



Communications Advisory Committee (CAC)

Minutes

January 20, 2021
Zoom

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Present: Karl-Gerog Federhofer, Caitlin Finalyson (SACUA liaison), Amanda Halbert, Kallie Michels, Kayla Niemann, Josh Pasek, Stephanie Preston, Amanda Thatcher, David Reid, Yulia Sevryugina

Absent: Marieka Kaye, Chandan Kumar,

Guests: Nikki Sunstrum, Director of Social Media and Public Engagement
Elyse Aurbach and Rachel Niemer, Center for Academic Innovation
Colleen Conway, SACUA Chair

Chair Preston called the meeting to order 3:00 PM

Updates from VP Michels

- **WilmerHale** – Michels shared that the Guidepost Solutions firm has been hired to assist the University with responding to recommendations from the Wilmer Hale report. She invited Conway to share SACUA and SA communications so far. Conway mentioned that if the CAC is interested in meeting with Guidepost that they should let the Faculty Senate Office know.
- **Student return messaging** – Michels shared that many recent communications have been issued regarding student safe return to campus for Winter 2021
- **COVID briefing** – Michels shared details about the communication work around the COVID dashboard, vaccine information, the COVID Hotline (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vK23SkfMhAv0lhVT884IQ9PZW_91T9bJVzvwWWSht2w/edit?usp=sharing), and the President and Provost's weekly COVID briefings. Michels encouraged faculty to access the weekly briefings and encourage colleagues to do the same.

Chair Preston reminded the committee about the idea of changing the name of the COVID briefing to a more general title in the future. Preston asked committee about interest in continued virtual briefings. Sevryugina shared that faculty are confused about which group they fall into with regards to the vaccine. Sunstrum assured committee members that if faculty have completed the vaccine application that the data has been received and is secure. She provided some details about how Michigan Medicine is prioritizing vaccines and shared which decisions come from the state and which are done at Michigan Medicine. Thatcher encouraged faculty to access the "Blue Queue" email update. Finlayson urged communications to continue to stress the positive work in this area given that the media often focuses on the negative. Preston encouraged the



University to quickly look ahead to fall planning. Federhofer encouraged the office to avoid issuing the numbers of those applying for the vaccine, however, Sunstrum shared in the effort to be accountable that UM is sharing vaccine numbers, but they are not sharing the number of vaccine applicants.

Amanda Thatcher shared she will be leaving the University in February to take a position at Ohio State. The committee offered their congratulations to Amanda.

Nikki Sunstrum, Director of Social Media and Public Engagement

Sunstrum shared a 2020 year in review video put together by her team. She highlighted key 2020 communication priorities as COVID response, Democracy and Debate, as well as the Maize and Blueprint (hybrid format). She shared the Community Outreach work on campus in relation to including students not on campus due to COVID as well as in response to current political and societal events. Her report included information on the Michigan Minds podcasts as well as details about collaborations with the Office of Research, the Office of the President, the Institute for Social Research and Government Relations. Sunstrum shared the President's Twitter has broken new records of followers. Faculty had a few moments to get clarity on the report.

Elyse Aurbach and Rachel Niemer, Center for Academic Innovation

Aurbach and Niemer shared their work in the area of public engagement. Since 2017 they have been involved in improving public engagement through the Center for Academic Engagement. Work has been done to understand the landscape of various projects at the University-

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vK23SkfMhAv0lhVT884IQ9PZW_91T9bJVzvwWWSht2w/edit?usp=sharing

Aurbach shared details of the Public Engagement Faculty Fellowship launched in 2020. Niemer shared a focus in their office on how new technologies assist their public engagement work. Conway shared her experience with the PEFF this past summer and suggested that CAC may want to consider ways to assist faculty in communications regarding their public engagement work. Sunstrum shared some previous work from her team on working with Deans and Directors around their role in supporting public engagement and suggested she will continue those conversations. Finlayson asked about this work on Dearborn and Flint campuses. Niemer shared that there is a need to understand how best to assist Dearborn and Flint faculty in their work and how to help Ann Arbor faculty learn from what Flint and Dearborn faculty already do in this space.

Preston concluded that in the March 17th meeting the committee might return to a discussion of how public engagement work can be communicated and how that work intersects with the Anti-Racism initiatives on campus.