



Student Relations Advisory Committee (SRAC)

Minutes of Meeting: 11/15/24

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Present: Jonathan Brennan, Marna Clowney-Robinson, David Potter, Joel Scheuher, Om Shah, Martino Harmon (VP for Student Life), Connie Tingson Gatuz (Associate Vice President for Student Development, Learning, and Social Change Education), Myles Durkee, Cindee Giffen, Bruno Giordani, Anouck Girard, Marita Rohr Inglehart (Chair), Charlie Koopmann, Jamie Niehof, Kaitlin Karmen, Oliver Kozler

Absent: Charlotte Karem Albrecht

Guests:

Jon Kinsey, Vice President and Secretary of the University
Erik Wessel, Director, Office of Student Conflict Resolution (OSCR)

Faculty Senate Office: Eric Vandenberghe

11:31am-11:35am: Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Minutes, Announcements

The agenda was approved. The minutes for the October SRAC meeting were approved. Introductions are made to the guests.

11:35am-12:09pm: Discuss the Statement on Student Rights and Responsibilities (SSRR) Amendments

Summary: The Chair introduced the guest, VP Kinsey, and thanked him for attending the SRAC meeting. She then briefly reviewed the history of previous SRAC faculty member responses to the July 18, 2024, changes made by the Regents to the SSRR, specifically the letter signed by all SRAC Faculty members sent on August 14, 2024, and the invitation to President Ono and Katherine E. White, Chair, Board of Regents, to the November SRAC meeting sent after the October SRAC meeting. In response, VP Kinsey explained that he does not speak for the Regents but will communicate the SRAC meeting discussion to the Regents. He also did not rule out that a future meeting with Regent White might be possible. The committee members made it clear that they still wish for President Ono and Regent White to meet with the committee and stressed that any time convenient for both would be acceptable to SRAC members.

The chair then distributed a handout that was based on email interactions among the SRAC faculty members prior to the meeting. This handout focused the discussion on a general question and three questions concerning changes made to the SSRR on July 18, 2024.

The general question focused on the fact that on July 18, 2024, the Regents made substantial changes to the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities (SSRR) - without seeking any input from students and faculty. This process was inconsistent with the amendment process outlined in the SSRR. The question was why this happened and if the Regents plan



to proceed in this fashion in the future? VP Kinsey responded that he does not know why this happened and has no knowledge of how the Regents want to proceed in the future.

The first specific change-related question focused on the July 18, 2024, change to the SSRR that the University can act as the complainant. Specifically, the question was (a) How exactly would this work and would they hire an outside entity to bring the complaint? And (b) how do the REGENTS justify that the fact that having the “University” be the complainant and then the President makes the final decision in the process reflects a lack of division of power? As a rationale for this question the argument was made that being used in an academic institution, the SSRR was designed with an education-oriented underlying philosophy. It clearly relied on the principles of restorative justice. This approach focused on accepting responsibility to repair the harm caused and rebuild relationships between the complainant and respondent. The newly introduced lack of division of power and the strong power differential introduced into the process when the “University” brings a complaint and then makes the ultimate decision replaces this previous educational focus on “conflict resolution” with a focus on “punishment”. The follow up question then was if the Regents believe in the principles of restorative justice and an educational approach to conflict resolution in our academic setting?

The next change-related question addressed was concerned with change related to abolishing the Appeals board. It was explained that in the past, an appeals board “composed of one student appointed by the Central Student Government (CSG), one faculty member appointed by the Faculty Senate, and one administrator appointed by the President” handled appeals. This approach to involve representatives of students, faculty and administration promised a balanced deliberation of the appeal with different perspectives provided. The Regents abolished this Appeals Board. Instead, they changed the Appeals process as follows: “All appeals must be submitted in writing to the RC within five (5) academic calendar days after the RO submits its written decision. The RC will determine whether there are grounds for an appeal. If so, the Vice President for Student Life, or their designee, will serve as the Appeals Officer. The Appeals Officer, after reviewing the relevant information to the matter, will issue a written decision within five (5) days of the RC approving grounds to appeal. The written decision may sustain or reverse the finding of responsibility; modify the assigned sanction(s); and/or order a new hearing. This decision is final.” The question asked was whether the Regents agree that this change further curtails the respondents’ rights and puts the power solely into the hands of the VPSL, given that RCs are employees of OSCR which is under the VPSL?

In addition, a faculty member also made the point that the elimination of the appeals committee causes UM to diverge from the way peer institutions handle student conflict resolution. This is discussed. A member voices concern that changes of this kind cause concerns to parallel committees and processes concerning faculty. This is discussed further.

The final change-related specific question focused on the fact that the Regents eliminated the possibility of a student panel hearing in a case. It was argued that such a panel had educational value for student panel members and also for both the complainant and the respondent. Eliminating this educational moment is changing the character of the conflict resolution process to becoming more punitive and less educational.

VP Kinsey made it clear again that he cannot speak for the Regents but that he will relay this information to the Regents. In addition, VPSL Harmon supported this point by also stating that he and VP Kinsey will relay this feedback to the Regents.



Discussion takes place to the other changes to SSRR that took place at the 7/18 Regents meeting. A clarification is made related to the process for selecting resolution officer (RO) and the request is made to Dr. Wessel to provide information about (a) how many resolution officers there are currently and (b) how many of these ROs are staff members or faculty members.

Further discussion on matters concerning the Regents takes place. At the conclusion of the discussion, VP Kinsey is thanked for joining this meeting and exits.

Action: Discussion

12:09pm-12:14pm: Discuss if recusal will be applied to those who author proposals

Summary: The Chair brings up the issue of if it is necessary for those who brought forth suggested amendments to the SSRR need to recuse themselves during consideration of these amendments. The consensus is that such a recusal is not necessary, but that the situation should be acknowledged should the amendments be approved by the committee when they are forwarded to the President. This is passed by the committee through unanimous consent.

The Chair acknowledges the vast number of amendments proposed by the community and indicates more meetings should be necessary. Through unanimous consent, the committee directs the Faculty Senate Office to hold additional meeting times on 1/10 and 1/24. These meetings will be on an as needed basis.

Action: Discussion

12:14-1:00pm: Review of staff-submitted proposals to amend the Statement on Student Rights and Responsibilities (SSRR)

Summary: Director Wessel shifts the meeting towards review of proposals to amend the SSRR. There are 29 total submissions. It is acknowledged that this is more than in past years, and that it is good that the committee has held more time in January.

Five proposals that were submitted by staff members were discussed at the November meeting, but not voted on. The reason for this is that the committee has not seen all the proposals, and that it will be necessary to view them all, as there may be some overlap. The remaining proposals will be provided to the committee as soon as possible.

The five proposals are presented by Director Wessel, and comments are offered.

1. Staff Amendment Proposal #1

This proposed amendment relates to adding the use of AI, etc. to violation P. 1. Members raise questions about the proposed text, which includes examples of current and emergent technologies. Should there be specific examples offered? The list would not be comprehensive due to the evolving nature of the technology. This is discussed. Could this be characterized without including examples? Changes are made. The distinction is made that attribution is different from impersonation. A member makes a point that naming specific



technology, such as deep fakes, is necessary. The member indicates that without these technologies specifically mentioned, it leaves open the possibility that one could call into question whether these technologies would be covered by the SSRR. Naming these technologies explicitly would give clear indication that they do fall under the purview. Suggested text is offered: “this includes but is not limited to...” Further changes are made.

2. Staff Amendment Proposal #2

This proposed amendment relates to amending section V: Scope of violations to include substantial disruption. A member indicates issues with this proposed amendment. Including its placement in this section of the SSRR. Broader discussion on protests takes place. Questions are asked regarding this proposed amendment. How does this relate to classrooms? What is the definition of “substantial?”

3. Staff Amendment Proposal #26-28

These proposed additions and clarifications relate to the following:

- Adding cruelty to animals as a Statement violation

Members offer their opinions on this and tweak the language.

- Clarifying which agreements failing to comply with would be a policy violation

Members offer their opinions on this and tweak the language.

- Clarifying the time available in cases that attempt the ACR process, where an alleged policy violation is substantiated

Director Wessel offers insight into the ACR process. This conflict resolution process takes time. Having an arbitrary timeline when the parties are working in good faith does not benefit the community. If the parties do not agree to the process, then the timeline would be appropriate to take effect. Discussion on this ensues. Party availability is what could cause issues with the proposed timeline. A suggestion is made to change the language to make the timeline aspirational. The term “pathway” is a term of art within the conflict resolution space. Altering this term in this instance would require changing it throughout the file, and in other spaces.

A request is made for resolution officer metrics. This will be provided by Director Wessel at a later date.

The committee agrees that the Chair will send an email thanking VP Jon Kinsey for his attendance at today’s meeting. The Chair will write a draft and offer the chance for the committee to provide input.

Action: Discussion

1:00pm: Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,



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