



### **General Counsel's Advisory Committee (GCAC)**

Minutes of Meeting: 1/19/24

Circulated: 3/27/24

Approved: 4/3/24

Present: Rogério Pinto (Chair), Adam Matzger, Graham Hardig, Tim Lynch (VP and General Counsel), Judith Walker, Pamela Smock, Steven Chinn, Christopher J. Walker, Janet Biermann, Kirsten Herold, Alex Yasha Yi (SACUA Liaison),

Absent: Nancy Allee, Jamie Tappenden, Silke-Maria Weineck, Londen Ward

Faculty Senate Office: Eric Vandenberghe

**9:00am-9:08am:** Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Minutes, Announcements

The agenda was approved. The minutes for the September and November GCAC meetings were approved.

**9:08am-10:00am: Limits to free speech and how to handle speech that is hateful. Anger is protected speech. Should it be?; Discussion on the recent Congressional testimony on antisemitism on college campuses that took place in early December 2023**

Summary: The Chair introduced the topic and acknowledged the recent adoption by the Board of Regents of the statement of principles on diversity of thought and free speech. VP Lynch laid out a brief timeline that led to the adoption of this statement. The committee was thanked for their work on this. It is acknowledged by a member as an important step forward, and can address some of the issues on campus.

A question is asked on how this would affect UM administration handling of controversial individuals or groups speaking on campus. The statement does not change how these types of situations are handled. UM does not have the ability to stop these issues, so long as they can be done safely. Concerns on this point are raised. Since UM is a public institution, speech will not be limited. A broader discussion on free speech is held.

A discussion on the timing of the approval of the statement takes place.

The recent Harvard President resignation is brought up in conjunction with the related Congressional hearings regarding antisemitism on college campuses. The hearing took place in early December 2023. The threat of harm can chill free speech and the defending of processes. A point is made by a member that the institution is responsible for defending the position. The sexism and racism of the case is discussed.

A question about how the Presidents in the Congressional hearings were prepped. Discussion ensued on this topic. What is the role of the University President? Different opinions are shared. The difficulty of testifying before Congress is reflected on. It is easier to have this conversation in a friendly committee.



There is support for the statement. A point is made that we have a responsibility to defend free speech. A point is made on the importance of the adoption of this statement being at the Regential level.

The student's perspective is given. The reaction seemingly has been mostly positive. Certain concerns are raised, particularly defining violent speech.

Action: Discussion

**10:00am-10:29am: General Discussion; GCAC term limits**

Summary: VP Lynch exited the meeting at this time.

The new nominating committee is discussed following a question regarding committee term limits. A point is made that having a big GCAC committee improves the diversity of thought. Having students is praised by a member due to the unique perspectives they can provide.

A debrief of the earlier conversation takes place. The power dynamics of free speech are discussed. The CSG elections are brought up and discussed briefly. The implications for faculty governance are discussed.

Action: Discussion

**10:29am:** Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Vandenberghe  
Faculty Governance Coordinator  
Faculty Senate Office