Government Relations Advisory Committee (GRAC) Minutes

Minutes of March 30, 2023, 9:15-10:00 am, regular meeting
Circulated: 04/24/2023
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Present: Ruth Person (Chair, presiding), Ramiro Garcia, Larry Gant, Chris Kolb (VP for Government Relations), Andrea Lewis (Government Relations Specialist), Ann Marshall (FSO, secretary), Teri Rosales.

1. 9:00 am, Chair Person called the meeting to order and the minutes from the February meeting were approved.

2. VP Chris Kolb Update:
   - Two major recent issues in the MI legislature include, first, the repeal of the right-to-work law and, second, the bill package of gun safety legislation, where UM faculty have been called upon to testify. UM’s approach is to typically not take a position, but to inform. A rare exception might be an issue very close to UM’s mission such as academic freedom.
   - The recent Congressional Breakfast was very successful and included a reception at the alumni association, a meeting with White House staff on climate policy, a meeting with MI’s two senators, and an engaging conversation with the Department of Education, where mental health policy was discussed as a particular area of interest, along with higher education affordability and accessibility.

3. Brainstorming Session: GRAC members discussed areas of UM faculty expertise having potential to inform policy making.
   - Teri Rosales -- Rural issues in MI, including three recently-funded interdisciplinary projects that combine the social sciences and engineering and focus on water management, electric vehicles, and diabetes in rural areas.
   - Larry Gant – Detroit, including being captivated by the many neighborhood-based activities; efforts linking neighborhoods with funding; a revitalized City government. UM Social Work students intern with the City. See also the Detroit State of the City presentation and UM Detroit Engagement Census. An update to the census is coming soon.
   - The Egalitarian Metropolis: Towards an Inclusive Recovery for Detroit, March 2023 symposium.
   - TRAILS
   - Government Relations efforts include: 1) connecting policy makers to researchers on an individual level, either with a legislator or agency, e.g. the Dept. of Agriculture, 2) helping to bring a researcher’s expertise to a legislative committee, 3) promoting communication, e.g. newsletters, etc.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 am

Next meeting is Thursday, April 27, 9:15 am

Submitted by Ann Marshall, FSO, Secretary