



### **Communications Advisory Committee (CAC)**

Minutes of Meeting: 3/8/24

Circulated: 4/23/24

Approved: 10/10/24

Present: Cliff Lampe (Chair), Pat Herbst, Ellen Bauerle, Richie Hunter (VP of Communications), William A. Calvo-Quirós, Stefanie Galban, Jim Cranford, Laura Beny

Absent: Sarah Murray, Maheema Kohli, Malinda Brunk, Alex Yasha Yi (SACUA Liaison)

Faculty Senate Office: Eric Vandenberghe

**1:02pm:** Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Minutes, Announcements

The agenda was approved. The minutes for the December CAC meeting were approved.

**1:02pm-1:27pm: Discussion of the Kalven Report**

Summary: The Chair introduced the subject. A brief summary of the [Kalven Report](#) is provided.

A question is posed about the limits of neutrality by a university. This is framed through the eyes of a faculty member. The difference between university neutrality and how that impacts individual faculty is discussed. There are times that the general public cannot differentiate between the opinions of faculty, students, staff at the university, and the official stance of the university. With that in mind, it is different when an individual faculty says something versus the official stance of the university. Some are not aware or comfortable with institutions such as the University of Michigan being places differing opinions and debate are not only welcome, but encouraged.

A member of the committee suggests that the university could make a statement against particular types of speech including condemning racism and sexism, which could be pointed to in specific instances. It is suggested that the university does not need to be punitive in its reaction to speech that does not break the law.

A discussion takes place regarding when speech crosses the line in terms of misinformation. Expert opinions are discussed when it comes to medical advice, as well as well-established fact. The university has an obligation to protect its community. Neutrality would be applied more so to geopolitical situations. There are times when geopolitical situations come directly as a threat to academic institutions and their mission, and these are also instances where the university has an obligation to defend academic freedom, as well as the mission of the university.

A question is asked if there is a generational difference in how individuals expect institutions to respond to geopolitical events. A member states that expectations between generations seem to be altered and potential reasons for this are provided. Further discussion ensues on this topic. A point is made that there is an overwhelming amount of



information with the advent of the internet, and students can sometimes respond negatively to this.

Action: Discussion

**1:27pm-1:41pm: Campus during an election**

Summary: The Chair introduces this topic and provides a brief overview of some of the potential challenges that the university community will face during the upcoming election cycle. There will be a lot of information available, and some will look to faculty and the University for guidance.

A question is posed regarding the university and faculty's preparedness for the potential issues that will be faced. Opinions on this matter are shared. A challenge the campus will face is protection of academic freedom and encourage respectful dispute. The consequences of not being ready can be seen in Florida and Texas right now in regards to issues of DEI and changes to curriculum.

Action: Discussion

**1:41pm-1:58pm: Reducing email clutter**

Summary: This topic is introduced by the Chair. There is an overwhelming amount of email coming to members of the campus community. The biggest contributors to this issue are identified. Potential solutions are discussed. A central policy or guidance for departmental communication is discussed. A suggestion is made for utilizing AI tools. The merits of these ideas are discussed.

Discussion regarding the current email interface are discussed. Suggested improvements are brought forth by committee members. These suggestions include improving the search function, improved sorting, among others. A suggestion is made that a task force examine this subject and offer recommendations to the administration. For this suggested task force, it is requested that the group include social scientists, as well as those from other disciplines.

Action: Discussion

**1:58pm:** Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Vandenberghe  
Faculty Governance Coordinator  
Faculty Senate Office