling of sexual harassment of students.

Regent Acker said that some candidates would not apply if the search were totally open. He is not in support of an open search. It needs to remain confidential for the sake of the candidate.

Vice Chair Finlayson said that more direct communication between the regents and faculty governance would have signaled problems with the President’s administration sooner and could have avoided a number of problems over the past 2 years. Professor Melanie Tanielian said faculty and regents need to communicate more. This would have prevented some of the past problems. Regent Acker said the president should not just communicate as an email writer or speech presenter, but one who listens. There is a physical reset to Ruthven. The president’s residence will be renovated. Our colleagues need to engage in the presidential search.

Professor Tanielian said it was a serious oversite to not have someone from the humanities on the committee, and the committee’s representation should be expanded. Professor Chris Friese said the Regents don’t represent our community. Candidate searches are public as at USF (University of South Florida?). We should re-think our position of privacy. The Board of Regents represents the people of the state of Michigan. They should listen to and speak for us. They should uphold the Constitution of the state. We want a different kind of leader. Professor Analisa DiFeo asked, why does a great leader want to lead? Is it because of their ego or their heart? Maybe it is not how the search is run but the candidates? These are the considerations of how she hires for her lab. “Why do you want this job?” What is your vision? Regent Acker said this is a difficult time to be a leader here and beyond. We make the university great, and he thanked the faculty.

**4:00**: **Provost Susan Collins**: Provost Collins attended the meeting with Special Counsel to the Provost, Christine Gerdes. Chair Liu congratulated the provost on her new position. She replied that she was glad to have the time to spend with us. She acknowledged the difficulty of the last 2 years, mentioning COVID and racism and we dealt with these issues both personally and publicly. She admired how faculty have dealt with work, students, family, etc.

She likes to look at the silver linings. We heightened understanding of the contributions of research: arts and humanities, social sciences, medicine, etc.

As we return more to normal, how can we help our faculty in their transitional work?

Two important issues to address were 1. Faculty retention and 2. Student Well-being.

1.We are seeing less of the great resignation, however, there is much competition for our faculty. Our peer institutions are working to recruit our faculty. According to ODEI and ADVANCE, BIPOC faculty on our campus are not retained.

They are designing initiatives to retain faculty of color so that everyone will benefit. Faculty of Color take on lots of service and are under recognized. Provost Collins noted a lack of leadership opportunities for BIPOC faculty. NCID and RISE help create a stronger sense of community for BIPOC faculty to connect across and outside of departments. NCID Anti-Racism Collaborative is working to form community, helping people connect, building partnerships with research. It will be enhanced. There is the third round of Anti-Racism cluster hires, and grad students too.

Work is being done on many of the issues to create more supportive environments.

2. Student well-being receives national press coverage. Student mental health review committees look at strategic planning and infrastructure. What is needed is more compassion, less stress, visible resources, hiring more mental health staff and triage system. The budget expanded peer support programs, as well as technology health services. Dr. Robert Ernst oversees UM Health.

Rackham, CEW+, etc. are units working to develop changes in their climate. The initiatives of Sonja Jacobs from Michigan Medicine, and Dean Hurn of the School of Nursing are working to change campus climate more broadly. They are working to enhance and strengthen our community.

Chair Liu thanked her and began the Q and A: Professor Derek Peterson asked if she had any thoughts regarding what we could have done differently to avoid the embarrassing events of the past month. The provost had no comments except to say that we need to work together, and the policies put in place need to apply to everyone. We learn from mistakes and move forward. She is looking forward and concentrating on the positive news across our campus. We are impacting society from our efforts.

Professor Vilma Mesa asked about the backlash against initiatives for BIPOC. How are we dealing with backlash from politics in broader society? How are students from different backgrounds, ethnicities, and race affected? Provost Collins replied that she is data driven. She knows some of the data suggests that students of color and first generation were requesting more assistance. Data suggests less well-resourced students need more help. It is a journey. She sees faculty retention as important to make Michigan a place where BIPOC faculty want to be. From the day of arrival, top down and bottom up, how do we value what they bring to the campus? Annual reviews, tenure and promotion are key areas to consider, particularly in reference to how decisions are made. How do non-BIPOC faculty and students fare? It is important for us to speak of this. We have workshops that deal address these issues with faculty, deans, and chairs.

Professor Luke Hyde asked her to advise us regarding creating productive relationships between the administration and faculty. What are the best ways of relating and communicating between faculty and administration? There was a range of faculty responses. The need is to hear this range of voices and talked through it more fully. Faculty voices are still important to hear, whether administration makes the desired decision or not. Small groups and surveys can be helpful. There are multiple ways of communicating, and many channels. Staff and student input is important too. There are so many new decisions and circumstances. We need to acknowledge that reasonable people may differ. It would be useful to continue to have more regular meetings.

Professor Odest Jenkins thanked the provost and asked a question regarding Mathematics education. Students are struggling with linear algebra and statistics alone, remotely. Provost Collins said that faculty are closer to struggling students than she is. She fondly recalled helping students with math earlier in her career. She said that we can learn from what we’ve done. Students have struggled across the board, and not just in math. We need to keep our wonderful faculty here.

**4:30**: **Presidential Search and Regent Acker / Provost Visit Debrief**: Professor Derek Peterson brought forth a motion to discuss the make-up of the presidential search committee. The motion was accepted to adopt a change to the agenda. Professor Rogerio Pinto thought the resolution was worthwhile with a recommended change to the language. 1.The objection was to the language using the term ‘embrace’ implying that the university ‘embraced’ sexual predatory behavior. He disliked the wording suggesting that UofM has a long-term history of sexual abuse. “Embracing” is the wrong term to use in this case. 2. Identify the committee members at the beginning of the process, rather than waiting until a problem arises. Specify the composition of the committee.

Some of the comments are useful and the language can be revised prior to the vote. Professor Cliff Lampe noted that he plans to vote against the statement as currently written because the language is not specific enough. Professor Vilma Mesa agreed that the term “embrace” was too strong a term, but there have been ongoing problems regarding sexual harassment, and nothing done about it until very recently. Professor Peterson brought up Dr. Anderson who was active from the 1960’s into 2000’s, which represents long term toleration of abusive behavior. He said “presence” was not a good term either because perpetrators rose to positions of increasing prominence. Sexual harassment and abuse were perhaps not embraced but they were tolerated. Professor Peterson asserted that people knew about abuses, and they were allowed to continue. Chair Liu reasserted that the language could be changed prior to the vote.

Regarding the motion on the make-up of the presidential search committee, there were also concerns that the composition of the search committee was not sufficiently diverse in terms of campus disciplines represented. The terms Humanities and Interpretive Social Sciences were thought to be confusing in the motion, and that too much prominence was assigned to LSA faculty. Professor Luke Hyde broadly supported the document but not as written. He agreed that “Interpretive social science” was problematic language, and it was not true that only humanists understood DEI. He noted the inclusion of Professor Tabbye Chavous, who is a social scientist, on the committee. We want as many schools represented as possible.

The scholarly representative on the committee, some suggested, is mainly Science and Medicine. There are people with humanities degrees on the committee, but it doesn’t necessarily represent the high-level of Humanities scholarship on campus. Scholarly expertise on the committee is heavily represented by Science and Medicine. LSA is represented by Chemistry. Professor Tabbye Chavous is good, but more diversity of fields is needed. Professor Rogerio Pinto said the verb is not important but the subject. I am the university.

Professor Maya Barzliat asked why we need more humanists. We have world renowned scholars of the humanities. There are scholars of excellence here in all fields. There is excellence in all fields beyond just Science and medicine. Professor Peterson requested to revise the language. Chair Liu said the vote could go out tomorrow morning, but we need to address the faculty comments and changes.

**4:45**: **Flint Post-Tenure Review/Workload Policy SACUA Resolution**: The issue brought before SACUA concerned a document to evaluate faculty productivity on the Flint campus in relationship to teaching workloads for those at the post-tenure position. Many feel this document constituted an ongoing post tenure review process. Professor D.J. Trela of the Flint Faculty Senate Council and Flint Provost Sonja Feist-Price were invited to submit video statements in advance of the Senate Assembly meeting.

In the opinion of the Flint Faculty Senate Council, not only was the content of the document problematic but its origin was problematic as well, as it did not engage faculty from the inception of the process, nor did it provide sufficient avenues for faculty feedback on this potentially policy. Instead, the provost convened meetings with the deans then submitted the document to the Faculty Senate Council for review and input. Provost Feist-Price defended her right to proceed in this manner, saying that there were differences in how one might proceed in the matter of faculty governance and unfortunately, she and Professor Trela disagreed on this.

Discussion took place regarding the problematic content of the Post-Tenure Review/Workload document as well as a series of questions and answers.

Professor Vilma Mesa said she watched the provost’s video explanation of the document. The process was clear, but she questioned why the provost found it important to focus on this rather than more important, pressing issues? Provost Feist-Price responded that she appreciated the question, had only been here two years, and in that short time, heard from deans that productivity was a need to be addressed. Their complaint was that some faculty “retire in place”. No guidelines existed for scholarly output. Deans could not encourage productivity, in her view.

Professor Trela said that there were no numbers on how many faculty ‘retired in place’ and that there were no provisions to incentivize productivity or provide remediation plans for faculty deemed not sufficiently productive. The policy was solely focused on punishment in the form of increased teaching loads. The only proposed way to address the issue was teaching loads, since there was no faculty input to suggest other options or methods of incentivization.

Differences across disciplines and departments were a factor in productivity, and service was considered the second arm of productivity after teaching, not research. According to the Provost, the document highlighted that the priorities should be teaching, research and service (in that order).

Vice Chair Finlayson presented an argument regarding BIPOC female colleagues who often take on a greater amount of service work and who become stuck in the ranks of Associate Professor and unable to advance to full professorship. This Workload policy devalues that critical service to the University and service to faculty governance. Also, women might delay childbearing until tenure, and so a lag in productivity post-tenure might be a reasonable outcome of prioritizing childbearing. The provost said the document does take service of women and BIPOC faculty into consideration. It allows the deans to adjust when people are overly burdened by service. Deans could not bring about equity across disciplines. Vice Chair Finlayson said that what she described in terms of varying service burdens was typical of all three campuses. There are nuances across disciplines in terms of teaching and service expectations. She suggested an overarching structure defining expectations and exactly what constituted ‘productivity’ was needed.

Professor Sylvia Pedraza said that administrators frequently speak of how to get rid of “dead wood”, and it seems as if Provost Feist-Price and the faculty are talking past each other.

Provost Feist-Price said she worked with deans on guidelines which provided details. She said she shared it with the Faculty Senate Council and received feedback from faculty and deans. It is an iterative process. She insisted that there are multiple ways to exercise shared governance and disagreed about the lack of consultation.

According to Professor Trela, the video shows that the system is punitive: all sticks with no carrots. Provost Feist-Price said there were lots of opportunities for service at Flint. We don’t have to create more committees to serve on to perform more service. Some faculty with tenure performed service but no research. (NSF grant, editor of the board, there are rewards built-in to the document.) She expressed frustration that faculty and administration cannot talk together, and they are not playing on the same team.

Professor Trela said he wants to resolve the matter “in-house”. He said there is no faculty input and noted that the ability to post comments via a website only recently went active. The provost insisted that there was faculty input, just not at the very beginning. Professor Trela pointed out that every campus has some unproductive faculty; Flint is not unique in this regard. He is a former dean of 14 years and 10 years a chair. Provost Feist-Price expressed a willingness for more ongoing faculty involvement. She would like to ascertain faculty input to help inform the situation. She remarked that Professor Trela is describing one way to involve faculty, but it is not the only way. The provost disagrees with the faculty’s assessment of the consultation process.

**4:58**: **Matters Arising**: -- 3 Votes took place -- 1. CFEI language - 2. Presidential Search Composition - 3. Flint Workload

**5:00**: **Adjourn**: 5:07

Addendum:

Results of the vote were distributed two days later on February 16, 2022

The results of the 3 Senate Assembly votes were:

1) The revised language on inclusion passed or with 40 Yes, 5 No, and 4 Abstentions.

2) The resolution on expanding the presidential search committee passed with 31 Yes, 20 No, and 0 Abstentions.

3) The SACUA resolution on the proposed UM-Flint’s workload/post-tenure policy passed with 35 Yes, 6 No, and 8 Abstentions.

Respectfully Summitted,

Deirdre D. Spencer

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.”