

Communications Advisory Committee (CAC)

November 16, 2020

3:00 – 4:00 pm

Zoom

Circulated: May 28, 2021

Approved: June 4, 2021

November 16, 2020

3:00 – 4:00

Zoom

In attendance: Stephanie Preston, Kallie Michels, Amanda Halbert, Amanda Thatcher, Chandan Kumar-Sinha, Dave Reid, Kayla Ann Neimann, Merieka R Kaye, Yulia Sevryugina

Agenda Items

3:00 Call to order, approval of agenda and minutes, announcements

The agenda was approved.

3:05 Member check-in about COVID response

-A member noted that she has received very positive feedback about the athletics weekly briefings.

-Kallie Michels noted that several thousand and two or more thousand watch the COVID briefing video later, FAQ is constantly updated, questions are getting answered and the tone of people's communications with UM have improved.

-Member Thatcher reported that Michigan Med has gotten the information and response that they needed.

The group discussed plans for the upcoming Winter term regarding students returning home versus staying in Ann Arbor (many are planning to rent in town and stay).

There has been criticism over engagement; there is an engagement group; they are about to communicate about a new 3-week restriction from the Governor. There is a Winter term planning group (important decision-making moments, timing, lay out clearly and identify when and who needs to communicate).

A member described seeing announcements in more places, which is positive.

3:30 Unfinished business - WilmerHale Report

AGENDA ITEM: WILMERHALE Report on Philbert

A member expressed concern about a lack of accountability.

A member noted that faculty and staff should be kept to a high standard and asserted that UM has come up short on this.

A member expressed concern about the situation and response, including steps forward. A more specific breakdown of the problem and solution in communications is needed.

Kallie Michels noted that there have been multiple communications including in July and September.

Three areas of response were identified including hiring a consultant to help implement recommendations. Communications did not create the report, and the response will take a long time.

The similar case of Dr. Anderson was discussed regarding the extensive communications and transparency.

Because the Philbert situation will take time to resolve, it was suggested that quarterly updates could be implemented, similar to the COVID briefings. The group discussed the merits of combining these issues

into a single unified briefing that changes in theme time to time versus branded named updates for each issue. Kallie Michels agreed that such a routine update would be good and maybe should have its own name. There could be potential to extend the COVID briefings to other topics down the line when COVID is less prominent in our minds.

New topic question:

Chair Preston asked if people wanted the committee to visit a SACUA meeting Nov 30 or Dec 14. There was consensus that there is not a need to meet with SACUA at this time.

3:40 Faculty engagement with the public.

The group solidified the idea that engagement is part of U-M's mission. President Schlissel discusses the importance of a public institution sharing knowledge and helping the public through its research. There are difficulties with the faculty using engagement avenues. Nikki Sunstrum, who works on public engagement, could share with the committee what her office does and how it can help people who want to increase engagement through many avenues including key messages, improvements to a website, and disseminating information in the most effective way possible. We previously heard from Fitzgerald about public affairs. Public engagement awards may incentivize participation.

<https://publicengagement.umich.edu/>. Others on the committee can share information about faculty engagement in community partnerships around campus.

3:50 Agenda items for next term:

The group discussed the following possible next topics:

- Communications role in driving enrollment and retaining students during and post COVID.
- Topics around safety (Post-Election Tensions, Racial Equality, Etc.)?
- Faculty Engagement - socially enhanced intranet site enabling two-way communications (I don't recall what this means...I asked Dave to clarify if he remembers; we can just remove if needed or I will ask at the next meeting)?
- Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) committee visit to talk about their work on reducing gender discrimination and sexual harassment at U-M.

4:00 The meeting was adjourned.