

Minutes: November 18, 2024

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Senate Assembly

Monday, November 18, 2024, 3:15

The hybrid meeting was held in University Hall, Ruthven, Room 2000

In-person attendees: Charlotte Karem Albrecht, Mousumi Banerjee, Meaghan Blanchard (nonvoting), Tom Braun (nonvoting), Jon Brennan, Paul Fossum (nonvoting), Pauline Jones, Ann Marshall (nonvoting), Luke McCarthy (nonvoting), Luke McCarthy (nonvoting), Rebekah Modrak, Heather O'Malley, Derek Peterson, Soumya Rangarajan, Craig Smith, Deirdre Spencer (nonvoting), Melanie Tanielian, Kentaro Toyama, Eric Vandenberghe (nonvoting), Jon Zelner.

Virtual attendees: Kenneth Alfano (nonvoting), Christina Aplin-Snider, Jayapalli Bapuraj, J. Sybil Biermann, Julie Boland (nonvoting), Jade Burns, Deepa Butoliya, William Calvo-Quiros, Jesse Capececlatro, Tabbye Chavous (nonvoting), Yi-Su Chen, Amy I-Lin Cheng, Meghan Courtney, Simon Cushing, Aileen Das, Johannes Foufopoulos, Terri Friedline, Caren Goldberg, Joshua Hausman, Sarah Hawley, Julia Hell (nonvoting), Justin Hodge, Kelly Hoffer (nonvoting), Yihe Huang, Holly Hughes, Elizabeth Keren-Kolb, Shake Ketefian (nonvoting), Marjorie Levinson (nonvoting), Yongqing Li, Brian Love, Charles Lwanga, Scott Lyons (nonvoting), Shahzad Mian, Mark Mizruchi (nonvoting), Genevieve Monsma (nonvoting), Karin Muraszko, Susan Najita, Mojtaba Navvab, Mukesh Nyati, Phillip Palmbo (nonvoting), Jessica Pasquale, Pamela Pennock, Harmony Reppond, Stacy Rosenbaum, Kimberly Saks, Suzanne Selig (nonvoting), Maddyn Shapiro (nonvoting), Albert Shih, Lauren Smith, Brian Stewart, Charles Taylor (nonvoting), Lisa Vandebossche (nonvoting), Elizabeth Viglianti, Terri Voepel-Lewis (nonvoting), Craig Wilkins, Jason Young, Robert Ziff, Paul Zimmerman.

Guest: Vice Provost for Equity and Inclusion Tabbye Chavous

Press:

Genevieve Monsma – *University Record*

Maddyn Shapiro – *Michigan Daily*

3:15 Come to Order, Minutes and Announcements Approval

The meeting was called to order at 3:18. The minutes from the October Senate Assembly meeting were approved by consent. The chair reminded the attendees that while the meeting is open to the public, only Senate Assembly members may join the discussion.

3:20 Senate Assembly Chair Update

1. There were updates to the 4 motions which passed. SACUA sent a letter to the Regents asking for the SACUA chair to be given a reporting opportunity at the regents meeting as part of shared roles in faculty governance. SACUA also requested a pause in the implementation of the changes in the Student Statement of Rights and Responsibilities following the motion. The Chair has asked President Ono to forward our requests to the regents. Neither the Secretary of the University nor the Regents have responded yet to the chair.
2. The Chair is hearing concerns that there may be new policies being put in place that are impacting email communications within units. It is still unclear whether this issue is something about which to be concerned. If new policies or practices are negatively impacting email communications in your academic unit, please contact the chair to let her know.

3:22 Matters Arising

After Chair updates, there was a wait before the Assembly's 3:30 guest arrived. Therefore, without objection, the floor was opened for Matters Arising, normally at the end of the meeting, to allow members to raise matters.

A faculty member highlighted the fact that the recently-approved University Senate motions were supported by a large majority of the voting Senate members: ~70-80%. The Regents have not responded to these motions and have not extended an offer to dialogue with SACUA. We in the Senate Assembly need to be concerned about this and what actions are next. Members were invited to offer suggestions for the next steps of the Senate Assembly going forward.

A faculty member stated that regarding next steps, the Student Relations Advisory Committee (SRAC) sent letters to President Ono and the regents, and said the response time from them, if they respond at all, was long. They concluded that communication with faculty governance is not being treated as a priority.

The SACUA Chair invited the Chair of the Board of Regents to a meeting and heard nothing. Closer to meeting time the Chair reached out again and was informed that the Regent would not be coming.

A faculty member thought we should involve the press more to help prompt a response. This could involve the Daily and the Record, but also national level press.

A faculty member commented that individuals can sign up to attend the Regent's meeting a week prior to the meeting. The next one is December 5th.

A librarian said that faculty governance is perceived as an advisory group, and as such we may need to revise our approach to communications.

A faculty member expressed agreement with the newspaper and publicity approach, as

well as presenting at the Regents' meetings.

A faculty member commented that the administration, faculty and Regents need to consider the quality of our institution. New elections bring new Regents, and we can reset. We can make new resolutions. We could have university-wide discussions with all parties to discuss our specific concerns. We should invite all parties to participate in the guidance of the university, led by the Faculty Senate.

A faculty member pointed out that the Regents are elected by the general public. They are connected to the people directly; they are beholden to the public, and not the university per se. They are charged with overseeing the financial aspects of the university, not educational policy or shared governance. This does not provide a legal requirement for them to listen to us.

3:30 Faculty Senate Support for DEI -- Guest: Tabbye Chavous, Vice Provost for DEI

The Chair introduced Vice Provost Chavous, then drew attention to the Nick Confessore article in the *New York Times*, and V.P. Chavous' rebuttal article.

The Chair agreed with the Vice Provost that the article was not-well researched and contained factual errors. It cherry-picked topics to instill fear of cancel culture but very little established DEI content.

The Chair added 2 extra points of information:

1. Over a week ago there was a small, private meeting where the Regents discussed defunding DEI without the Vice Provost for DEI being present. She has the most expertise and data on the topic of DEI. Among items discussed was the future of DEI at UM, including defunding DEI in the next fiscal year. They may discuss this at the next Regent's meeting.
2. The NYT article is being held up by some as proof of the failure of DEI at Michigan, warranting its elimination or defunding. Several Regents had apparently been in communication with the NYT journalist to provide a framework for the article. Some of the Regents share the views promoted in the article. However, DEI addresses systemic inequities and is part of our core values at Michigan. The article does not make it clear that not everyone has the same opportunities. Many demographic groups would be affected by the loss or defunding of DEI, including first generation students, those racially marginalized, those with disabilities, LGBTQ+, religiously diverse, veterans, and age diverse groups.

Vice Provost Tabbye Chavous' presentation.

There have been talks for a while about the future of diversity, equity and inclusion work. Information seems to change daily. The office anticipates adjusting to the changes within higher education and the circumstances of the new [federal] administration. Some questions have emerged regarding what happens with the new administration. There is no plan as of yet but they anticipate a need to adjust to changing circumstances.

DEI is not just a slogan but is part of Michigan's core values and serves many communities. What's at stake? Our core values are at stake, which affects students, faculty and staff.

Affordability and Access were part of the initial DEI efforts, and they involved financial aid efforts such as the Go Blue Guarantee for low income and first-generation students. This has resulted in marked increases in enrollment from those groups and was built into our initial DEI plan. Wolverine Pathways, first-generation students, and those from lower income households have benefitted. These are the largest proportions of most DEI budgets. She called attention to graduate students, international students, and the work around housing and child and family care, facilities, HR, to our schools and colleges to help provide access in the broadest way.

DEI work also goes to support, actions, labor, and finances to support Disability Accommodations and the culture surrounding ableism.

DEI 2.0 addresses students, academic supports, digital and physical accessibility, including the first annual anti-ableism and disability conference to support faculty and student staff accommodation needs. This was one of the main omissions in DEI 1.0. The provost's office just launched a DEI plan specifically on disabilities.

Other areas are efforts to support equitable pathways to all students and their success. This includes First Generation students, those from historically underrepresented backgrounds, and non-traditional students who might also be parents. Many of these programs are supported by the Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives (OAMI), which supports the First-Gen Gateway to help these students to navigate this very complicated environment.

OAMI provides many support services which are also supported by DEI: e.g. Success Connects for peer tutoring, and community building and mentoring which encourages success. All students are eligible to participate should they choose to opt in, and one outcome is to close gaps for first generation and underrepresented students.

DEI supports college access in 2 critical colleges and units. Wolverine Pathways recruits underrepresented students in diversified areas and is linked to 20% of our state-wide Black students in only 5 years. Educational outreach partners with K-12 schools, policy makers, families, and supports college access not just for students who might attend UM, but helps students in urban and rural areas access higher education. It would pull 27 counselors from Detroit Public Schools and underserved school systems if we were to reduce funding for the program. These efforts support the state of Michigan.

Faculty diversity is also supported with innovative models to support hiring, and retention and support for faculty to promote inclusion at department and college levels. Supporting faculty innovation and scholarly work then supports DEI in their field. New funding supports new grants and fellowships and helps faculty to advance and showcase

their work related to pressing social issues.

ADVANCE, DEI 2.0, and faculty scholarship support help support Michigan's multi-cultural communities. DEI provides support for the SPECTRUM Center, among the oldest centers of its kind. Other resources also support the LGBTQ+ communities, as well as the entire campus community sponsoring events such as symposia and powwows.

There are new moves to support interfaith communities which began prior to October 7, 2024. These work to educate and create bridges across cultural groups.

Compliance and accountability is a part of DEI work, improving ways that we can achieve compliance and accountability for situations that may not rise to the levels of sexual misconduct and harassment. DEI partners with units to support educational efforts that go beyond compliance, but are important cultural issues to connect with those departments. Culture is important to prevent harassment and discrimination.

Several examples at the unit level (from LSA) were provided, many of which could not be scaled up without DEI funds. Most of the work and funding for DEI does not go toward the office of DEI or centrally, but rather goes to academic, service and administrative units across the campus. Example: the Laptop Program in LSA, which supports students who need access to computers. This was an LSA effort, and to spread the program to other schools and colleges across the university, DEI provided additional funds. Some initiatives, like this one, which are developed at the unit level could not be scaled up to the institutional level without DEI funds.

Prior to opening for questions and comments, the Chair communicated some of what she has heard from schools and departments.

Q. The Chair heard there is confusion about whether the regents can affect funding coming from units.

A. There is no one place where DEI funds come from or where the efforts go. DEI has partnerships with units across campus. Units tested out new ideas, then previously would come to the provost for funding if it was successful. Central DEI funding helped to institutionalize initiatives that began in units. Funding allowed testing and experimentation.

Q. Do some DEI initiatives come from departments and the provost, not DEI?

A. Some initiatives could continue and were not started with DEI funding, but could not thrive without it.

Q. Under Grutter v. Bollinger, the Supreme Court shut down affirmative action at the UM Law School, and it changed the face of the entire student body. DEI is part of the reasons people come here. DEI is an important part of Michigan's history, leadership, and values. How can we navigate the current terrain?

A. People like to come here because of DEI and how Michigan stood by it when it was unpopular.

Q. There was a town hall on harassment of Black students on campus post-election. The situation has gotten worse, including an uptick in white-supremacist activity. Faculty and staff came out to support the Black students.

A. VP Chavous is working with these groups. We should consider the safety concerns on campus for Black students and lower the barriers on reporting. Supporters came out to support immigrant and other communities which have experienced real and perceived threats.

Q. What rationale would be provided to defund?

A. No plan has been stated yet.

The chair then reminded the group that the discussion and questions for the Vice Provost are only for Senate Assembly members, and the Vice Provost provided more information.

The Go Blue Guarantee came from research in financial aid, looking for a new model. Financial aid is not new, but now we can show we are reaching more and different people, using a different model. Financial aid is going to more students. Less than a 0.25% of the university's operating budget over 8 years went to DEI. This means that less than 0.25% of the entire operating budget is used to serve all of the communities and initiatives mentioned during the presentation. UM spends more than that on consultants in one year.

DEI is complicated and sometimes misunderstood. UM's diversity efforts aren't perfect and there are imperfections. There have been assessments and analysis that would be valuable to publish. The Vice Provost agrees that there is a communication problem about the scale, cost and complexity. Opponents have instituted a smart, well-funded anti-DEI campaign, making it important to be more vocal and very precise about the positive outcomes that have been happening.

The Chair asked if the Vice Provost has had advance notice or indication of what the Regents are planning. The regents have small, informal private meetings where they discuss issues as well as the formal public meeting. In writing about DEI, what are we doing well and what do they think we need change?

4:00 SSRR Revision Proposals

There is a regular tri-annual review, by faculty, students, and staff, of the Student Statement of Rights and Responsibilities. Proposals will go to the Student Relations Advisory Committee (SRAC), which will submit a recommendation to the Office of Student Life and the President. The Senate Assembly reviewed the faculty proposals. Members separated into breakout groups and proceeded to offer comments on the current proposals. Each breakout group was moderated by a SACUA member. Without objection, the proposals will now be forwarded to SRAC for consideration, with the addition of SA member comments.

4:50 Matters Arising

Matters Arising was addressed earlier, at 3:22, while waiting for our 3:30 guest. The floor was then opened again at ~4:50 for any other matters.

A faculty member suggested having shorter informational sessions. We could have a shorter series of updates regarding other universities and how they engage in faculty. Would it be possible for someone from AAUP to speak to the SA?

Anyone with ideas for potential speakers should email the Chair or the FSO Director. The Chair remarked that at the national meeting for faculty senate chairs, most topics raised, with the exception of institutional neutrality, are not those which are currently most critical at Michigan.

5:00 Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 5:01.

Senate Assembly Actions

Between regular meetings, the Senate Assembly has performed the following actions that should be included in the Senate Assembly minutes:

- On October 28th, 2024, the Senate Assembly elected Craig Smith, Senior Associate Librarian, University Library, to fill a current vacancy on SACUA, with a term ending on April 30, 2025.
- On October 31, 2024, the Senate Assembly approved “Motion 1: Call to Pause Implementation of the Revised Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities,” which was then considered at the University Senate meeting on November 4, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Deirdre D. Spencer,
Secretary

University of Michigan Bylaws of the Board of Regents, Sec. 5.02:
Governing Bodies in Schools and Colleges
Sec. 4.01 The University Senate

"...[t]he Senate is authorized to consider any subject pertaining to the interests of the university, and to make recommendations to the Board of Regents in regard thereto. Decisions of the University Senate with respect to matters within its jurisdiction shall constitute the binding action of the university faculties. Jurisdiction over academic policies shall reside in the faculties of the various schools and colleges, but insofar as actions by the several faculties affect university policy as a whole, or schools and colleges other than the one in which they originate, they shall be brought before the University Senate."

Rules of the University Senate, the Senate Assembly and the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs:

Senate: “In all cases not covered by rules adopted by the Senate, the procedure in Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed.”

Assembly: “The Assembly may adopt rules for the transaction of its business. In appropriate cases not covered by rules of the Assembly, the rules of the University Senate shall apply.”

SACUA: “The committee may adopt rules for the transaction of its business.”