

Minutes April 25, 2022  
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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs  
Monday, April 25, 2022, 3:15  
The Hybrid meeting was held in Ruthven 1100 and via ZOOM

In person attendees: Chair Allen Liu, Professor Silvia Pedraza, Professor Donald Freeman, Faculty Governance Coordinator Ann Marshall, Faculty Governance Coordinator Elizabeth Devlin, Secretary Deirdre Spencer  
Virtual Attendees; Vice Chair Finlayson, Professor Michael Atzmon, Professor Tom Braun, Professor Simon Cushing, Professor Durga Singer, Professor Kentaro Toyama  
Absent: Professor Sara Ahbel-Rappe, Professor Elena Gallo, Professor Sergio Villalobos Ruminott

Guests:

Jeff Bleiler – *University Record*

Tina Yu – *Michigan Daily*

Mark Allison – Chair, Committee on Fairness Equity & Inclusion (CFEI)

Tami Strickman, Executive Director, Equity, Civil Rights, and Title IX Office

Elizabeth Seney Senior Associate Director, Equity Civil Rights and Title IX Office

Larry Plutko – Guideposts Solutions

3:15 -- Call to Order – 4/11/2022 Minutes / Announcements -- The meeting was called to order at 3:21pm. There was not a quorum at first but was later achieved. The minutes from the April 11, 2022, meeting were approved by consent pending a few cosmetic changes. Chair Liu announced that Faculty Governance Coordinator Elizabeth Devlin was leaving to go to the University Development Office. Chair Liu welcomed part-time Faculty Governance Coordinator Ann Marshall. Regarding the Jackie Lawson Award, Chair Liu announced that the regional campus faculty senate chairs agreed to work with the immediate past chair of SACUA to select winners for the award. He asked if SACUA members had any objections to having the immediate past chair of SACUA serving in that capacity. There were no objections.

3:20 – Academic Freedom Resolution – Mark Allison, Chair Committee on Fairness, Equity & Inclusion

Professor Mark Allison spoke about the resolution for the University of Michigan to join other universities across the country, advocating for academic freedom to teach about race and racism in the academy.

This resolution is in concert with over 150 other institutions, some of which are other Big Ten institutions such as Michigan State and Ohio State. Some statements had strong language coming from the faculty, administration and the regents supporting this position. He reached out to Secretary Spencer, a

librarian, to locate language from the UM regents. They searched documents but there was no strong language to speak of. The closest language to a statement supporting academic freedom was from 2009, created by the Faculty Senate.

SACUA engaged in editing the CFEI resolution document. The resolution stated that we need to take a stance on race and gender to have its teaching protected in the classroom. There was much discussion within CFEI, and it was decided that they should move forward on this and show solidarity. Chair Elect Pedraza asked if anything had happened in the state legislature since November 2021. Professor Allison could find nothing tangible that had been voted on, or that would move the needle. Professor Pedraza wanted to ensure all was up to date.

Professor Atzmon asked if any issues generated controversy or discussion within CFEI or was it all straightforward. Professor Allison said that originally the decision was made to see what happens and not take a stance either way. They thought academic freedom to teach about race and gender was only going to be challenged in places like Kentucky or Texas. However, they found challenges to academic freedom moving the wrong way in Michigan. Chair Allen Liu said we should be taking a stance now. Professor Toyama suggested some changes in the wording which Professor Allison agreed with. There were several changes in wording which needed to be discussed before being voted on.

Professor Atzmon mentioned that historically there have been works of art that are considered sexist and racist. He asked if the critical teaching of art would be protected? Professor Allison said the faculty member would make that decision, and the document is an enhancement of the existing language on academic freedom. He reiterated that faculty senate is the tip of the spear and there had been nothing in writing since 2009. Vice Chair Finlayson teaches medieval literature, much of which is considered racist and sexist. The University of Wyoming just moved to restrict teaching gender studies. She read the document carefully and there is a need to discuss these controversial works. Professor Allison said that the language of the document supports efforts to protect teaching about racism and sexism.

Professors Toyama and Pedraza objected to language which focused on Officer Derek Chauvin's trial rather than on George Floyd's killing. The University of Michigan has come out in support of George Floyd. In summary, the resolution is a statement to strengthen our academic freedom. Due to time limitation, the vote on the resolution took place later in the meeting. Chair Liu thanked Professor Allison for coming and presenting.

3:30 -- SACUA Preparatory Discussion  
Executive Session

3:40 – Equity, Civil Rights and Title IX Office – Tami Strickman, Executive Director, Elizabeth Seney, Sr, Associate Director and Title IX Coordinator  
Executive Session

4:10 – SACUA Priorities for 2022-2023

4:30 – Parting Remarks: SACUA Members Sara Ahbel-Rappe, Donald Freeman,  
Elena Gallo, Vice Chair Caitlin Finlayson Executive  
Session

4:55 – Matters Arising – Academic Freedom Vote passed unanimously at 4:30pm

5:00 – The meeting adjourned at 4:58pm

Respectfully Submitted,

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 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."