



## **Government Relations Advisory Committee Minutes**

Minutes of January 26, 2022

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Present: Larry Gant (Chair), Chris Kolb (VP for Government Relations), Michael Atzmon (SACUA Liaison), Justin Hodge, Erin Kahle, Renee Nguyen, Ruth Person, Jacob Pearlman, Stilyana Mechkova, Nell Dority, Andrea Lewis, Elizabeth Devlin

Absent: Marisa Conte, Daniil Manaenkov, Okeoma Mmeje, Michael Thompson, Megan Tompkins-Stange,

1:02: Chair Gant called the meeting to order and gave an overview of the agenda.

### **Topic 1: Impact of UM Presidential replacement at state political levels**

VP Kolb shared that, following the dismissal of former President Schlissel, key legislators were apprised of the situation and that Mary Sue Coleman will serve as interim president. As reported in the press, there has been a negative reaction to the Regent's acting during a closed meeting. There is now interest in looking into the Public Meetings Act. If changes were to be made it would be a state constitutional amendment that would make all meetings of Regent's and Board of Trustees of the 15 public universities open to the public.

The committee discussed the reactions and impact of the recent dismissal.

### **Topic 2: Updates of renovation activities at Rackham building in Detroit, proposed UM center near downtown Detroit, and UM Detroit Center**

VP Kolb shared that the Regents approved the renovation to a portion of the Rackham Building that will be a 'front door' to the university to the community in the Detroit area. He indicated that space for community gatherings/meetings would be included.

The small Detroit Center Office will close, with their activities shifting to the Rackham building.

VP Kolb shared that the Detroit Center for Innovation will be a center for engaged learning in an urban setting. It consists of three buildings: the Detroit Center for Innovation, an incubator site, and a residential hall. It will offer graduate degrees, employee certifications and reskilling and upskilling opportunities. Curriculum development is underway.

VP Kolb invited the committee to share their ideas on how to broaden the university's reach into Detroit. He shared that at a future meeting it might be helpful to invite the Ginsburg Center to present on a database they are working on called Connecting Michigan. It is a database for exterior partners to find people inside the university that match their interests. The database could also be helpful for faculty and researchers to find partnerships internally and externally in their areas of expertise.

### **Topic 3: Status and impact of voting access changes in Michigan**



VP Kolb gave an overview of the proposed voting access changes in Michigan. This is a proposed change put out by the Republican Party, and they are currently in the process of collecting signatures across the state.

The committee discussed the impact of these voting actions on both in-state and out-of-state students.

VP Kolb shared that the university has always been very active in getting U-M students registered to vote and making sure there are opportunities available for students to vote. The university is preparing to work with the city clerk's office to replicate the campus model that proved successful during the 2022 election.

Chair Gant thanked the committee for their continued engagement and encouraged them to submit agenda topics to either himself or to the Faculty Senate Office for consideration for the next meeting agenda.

1:54pm: The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Devlin  
Faculty Senate Office