



Academic Affairs Advisory Committee (AAAC) Minutes
March 14, 2024, 1:45 – 3:15pm (Provost attending 2-3 pm)
via Zoom (virtual)

Present: Emmanuelle Marquis (Chair), Colleen Conway, Robert Deegan, Christine Gerdes (Special Counsel to the Provost), Bruno Giordani, Aubree Gordon, Allison Kushner (invited guest, Director of Disability Equity and ADA Coordinator), Ann Marshall (FSO), Luke McCarthy (FSO), Laurie McCauley (Provost), Damani Partridge (SACUA liaison), Jordan Siegel.

Minutes of Meeting: 03/14/2024

Circulated: 4/10/2024

Approved: 4/17/2024

1. In preparation for the arrival of the Provost, the minutes from 02/01/2024 were approved, and members briefly discussed AAAC agenda items.
2. Support for faculty and staff with disabilities and a draft Disability Justice document
 - Invited guest, Allison Kushner, Director of Disability Equity and ADA Coordinator, was introduced and welcomed to the meeting. Allison’s office is well-positioned to support U-M faculty and staff with disabilities and to also work on prevention.
 - Disability equity is one the Provost’s top goals, and the Provost invites AAAC input and is also partnering with VP-CDEI Chavous on disability-related initiatives. There is interest building upon the [2019 Student IDEA Board](#) and [report](#).
 - A draft AAAC document was shared with the Provost that outlined a proposal for addressing systemic discrimination toward staff and faculty with disabilities and also recommended steps for UM to become an institutional leader in Disability Justice (DJ).
 - NSF and other sources report an underrepresentation of people with disabilities in higher education, including in [STEM fields](#). A [2020 U-M ADVANCE report](#) identified discrimination and macroaggressions facing U-M community members with disabilities and also offered recommendations.
 - AAAC’s draft document made recommendations that included: 1) expanding the [Disability Navigator Pilot Program](#), addressing ongoing systemic issues with Work Connections, and training U-M leaders in Disability Justice, 2) supporting culture change and grassroots disability advocacy efforts, and 3) formalizing, expanding, and strengthening the [disability study program](#) (led by Robert Adams and Remi Yergeau).
3. Provost and AAAC discussion and next step brainstorming:
 - There is a sense of urgency within the disability community on these issues and frustration with the slow pace of change. A goal is to create equity across units while also being embedded within the units. A potential role for the Office of Disability Equity is to help coordinate the expansion of the Navigator Program and for the Provost’s Council on Disability to help move forward with AAAC recommendations.
 - The Provost’s Office may be able to help identify funds to support faculty doing research on these issues. If individuals and entities across units were to submit funding proposals, an initial step would be to create the right entity to oversee the proposal process. There was discussion on involving Michigan Medicine (perhaps with a matching program), while also ensuring opportunities for both



MM and other campus units to be involved in meaningful ways. It is important to frame the project correctly, i.e. focused on disability justice, and to consult with disability advocates (e.g. Robert Adams, Remi Yergeau) to create a robust process and wording.

There was also discussion on the following potential goals:

- To identify other institutions and experts who excel in disability justice in order to create, for example, a graduate program/s and undergraduate major.
- To look carefully at U-M hiring practices and how the interview process itself may prevent candidates from disclosing a disability. For example, to consider how the faculty interview process is so taxing that it immediately rules out candidates. Training for unit leaders in disability justice could potentially help address such issues.
- To review one-year data from the Disability Navigator Pilot Program that could inform initial planning. An LSA AAAC member could reach out to inquire. A report is expected at the end of the three-year pilot program.

5. Additional Committee Discussion

- After the Provost left the meeting, there was brief committee discussion related to AAAC next steps, including an update on the salary study, whether to consider drafting a SACUA/SA resolution, and what opportunities might exist to collect additional data on Work Connections.

Upcoming meetings:

April 17, 9:45-11:15 am, AAAC meeting (with the Provost attending 10-11 am)

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Marshall, Faculty Governance Coordinator (FSO)