



**Government Relations Advisory Committee
Minutes**

Minutes of February 23, 2023, 9:15-10:00 am, regular meeting

Circulated: March 27, 2023

Approved: March 30, 2023

Present: Ruth Person (Chair, presiding), Ramiro Garcia, Erin Kahle, Chris Kolb (VP for Government Relations), Andrea Lewis (Government Relations Specialist), Ann Marshall (FSO, secretary), Teri Rosales, and Michael Thompson.

1. 9:17 am, Chair Person called the meeting to order and the minutes from the December meeting were approved.

2. VP Chris Kolb Update:

- The State's Proposed Budget for Higher Education: budget includes a 4% increase for all public universities and community colleges, \$13.5 million increase; includes money for ongoing maintenance, infrastructure, scholarships (\$100 million), pathways funding program, mental health (\$39 million), wrap around support for students (\$30 million), college success fund (\$25 million). The proposed funding is considered a good starting point, a "floor" (not the ceiling), with money allocated to a number of areas and with opportunities for growth. The proposed funding goes next to the legislature with an estimate of early June to be approved.
- MI House [Higher Education Committee](#) Update: This is a newly reformed committee without a clear agenda yet and an opportunity for building knowledge on higher education in the legislature. Michigan Education Association (MEA) efforts and labor issues could impact the work of the committee and additional potential issues to be raised may include graduation rates, mental health, wrap around services, safety, among others.

3. GRAC discussion on items of interest for future meetings:

- VP Kolb and the UM Office of Government Relations is interested in GRAC members' input and work on how to best leverage UM faculty expertise to inform and impact policy makers. Discussion included: the possibility of using IRIS data/expertise to create an easily searchable dataset of faculty experts, with a connection to HR to keep it up to date; while Government Relations remains neutral, the office can help facilitate connections; legislators may be more willing to take up (or not) an issue depending on the circumstances in their electoral districts and/or the situation in the legislature more broadly.

4. Action Item: GRAC Brainstorming Session: What are the areas of expertise that UM faculty have that can contribute to policy making? Brainstorming could include:

- An exercise in being open to any ideas and to identify potential people and issues on the local, state, and/or federal level.
- Also, since there are so many good public policy issues, it can also be helpful to identify where is there traction? And, there is so much expertise at U of M, one or several faculty member don't know the research areas of all faculty.



5. **Initial Brainstorming of Ideas Included:** Medicaid, many regulatory barriers and many opportunities, how to partner better with MDHHS and save costs for Medicaid; Are there ways to move forward the rent control debate even if this is a divisive issue?; Gun safety and suicide: these are priority issues that in the state of Michigan, e.g. how to improve 20-year old legislation; the consideration of the many railroads in Ann Arbor and policies on this topic after the derailment in Ohio.

Meeting adjourned at 10 am

Submitted by Ann Marshall, FSO, Secretary