

Minutes: March 28, 2022
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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs
Monday, March 28, 2022, 3:15
The Hybrid meeting was held Virtually and in Ruthven 1100

Virtual attendees: Chair Allen Liu, Vice Chair Caitlin Finlayson, Professor Sara Ahbel-Rappe, Professor Michael Atzmon, Professor Donald Freeman, Professor Elena Gallo, Professor Kentaro Toyama, *Daily* Reporter Caroline Wang.

In Person Attendees: Professor Silvia Pedraza, Faculty Governance Coordinator Elizabeth Devlin, *Record* Reporter Ann Zaniewski, Secretary Deirdre Spencer

Absent: Professor Durga Singer, Professor Colleen Conway, Faculty Senate Office Director Mary Jo Banasik.

Guests:

Ann Zaniewski *The University Record* – In person
Caroline Wang *The Michigan Daily* -- remote

President Mary Sue Coleman, President of the University of Michigan – in person
Professor David Potter, Classical Studies and Chair of Sexual Assault – Wilmer Hale Subcommittee – in person
Professor Bill Schultz and Professor Ella Kazerooni, Co-Chairs, Rules, Practices and Policies Committee (RPP) – They were scheduled to attend but did not.

The majority of the meeting was in Executive Session; thus the minutes are brief.

3:15 Call to order: 3/7/22 Minutes/Announcements – Meeting Called to order at 3:16 – Minutes Approved for March 7, 2022, meeting.

3:20 SACUA Chair Updates: Faculty Senate Office Director MaryJo Banasik was absent from today's meeting thus there was no Faculty Senate Office Report.

Chair Liu recommended four names to the president's office to serve on the honor's degree committee. The President will pick two of the four names.

At the April 11th meeting the vote for Chair and Vice Chair of SACUA will take place. Chair Liu stated he would be happy to speak to those who might be interested in running for office. Chair Liu asks that SACUA members declare their intention to run for SACUA Chair and Vice Chair at next week's meeting.

Newly elected SACUA members are invited to attend meetings beginning in April. They become members on May 1st. Onboarding will be given by MaryJo Banasik and Vice Chair Caitlin Finlayson.

Names are needed for Advisory Board for Intercollegiate Athletics (ABIA). The names are needed by mid-May. Chair Liu will send an email soliciting names to submit for nomination. Ethnic, gender, and subject matter diversity should be

considered when nominating candidates. Experience with undergraduate students and with intercollegiate athletics are desired qualifications.

3:25 SACUA Chair Updates continued: Executive Session

3:30 President Mary Sue Coleman: Executive Session

4:00 Bill Schultz and Ella Kazerooni, Co-Chairs, Rules, Practices and Policies Committee (RPP) did not show (to be rescheduled) --Executive Session

4:20 5.09 discussion: Executive Session
Vice Chair Finlayson recused herself from the discussion.

4:35 Discussion of Resolution Concerning Student Debt Cancellation – Professor Kentaro Toyama:

Professor Toyama recommended reading the Faculty Senate Resolution on Cancelling Student Debt. On the national level, AAUP is partnering with Scholars for a New Deal for Higher Education. The organization plans to take political action by requesting a total cancelation of all student debt in the amount of \$ 1.7 trillion dollars owed to the federal government. They would like to make the request on April 4, 2022. This is just prior to the May moratorium placed on student loan repayment by the Biden administration due to COVID-19.

Arguments for cancelling the debt are: The high levels of student debt disproportionately affect people of color, minorities, and women. These demographics, among others, are struggling to repay student loans. Their lives improve with the cancellation of crushing debt. Although Professor Toyama is president of the local AAUP chapter, he prefers not to share his personal point of view on this matter. The question for consideration is whether SACUA and Senate Assembly want to vote for this resolution to meet a deadline of April 4th.

Supporters of the resolution would have such endorsements to take to the federal government. Professor Toyama doesn't know exactly the number of faculty senates that support the resolution but there are quite a few faculty who do.

Several faculty members agreed that this resolution seemed like a vague and simplistic solution to a more complex problem. One question was if the banks would be repaid by private entities? Another question expressed concern for those who were more frugal and didn't borrow loans? Where is the fairness to them?

Professor Freeman noted that the School of Education has colleagues with professional expertise in this area who can address these concerns. He will ask the expert to address SACUA and SA regarding these issues. Other SACUA members agreed that hearing from experts was prudent.

There was also some agreement with Professor Gallo that the money might be better spent on other social programs such as transforming the lives of young women with childcare subsidies or contributions to pre-college education. To summarize, the argument against debt cancellation was that this blanket solution was simplistic, and that the money might be spent in more productive ways.

Professor Pedraza mentioned that in the past the federal government offered student debt reduction if one pursued a particular profession, such as teaching, or participated in organizations, such as the Peace Corps. We need to learn more about this from experts.

There was general openness to hearing from an expert. Vice Chair Finlayson remarked that there is an intergenerational impact to college debt; people cannot attain financial security and get ahead because of crippling debt, and this financial burden can affect people for generations; thus stifling social and economic mobility. A counter argument was that paying off student debt was not the answer to more complex problems. Paying off current debt doesn't solve the root issues so you'll just have a group of students suffering from the same debt issues a few years down the road.

The debt issue differs across the three campuses and its differing populations. We cannot solve it over the next couple of days so SACUA would like to hear from the experts as this seems like an important topic to get a handle on.

4:55 Matters Arising – None.

5:00 Adjourn—Adjourned at 5:01

Respectfully Submitted,

Deirdre D. Spencer
Secretary

"...[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 policies 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."