



Committee Report

To: Silvia Pedraza, Chair, SACUA

From: Larry M. Gant, Chair, Government Relations Advisory Committee (GRAC)

Subject: Report on Activities of GRAC for Academic Year

Members: Marisa Conte, Elizabeth Devlin, Justin Hodge, Erin Kahle, Ann Marshall, Stilyana Mechkova, Daniil Menaenkov, Okeoma Mmeje, Renee Nguyen, Jacob Pearlman, Ruth Person, Michael Thompson, Megan Tompkins-Stange, Chris Kolb (VP for Government Relations), Nell Dority (Chief of Staff for Government Relations)

SACUA Liaison: Michael Atzmon

Meeting Dates: October 29, 2021; November 17, 2021; December 15, 2021;

January 26, 2022; March 30, 2022; April 27, 2022

Summary: The major topics of focus for the year included:

Summary Topic 1: Regent Election Process and Preview of 2022 Regent Race

VP Kolb gave the committee an overview of the regent election process. He indicated that regents are elected for an eight-year period, with elections each even year so there are overlapping terms. This year there are two regents whose terms are up: Michael J. Behm and Katherine E. White, both Democrats. Regents for the University of Michigan, Michigan State and Wayne State are nominated by the state parties at their conventions. VP Kolb shared that the Democratic Convention will be held April 9 in Detroit and the GOP will be doing their state convention, April 22 and 23 in Grand Rapids. The change from fall to spring allows the candidates to campaign for a longer period versus the late August early September timeline for statewide candidates.

VP Kolb shared with the committee that the budget process has started at the state level. The governor was presented with her budget in February. In April, the legislature will announce their target budget numbers. The governor initiated a 5% ongoing increase to the operational base, a one-time increase of 5% to all universities, and \$200 million for maintenance efforts for universities and community colleges. VP Kolb indicated, in the Labor and Economic Opportunity budget, there is over \$200 million in appropriations, \$130 million of which is for a University of Michigan electric vehicle center proposal. He will provide more information as the budget process moves

forward.

Summary Topic 2: Importance of Government Relations Department. Of special interest are programs that increase the visibility of university engagement at the state level (which aligns with community desired outcomes). The highlighted program for university engagement at the state level was the Roads Scholar Program.

VP Kolb gave an overview of Government Relations and the large breadth of issues they handle spanning from local to international issues. Government Relations' efforts connect the university with the entire state. VP Kolb would like the committee to engage in conversations that provide the faculty perspective surrounding different issues that will put emphasis on the public mission of the university.

VP Kolb invited Dana Sitzler, Associate Director of State Outreach, who coordinates the program, to discuss the program with the committee. VP Kolb indicated that one of the goals of the Road Scholars program is to connect the university and faculty to the state of Michigan. He stated that there are two state engagement staff members who are connecting with communities across the state to discover what the issues are and then to connect with faculty around those issues.

VP Kolb also shared that Government Relations is in the process of creating a tool to track engagement throughout the state of Michigan. He invited the committee to share their ideas for tracking tools. VP Kolb stated that the

Ginsberg Institute is currently creating a database, Connecting Michigan, a connection entry point for community members to UM faculty/researchers, institutes, or colleges. VP Kolb indicated that he could invite them to a future meeting to speak to the committee about this project.