

To: SACUA

From: Tom Braun, Chair, Government Relations Advisory Committee

Subject: Report on Activities of Government Relations Advisory Committee for 2023-2024

Members: Eesha Acharya, Tom Braun, Jowei Chen, Shevon Desai, Larry Gant, Ramiro Garcia, Shahzad Mian, Okeoma Mmeje, Mike Shriberg, Jeffrey Yackley

SACUA Liaison: Lindsay Admon

Meeting Dates: 10/26/2023, 02/22/2024

Committee Charge

1. Review recent examples of government investigations of faculty that undermine academic freedom (such as recent efforts to identify and prosecute alleged Chinese spies) and offer recommendations for action by the Office of Government Relations.
2. Work with VP Kolb to identify specific areas needing faculty engagement with government relations issues, and identify, contact, and solicit the assistance of faculty members with expertise and connections with the potential to impact policy making.
3. Examine how UM can work directly with Ann Arbor city government officials to develop plans for creating and maintaining affordable housing for graduate students.
4. Consider emergent issues or topics brought forward by GRAC committee members or the Vice President for Government Relations for discussion over the course of the year. While coordinating with the Faculty Senate Office to help avoid duplicating work that SACUA has now referred to itself or to another committee, the committee may also continue discussing any issues or topics raised in the committee's most recent annual committee report.

Information Obtained and Topics Discussed at GRAC meetings

- Alcohol sales policy at athletics events in relation to recent MI law changes.
- Role of the House Education Committee on setting education policy and Government Relations' work related to bipartisan education policy.
- The impact of the MI governor's budget on education funding, such as in relation to financial aid opportunities created for U-M students.
- Government Relations' work in facilitating opportunities for U-M faculty to provide expertise to policy makers at either the local, state, or national level.
- Considerations for how U-M is working with local governments on the UM Vision 2034 plan.
- A recently passed MI law with implications for ECRT-related mandatory reporting, including House Bill 4124.
- The issue of gubernatorial appointment versus election of university board members that has been raised in relation to other universities across the state of Michigan.



- Discussion of the Alabama Supreme Court Case regarding embryos being given rights and the impact of this on medical care more broadly.
- Government Relations' role regarding government investigations of faculty and academic freedom. For example, the DMNC hosted a March 2024 panel presentation titled, *China Initiative and Its Aftermath: The Impact on Science and Academic and Intellectual Freedom on Campus*.
- Government Relations' role regarding academic freedom and free speech more broadly. For example, GRAC members were invited to give feedback on U-M's draft *Principles on Diversity of Thought and Freedom of Expression*, as invited with an October 19, 2023 *Record* article.

Recommendations

- Identify and help implement strategies for faculty and Government Relations to meaningfully promote student civic engagement regarding the 2024 election.
- Discuss and provide faculty input on Government Relations' efforts with Vision 2034.
- Continue to address policy issues of interest to GRAC members, such as academic freedom among others.
- Discuss with the City of Ann Arbor opportunities for housing and access to facilities.