



Government Relations Advisory Committee (GRAC) Minutes

Minutes of October 26, 2023, 9:15-10:00 am, regular meeting

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Present: Tom Braun (Chair), Shevon Desai, Ramiro Garcia, Ann Marshall (FSO, Coordinator), Luke McCarthy (FSO, Director), Okeoma Mmeje, Mike Shriberg, Jeffrey Yackley

Absent: Eesha Acharya, Jowei Chen, Larry Gant (on sabbatical), Nakhiah Goulbourn, Shahzad Mian

1. Chair Braun called the meeting to order and there were no changes to the April minutes.
2. Welcome from the Chair and introductions
3. Discussion of the [2023-2024 GRAC Charge](#) and plans for the upcoming year:
 - The role of the committee is to advise VP Kolb, to bring action items to SACUA, to engage in conversation, and to develop recommendations, such as a statement, a seminar, speakers, etc.
 - Charge Item #1, government investigations of faculty and academic freedom
 - VP Kolb: Government Relations becomes involved if there is active legislation at the federal level or if some federal office is involved. The possibility that officials might use a broad-brush approach (targeting everyone from a specific country) instead of a finer brush approach (specific traits of individuals). The UM Office of Research has done recent work on this issue.
 - Gubernatorial appointment versus election of university board members: MI legislators recently discussed giving the governor, instead of voters, the power to select university board members. Having a single person, the governor, make University board appointments is concerning. See Detroit News, "[MSU turmoil ignites talks over appointing university board members.](#)"
 - Alcohol sales at athletic events and Government Relations role with the recent MI law change -- VP Kolb: Western Michigan and Michigan State pushed for the legislation and U-M asked for more flexibility than originally proposed. Crisler and Yost stadiums have moved forward and staff are being trained for Michigan Stadium. U-M is in conversation with other Big 10 schools on the issue.

VP Kolb left the meeting at 10:45 am to attend another last-minute scheduled meeting.

4. GRAC members expressed interest in these additional issues:
 - Strategic Plan and Master Plan – how is U-M working with local government with these plans, including affordable graduate student housing and parking?
 - Free Speech – GRAC members are encouraged to give feedback as invited in the recent [University Record article on the issue.](#)
 - New MI law with implications for ECRT-related mandatory reporting – Tom Braun and Luke McCarthy met with ECRT, who raised concerns about House Bill [4124](#), recently [signed](#) by the governor. The bill includes vague language, “to prevent or attempt to prevent the other person from



reporting.” The behavior of faculty could potentially be criminalized in situations where faculty explain the challenges of ECRT-related reporting procedures to students.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Marshall, FSO, Faculty Governance Coordinator