To: SACUA

From: Priti Shah Chair, Academic Affairs Advisory Committee

Subject: Report on Activities of Academic Affairs Advisory Committee for 2023-2024

Members: Andrew Chang, Bruno Giordani, Rachel Goldman, Aubree Gordon, Artemis Leontis, Emmanuelle Marquis, Frank Pelosi, David Potter, Mark Rosentraub, Jordan Siegel, Julia Catalano (graduate student), Gabrielle Scott (undergraduate student)

SACUA Liaison: Sergio Villalobos-Ruminott

Meeting Dates:
September 29, 2022; November 21, 2022; January 9, 2023 (planning meeting); January 26, 2023; February 26, 2023; April 6, 2023.

2022-2023 Committee Charge

1. Supporting the Provost and providing faculty perspectives on any matters arising and also communicating to the faculty the provost's perspective. In particular, two areas of interest that the Provost and Committee Chair have identified are as follows:
   - Supporting student success, including their mental wellbeing, through examining relevant data that the Provost's Office has already received in order to help derive recommendations.
   - Examining how the faculty could further assist in promoting a professional, positive, and respectful environment on campus that supports a constructive exchange of alternative ideas, perspectives, and experiences.
Other topics will be proposed by the Provost and/or the Committee Chair when generating the agenda for monthly meetings.

2. Ongoing discussion about ECRT—understanding how it differs from OIE and ensuring that there are protections for complainants re: fear of retaliation. Supporting the idea of enhancing the Office of Ethics, Integrity, and Compliance so it is more robust and more attentive to faculty needs.

3. Consideration of increased faculty workload due to joint appointments, digitization, lack of clerical support, and additional student demands of COVID19.

4. Discussion about the administrator evaluation process, including faculty engagement/input during administrator reviews.

Information Obtained and AAAC Meeting Discussion

AAAC members and the Provost discussed:

- **Academic calendar adjustments** and beginning the winter term a week later (September 2022). Provost McCauley announced this change to the 2023-2024 academic calendar in February 2023.
- **Retaliation training module**, implemented later in the academic year as Building a Culture That Thrives: Preventing Retaliation.
- **Student mental health**, including the need for better coordination of U-M support groups, increased availability of CAPS appointments, proactively identifying students before they seek assistance (e.g. psychological, learning concerns) and a more holistic approach to supporting students. AAAC received a copy of the *2021 Student Mental Health Innovative Approaches Review Committee Report*.
- **GEO negotiations**, with the Provost sharing information about the terms of negotiation and Provost's letter to faculty about the negotiations. The Provost invited feedback, with AAAC comments including: the helpfulness of the Provost's letter, faculty uncertainty about how to respond to the negotiations, thoughts on cost of living and of salary as a component of grant funds, questions about Rackham's new funding program and how faculty might navigate this in making recommendations to graduate students, among other issues.
- **Strategic Visioning Process**, with the Provost sharing the visioning process, timeline, and also encouraging faculty input. Discussion topics included public visibility of research as an area for improvement, need for a well-rounded curriculum, and ideas for engaging faculty in the visioning process (e.g. utilizing ADVANCE, engage with SACUA, gather feedback from chairs and ask chairs to devote time to this at faculty meetings), among other issues.

AAAC Actions and Recommendations

In addition to discussing faculty issues at AAAC meetings, AAAC members issued four documents (see attached Appendices), each with recommendations for the Provost's Office. First, at the request of Provost, AAAC members offered feedback on the *Final Recommendations of the Prost-COVID Grading Policy Committee*. Second, AAAC issued a statement endorsing SACUA's recommendations for UM's new Office of Ethics, Integrity and Compliance that, in particular, emphasized the importance of an independent investigative capacity for the office. Third, AAAC's document on faculty workload provided numerous examples of increased faculty workload, such as increased time supporting students and the many time-consuming administrative tasks expected of faculty. Fourth, AAAC issued a statement on the need for faculty to meaningfully participate in reviewing SPGs, and, as a start, for a committee to be created to review four SPGs (related to discipline, fitness for duty and sick leave), where abelist and gender discriminating language is particularly problematic.

AAAC also discussed having a speaking event during the Winter term, with Catharine MacKinnon as keynote and a panel discussion afterwards. The FSO indicated its interest in

supporting a few committees with one-time events because it currently had the financial resources to do so. The AAAC voted to move forward with such an event. The FSO invited Catherine MacKinnon, with Chair Shah and Jordan Siegel assisting. Due to scheduling conflicts and the difficulty of organizing a well-supported event mid-term, the plans shifted to holding an event on October 25th, 2023, with Jennifer Freyd as the keynote, followed by a panel discussion. Jennifer Joy Freyd, Ph.D. is the Founder and President of the Center for Institutional Courage. She is also Professor Emerit of Psychology at the University of Oregon, and Adjunct Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences in the School of Medicine, Stanford University. The topic will be "constructive ways in which the University could more effectively eliminate gender violence and harassment." Jennifer Freyd has already agreed to be the keynote and has made travel arrangements. The FSO will continue to help support and organize the event.

AAAC 2022-2023 Report Appendices

AAAC Feedback on Implementation of the Recommendations of the Post-COVID Grade Policy Committee

As requested by the Provost, the AAAC reviewed the recommendations of the grading policy committee. Here, we provide a brief summary of the AAAC comments.

Recommendation 1: Competitive grading should be modified or eliminated.

The AAAC generally agrees with part a (discourage competitive grading) and b (regular review of grading schemes), with the caveat that competitive grading should be explicitly defined. However, AAAC members expressed significant concerns about part C (allow faculty and students to opt for alternative grade reporting schemes such as CR/NCR, narrative assessment and). We are concerned about instructor bias and impact on students' future prospects. At minimum, we recommend that insofar as there is student choice, students should be educated about potential tradeoffs.

Recommendation 2: Encourage faculty to use authentic assessments, and provide them with the resources needed to provide timely feedback.

The AAAC endorses the spirit of this recommendation, as it conforms with best practices. At the same time, members of the AAAC are concerned about the impact on faculty workload; they note that many faculty have already adapted such practices with minimal support. Finally, the AAAC would like to see a clear definition of "authentic assessments."

Recommendation 3: Policies around Course Withdrawals and electing P/F should be consistent across the University

The AAAC agrees with this recommendation.

Recommendation 4 - Establish differentiated transcripts for internal and external use

The AAAC has a mixed reaction to this recommendation. Some members are concerned about equitable access to practices such as taking courses multiple times (i.e., highly privileged students can afford to retake courses numerous times and "game" the system). In contrast, others feel that differentiated transcripts may actually benefit less privileged students (for example, if they had to drop a course due to difficult life events) and that this benefit may outweigh the potential for highly privileged students to manipulate the system. Regardless of whether or not this policy is implemented, it would be important to assess its impact on students of different backgrounds.

Academic Affairs Advisory Committee
Endorsement of SACUA OEIC Proposals

The AAAC endorses Faculty Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA) proposals regarding the new Office of Ethics, Integrity and Compliance in its memorandum to President Ono. While we recognize that these offices can take a variety of forms, a crucial component of SACUA's recommendation is that the University of Michigan's office have an independent investigative capacity. This is a feature of offices that have been created at other Big Ten institutions like Ohio State (https://compliance.osu.edu/), Rutgers (https://uec.rutgers.edu/) and Michigan State (https://oarc.msu.edu/compliance/index.html) or the University of Southern California (https://ooc.usc.edu/) where power imbalances have hindered investigations in the past. The creation of an independent office with investigative capacity was also a recommendation of SACUA's previous WilmerHale Task Force.

　　　　We feel that the creation of an office without an independent investigative capacity will undermine community faith in the office and undermine confidence in the good faith of the University's administration.

Members
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　　　　Gabrielle Scott
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　　　　Jordan Siegel
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Faculty Workload & Wellbeing
Academic Affairs Advisory Committee

Introduction

UM faculty are engaged in world-class scholarship, teaching and mentoring undergraduates, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, research scientists and junior colleagues, doing clinical work and training, engaging in service to their discipline, the university, and their department homes, and engaging with the public. Faculty at R1 universities work many, many hours (recent studies estimate >60 hours per week, with a 1999 study of UM faculty reporting ~60 hour workweeks). Faculty stress has increased significantly over the last few years. More than half of faculty surveyed in the US report emotional drain and work related strain,

Faculty overwork may be related to poorer physical health, increased mental health concerns, greater burnout, and decreased productivity. Furthermore, increased workload not directly related to teaching and scholarship (e.g., taking on more clerical duties, viewing compliance trainings) may be costly to the university by decreasing research output, reducing grant applications and attainment, and negatively impacting quality of instruction. We note that in recent years have seen even greater demands on tenure stream faculty, clinical faculty, and lecturers and that a focus of the most recent SACUA meeting was on faculty burnout.

Unfortunately, this burden is disproportionately impacting some faculty over others. Women and underrepresented minorities tend to be most affected by overwork and there is a significant portion of the work that remains unacknowledged and under-appreciated. For example, these faculty tend to go the extra mile to make their teaching inclusive, to be role models, to serve as informal academic advisors, to write letters of recommendations, to be on DEI committees, and so forth, which takes time away from research. They are asked to be on many committees because these committees want inclusive representation, but that adds to their burden.

As far as we are aware, the 1999 study is the most recent formal report of University of Michigan faculty work life (though the Advance Climate Survey asks about work hours). We believe that the time is ripe to revisit this issue. More importantly, we must take concrete steps to directly reduce faculty workload.

Examples of Increased Workload

The AAAC has identified a number of circumstances and practices that have led to increased faculty workload in recent years. This list is not a systematic review, just concrete examples of how workload may have changed in recent years. The fact that something is listed does not indicate resistance to it or objection to the work. Rather, this additional work has not been acknowledged or accounted for, and that the total workload is overwhelming. These examples are not listed in any particular order but are classified by topic.

1. *Increased time supporting students.* Many members of the AAAC report spending more time on student accommodations and student mental health problems. In fact,

recent studies have found that neary ⅔ of undergraduates have anxiety, depression or another mental health condition. In large classes, this means several crises that must be dealt with per term (everything from contacting the Dean of Students Office, fielding family emails (without violating FERPA), creating new assessments, re-grading work, taking students to ER).

2. *Automation and centralization.* More generally, many tasks that used to be simply "email an administrative assistant" or "stop by the IT office" now requires a long and time-consuming process that starts with logging into some online system, filling out a form, receiving a "ticket", and then having to follow-up or finding work-arounds after hearing from no human ever or, if lucky after several days.

   Even stopping by the IT office might require going to a building far away; even basic equipment that must be borrowed regularly- like forgotten charges just before teaching a class- involves a 30 minutes (walking, filling out a long form and checklist, walking back). In the past, one could stop by the IT office, they would know who you are and they would let you borrow an available charger for an hour.

   Faculty have significantly reduced support staff because many activities have been centralized, so we are doing all our own support on top of our demanding jobs. The creation of shared services has, all in all, had a dramatic impact on faculty productivity and workload.

3. Faculty provided many ways in which such changes that are intended to reduce administrative/clerical work actually transfer this work to faculty.
   a. For example, most departments now use online forms for faculty evaluations that are enormously time-consuming whereas in the past faculty just submitted CVs; several faculty specifically noted this concern.
   b. In another example, letters of recommendation that were copied by clerical staff, signed by faculty, and then stuffed in addressed envelopes by staff now require faculty to create numerous online accounts, fill out many forms, and upload each individual letter.
   c. And in another example, rather than having students hand faculty a form indicating they are eligible for academic accommodations, faculty receive individual emails for each student. The faculty must click on a link in the email nad og into an online system and download that student's letter for each and then keep track of the names and different accommodations. One LSA faculty member reported it took them 3 hours to make a list of students who needed extra time on a test and other accommodations (300 students), a task that could have taken one minute if someone emailed a list to them. This faculty member has a lab of more than half a dozen graduate students, hundreds of publications, is an award-winning teacher, and earns a relatively high salary.

4. *Changing teaching demands.* Different AAAC members brought up different teaching-related workload matters which are listed here.

   a. Teaching has changed in a number of ways in the last few decades, and some of these changes have a positive impact on student learning. In some departments, class sizes have increased as the number of majors has grown but the faculty size has stayed constant.

   b. New technologies are constantly introduced, sometimes without any added benefit, to which faculty must adapt (e.g., Ctools->Canvas). During the COVID pandemic, faculty spent significant time learning and honing skills in new distant/digital teaching technologies and distant pedagogy. Even post-pandemic, some faculty have noted that students are requesting hybrid options for in-person courses.

   c. Something as simple as reading and commenting on a paper essay now requires viewing documents through canvas, entering points for each component of a rubric, making comments online, and so forth.

   d. Faculty have to constantly change their assessments taking into account student access to technology (most recently, ChatGPT).

   e. And smaller graduate student cohorts means that instructors are teaching specialized courses as directed readings (599 in LSA) as an overload.

   f. GSI's are responsible for more students, sometimes displacing more grading on faculty.

   g. There is a perception out there that students' class attendance rates have gone down meaningfully and stayed down relative to the pre-pandemic era, and that this has led to students perceiving that they can put more demands on faculty to send them class session videos and to give them duplicative instruction that they would have received by attending class. This adds to the workload burden faced by individual faculty members.

   h. In at least one unit, an administrative focus on reducing and/or eliminating courses without "large enough" enrollments has meant that numerous colleagues feel stressed out about enrollments. In terms of workload, this means planning new courses that are never provided and then taching an overload the next term.

5. *Compliance/Training.* Faculty are constantly asked to participate in new training ranging from attending seminars to watching videos and taking quizzes, responding to surveys, and so forth. Every time there is a problem, a new intervention is created. For example, with the increase in DEI concerns, faculty are undergoing constant new training on multiple levels for DEI; responding to surveys and attending workshops on DEI.

6. *Academic calendar;* Some AAAC members shared concerns about the academic calendar. Although the semester now begins before September 1, faculty members are paid for September 1-May 31. Furthermore, the fall semester has two additional teaching days compared to the post Labor Day schedule.

A second problem with the current academic calendar is the extremely short break between the fall and winter terms. This short break comes at a very busy time during which faculty (depending on their roles) engage in end of semester grading, new semester planning, graduate admissions, faculty hiring, and working on January and February grant deadlines. (This issue may already be addressed).

Recommendations for Moving Forward

The AAAC brainstormed possible steps that could be taken to address faculty workload. Again, these are examples and a more thorough analysis of possible solutions and costs is beyond the scope of this memo.

One proposal to form a campus-wide committee chaired by faculty with a faculty majority to investigate and make recommendations about faculty workload. They may choose to conduct a survey, but it may be that a survey is not necessary. Other recommendations:

1. Reduce the pervasiveness of the shared services model and return staff to units where their efforts can be more flexibly allocated to needs.
2. Increase staff who directly support faculty; NSF and NIH assume that clerical work is supported by overhead but for the most part it is not.
3. Consider paying faculty for one week in August (or changing the work/pay calendar to reflect the August teaching).
4. Minimize required training and other compliance activities. Even if necessary, space them out further (e.g., training that must be completed every 2 years could be required every 3 years instead). Many standards do not change enough (and memories are long!) to justify re-exposure to familiar material.
5. Analyze procedures from a faculty workload perspective, rather than from a staff perspective. For example, entering every service activity in a box on a form rather than submitting a cv that includes that information reduces staff workload but increases faculty workload. Giving us a list of students that require accommodations at the beginning of the term rather than asking us to download individual student letters has shifted work from staff to faculty. A single work study student might be able to consolidate this data for many many faculty. Ask faculty to identify inefficiencies of this type.
6. Reduce reliance on a shared services, distance model. Aside from obvious inconveniences for faculty, there are many downsides. There is no sense of clear university mission (teaching, scholarship, clinical work) or even connection to that mission if staff are separated from the folks who are doing this work. The faculty feel entirely unsupported, and the staff do not know the people who they are supporting.
7. Value the hidden activities many faculty engage in in support of students, DEI awareness, and culture change.
8. This was on our list but hopefully it is already implemented after the Regent's meeting last week: Change the academic calendar so that there is an extra week of

break in the winter. This change would not only impact workload and work/life balance, but could also increase the number of winter term grant submissions.

Faculty Workload Resources

https://www.chronicle.com/article/faculty-members-are-suffering-burnout-so-some-colleges-have-used-these-strategies-to-help?cid=gen_sign_in

https://www.michigandaily.com/news/academics/sacua-discusses-vacancy-election-process-faculty-burnout/

https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2022/09/12/author-charts-her-way-back-faculty-burnout-new-book

The SPG Review Process

There is currently no process by which faculty can participate in, review, or comment on the creation, modification, application, and enforcement of SPGs. This is problematic not only from a governance standpoint, but also in the potential accumulation of inconsistencies, duplications, and outdated language over time leading to confusion and potential harm for university employees. Further, it clear that a review of what is now seen as ableist and gender discriminating language must be performed.

We therefore recommend that:

- A dedicated committee combining faculty and University leadership be charged to review four specific SPGs as a start:
    - *https://spg.umich.edu/policy/201.12: Discipline*
    - *https://spg.umich.edu/policy/201.15: Fitness for duty*
    - *https://spg.umich.edu/policy/201.15-01: Temporary Removal of Faculty for Lack of Fitness for Duty*
    - *https://spg.umich.edu/policy/201.11-1: Sick Leave plan: Academic appointments*
- Any new SPG or changes to existing SPGs be published in the Record two months prior to their effective dates.