

Minutes October 4, 2021
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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Faculty Senate

Monday, October 4, 2021, 3:15

The hybrid meeting was held at the Michigan Law School Honigman Room 100 and via
Zoom

Guests: President Mark Schlissel and Provost Susan Collins

3:15 Call to Order

Chair Liu called the meeting to order and reviewed the processes for electronic participation. There were no questions about the agenda.

Chair Liu reviewed logistics and expectations for the meeting.

3:20: Secretary Candidate Videos and Parliamentary Candidate Statement

Professor Finlayson nominated Professor Conway for Senate Secretary; Professor Singer seconded the nomination. Professor Conway accepted the nomination. Professor Gallo nominated Librarian Spencer for Senate Secretary Toyama seconded the nomination. Librarian Spencer accepted the nomination. There were no further nominations. Chair Liu said that the ballot would be sent to the faculty for vote at noon on October 5, 2021.

Chair Liu introduced the nomination of Professor Fossum for Senate Parliamentary which Professor Finlayson provided. Professor Conway seconded the nomination. There were no further nominations. Chair Liu said that the ballot would be released later on October 4, 2021, and will remain open for twenty-four hours.

3:28: Motions 1-4 Discussion

1. The university is to direct Work Connections to validate and support all medically supported requests to work remotely; allow instructors to work remotely if medical recommendations require them to socially distance and such distancing is not possible; reorganize Work Connections with input from faculty governance; and institute a process for appealing determinations by Work Connections.

Professors Weineck, Traub and Szymanski spoke in favor of the motion.

2. The university is to increase COVID-19 testing frequency to twice a week for unvaccinated people, “and weekly testing be conducted for all community members” at convenient sites; make it so ResponsiBLUE does

not instruct vaccinated individuals to automatically check “no” as an answer to a question about having contact with someone who was recently diagnosed with COVID-19; and re-establish the notification of close contacts.

Professors Atzmon, Brown, Weineck and Satyendra spoke in favor of the motion.

3. The university is to “immediately re-evaluate and adjust its policy for in-person instruction, so as to better incorporate the legitimate input of the faculty.”

Professors Toyama, Kelow-Bennett and Prinz spoke in favor of the motion.

4. The university is to adopt recommendations made by women survivors of Martin Philbert’s misconduct and their attorney that would:
 - a. Require members of faculty or administrative search committees to retain a written statement from each committee member that they disclosed all known or suspected details of allegations of sexual misconduct;
 - b. Require leaders of units to document in writing in a staff or faculty member’s personnel file the factual basis for decisions on discipline relative to any allegation of sexual misconduct;
 - c. Require the Equity, Civil Rights and Title IX Office to “reference in writing any and all prior reports as a step in investigating and compiling reports on subsequent allegations, i.e., to access the data it has on hand to inform itself of facts, and permit the ECRT to act on iterative reports by re-opening or re-framing investigations as a way to call attention to and actively search for patterns of sexual misconduct”;
 - d. From a committee of sexual misconduct survivors to create additional recommended policies.

Professors Modrak, Wu, Szymanski and Atzmon spoke in favor of the motion.

4:00: President Mark Schlissel and Provost Susan Collins

Professor Schlissel addressed the active shooter threat to the campus community on the weekend of October 2-3, 2021 (<https://news.dpss.umich.edu/2021/10/2827>). He said that the Division of Public Safety and Security (DPSS) worked with the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) to evaluate the threat. The author of the threatening post was identified, and the FBI interviewed the person in his home (<https://www.michigandaily.com/news/news-briefs/umich-classes-to-remain-in-person-fbi-said-individual-responsible-for-shooting-threat-had-neither-the-means->

nor-the-opportunity-to-carry-out-the-threat/). Having assessed his capacity, the FBI reached the conclusion that he had no network or capacity to carry out the threat (<https://storage.googleapis.com/dpss-news-2020/1/2021/10/UM-Threat-Statement.pdf>). President Schlissel acknowledged that this was a traumatic event, and expressed his hope that people reach out for help if they needed it.

President Schlissel said that he had visited faculty meetings at all nineteen schools and colleges and expressed his view that collaboration was crucial for success in dealing with the pandemic. He drew attention to in-person events including a building dedication and two convocations, saying that he feels the campus feels like a campus, while recognizing that faculty and staff can feel anxious in the face of the pandemic. He said he was happy to have implemented the vaccine mandate, and that 96% of students, 99% of tenure stream faculty, 88% of lecturers, and 90% of non-health system staff were vaccinated. People who had not been vaccinated will be tested every week, that there is currently surplus capacity at testing facilities and capacity to upgrade testing if needed. People are cautiously returned to university events and positivity rates are low: there were 55 student cases in the last two weeks and that 2% of students who are symptomatic are positive for COVID-19, there are 30-40 cases amongst faculty and staff each week.

President Schlissel said that the University was not seeing clusters of cases, and that there was no classroom spread, a situation that was common in other universities. In response to concerns about the active University campus in Ann Arbor, and the impact on community health, he said that cases in the county have drifted downwards, COVID-19 cases on the campus are 10% of the county total (down from 60% last year). Testing showed that strains of the virus differed between the town and the campus.

President Schlissel acknowledged that that the University community still had fresh scars stemming from the case of former-Provost Philbert and that the administration had enacted a number of the recommendations from SACUA's WilmerHale committee report, adding that he recognized that the University must do a better job of vetting appointees, and strengthen antiretaliation policies. He said that he and Provost Collins were in dialogue with SACUA and other faculty. With respect to the motions, he asked that people look at his email addressing them (<https://president.umich.edu/news-communications/messages-to-the-community/a-message-to-the-university-of-michigan-faculty-senate-2/>), saying that he had considered the resolutions and will work collaboratively with the faculty (<https://www.michigandaily.com/news/rift-between-faculty-administration-deepens-as-schlissel-refutes-motions-at-upcoming-faculty-senate-meeting/>). President Schlissel concluded by saying that the University had the largest applicant pool ever (80,000), from which it had accepted the largest and strongest class ever.

Provost Collins acknowledged the public safety concerns of the past weekend in Ann Arbor as well as the concerns about gunfire on the campus of UM-Flint (<https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan/2021/10/04/all-clear-um-flint-after-report-shots-fired-campus/5988886001/>), saying these were traumatic events for many members of the community.

Provost Collins said that bringing the community back to campus allowed community members to refocus on working together on our shared purpose, and she appreciated the dedication of the faculty in permitting the community to achieve this. She noted that students were especially glad to be back, and that the overwhelming majority are doing their best to follow guidelines. They greatly appreciated in-person classes, and that co-curricular groups bolstered their in-person experience. She drew attention to practices developed during the period when classes were remote such as virtual office hours which enhanced accessibility for students.

Provost Collins acknowledged the general tension of the times combining concerns about the pandemic, sexual misconduct, and racial justice issues. She urged community members to work together to address these challenges and stated her belief that returning to work on campus allowed the community to enhance its ability to pursue its mission.

Provost Collins said she and President Schlissel, in conjunction with the Regents, made the decision to return to campus during the summer with the after discussions with the deans. She said she remained committed to monitoring the situation.

Provost Collins said deans have responsibility for the integrity and quality of the programs under their control, and that University policy gives deans the authority to decide where people teach. While she appreciated the concerns expressed in the September Senate Assembly meeting about teaching modalities (<https://www.michigandaily.com/news/academics/our-classroom-is-our-domain-faculty-governance-members-criticize-umichs-process-to-request-teaching-remotely/>) she said that deans and directors make decisions to ensure the quality of the educational experience while receiving requests from many sources, and have to balance competing needs. She added that Work Connections (<https://www.workconnections.umich.edu/>) has expertise working with nurses and doctors to make decisions about individual cases. She expressed satisfaction with the residential experience, as well as with research and scholarship on campus.

Provost Collins acknowledged that there are uncertainties and stresses for many, encouraging untenured faculty to request tenure clock extensions (managed at the unit level) as the bar for tenure has not changed. She added that unit leaders should show reasonable flexibility, reviewing, for instance, service assignments in recognition of the challenges faculty face.

Provost Collins said new work includes comprehensive action to meet health and wellness needs for undergraduates and graduates; a number of anti-racism initiatives, including the National Center for Institutional Diversity (NCID) (<https://lsa.umich.edu/ncid>), the faculty collaborative on anti-racism, which looked to do better work in retaining faculty, as well as an anti-racism cluster hire. She added that a task force charged with advancing public safety had turned in a report recommending better training and data collection (<https://provost.umich.edu/initiatives/anti-racism/public-safety-task-force/>). In sum, these engagements are critical for the mission and will help the University community move forward.

4:25: Question and Answer with President Schlissel and Provost Collins

Professor Hughes asked President Schlissel to discuss the University's masking policy.

President Schlissel replied that if there is a distance of ten-twelve feet it is permissible to speak without wearing a mask.

Professor Hoffman said that Work Connections had compelled instructor with health concerns to teach in person. President Schlissel said that Work Connections had received no instruction to deny cases, its role is to make determinations based on stated criteria from the University Health System and the Center for Disease Control.

Professor Ahbel-Rappe asked why President Schlissel is not following recommendations from survivors of sexual abuse for improving campus safety, noting that faculty exploring the issue found the voices of survivors very important to the process.

President Schlissel said that Work Connections reviewed 28 formal requests to teach remotely out of a total of 8,500 instructional faculty members across all three U-M campuses, that every case was judged on its merits with the result that 20 were rejected, 4 were accepted as "needing some enhanced accommodations," 2 are awaiting more information from the applicants, 1 was withdrawn and 1 was unrelated to COVID-19. He believed that if there was a relaxation of standards, the number of requests would grow exponentially.

Professor Weineck asked Provost Collins why she was ignoring widespread community requests for varied teaching modalities, and if she could comment on the possibility that her attitude was the result of a promise that had been made to the Republican-led state legislature? Collins spoke about the value of in-person teaching.

An Anonymous faculty member asked if there were plans to address changes in course modalities (quoting Michigan Daily article: <https://www.michigandaily.com/news/we-do-not-feel-safe-coming-on-campus-petition-demands-https://www.michigandaily.com/news/academics/our-classroom-is-our-domain-faculty-governance-members-criticize-umichs-process-to-request-teaching-remotely/>) if the situation on campus changed. Provost Collins replied that the central administration allowed individual units to make decisions about teaching modalities.

Professor Ahbel-Rappe asked if the provost was suggesting that we are not still in the pandemic as she says she is surprised if people want an online teaching modality. Provost Collins replied that the central administration has always allowed units to choose the teaching modality.

Professor Kelow-Bennett asked Provost Collins why she was so dismissive of requests for changes in teaching modality. Provost Collins said that President Schlissel had just answered that question.

Professor Traub said that personal safety is the most pressing issue for faculty. Provost Collins said that the administration continues to work to address safety issues, drawing attention to the vaccine mandate, mask requirements, and

the improvement in ventilation standards which have made the campus as safe as possible.

An Anonymous faculty member said that the women who survived Bruce Conforth's abuse (<https://www.michigandaily.com/news/former-rock-n-roll-professor-accused-of-sexual-misconduct/>) want to know when they can be contacted. President Schlissel replied that the University doesn't specifically reach out to survivors but provides opportunities for survivors to reach out to the University.

An anonymous faculty member asked President Schlissel if he would be attending the anti-ableism academy congress in the coming days (<https://www.michigandaily.com/campus-life/anti-ableism-conference-kicks-off-with-discussion-of-accessibility-discrimination/>). President Schlissel said he was not familiar with the conference.

An anonymous faculty member asked why, if the faculty are thoughtful, the administration did not support individual faculty requests about course modalities. Provost Collins said that the decisions about course modality are made at the unit level.

Professor Ward returned to Kelow-Bennett's question. President Schlissel said he did not see the relevance of the number of requests to the parameters governing the decisions and stressed the need for a consistent rubric. Provost Collins said that the administration had not treated individual cases in a dismissive way.

Professor Traub asked why did President Schlissel say that it is not in Work Connections' scope to review requests related to the health status of an instructor's family members or others with whom they reside. President Schlissel said that Work Connections deals with faculty requests—other decisions are referred to schools and colleges because those are not dealt with by Work Connections.

4:45 Motion 5 Discussion

5.The university should provide all instructors and staff who care for young children the option to move their teaching or office work online if their children cannot attend school in person because they are unvaccinated, must quarantine or are receiving medical or mental health care at home. The resolution also calls for the university to devote significant resources to “materially and structurally” support parents of young children and for SACUA to appoint an ad-hoc committee to determine recommendations around the shape and extent of this support.

Professors Paloff and Weineck spoke in favor of the motion.

4:58 The meeting adjourned

Professor Pedraza moved the adjournment Professor Pottow seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,
David S. Potter
Senate Secretary (former)

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."