



General Counsel's Advisory Committee (GCAC)

Minutes of Meeting 11/15/2024

Circulated: 1/10/25

Approved: 1/17/25

Present: Jason Fettig, Sybil Biermann (Chair), Aric Knuth, Kirsten Herold, Judith Walker, Derek Peterson, Tim Lynch (VP and General Counsel), Chris J. Walker, Jamie Tappenden,

Absent: Nancy Allee, Yulia Sevryugina, Silke-Maria Weineck

Faculty Senate Office: Eric Vandenberghe

10:03am-10:04am: Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Minutes, Announcements

The agenda was approved. The minutes for the September GCAC meeting were approved.

10:04am-11:12am: Principles Subcommittee Two report; Motions

Summary: The Chair introduced the topic. VP Lynch appreciated the discussion from the last meeting and thanked the committee for their insights. He offered a brief overview of the charge and work that subcommittee two was tasked with completing.

Discussion ensues. A member states that they are concerned that the recommendations are quite tentative. Diversity of perspective is discussed with various ideas for fostering an environment in which these perspectives can be voiced. A lecture series is briefly discussed.

Team-teaching is brought up and discussed. The idea would be to have two faculty with differing viewpoints teaching a course together. A goal would be to showcase how to intake and respond to varied viewpoints in a constructive and healthy way. Members offer support for this. There are logistical issues that come with team teaching and these issues are discussed. Funding is a primary issue, and potential solutions are brought up. Positive examples of team teaching at UM and other institutions are discussed by several members.

A member discusses the Year of Democracy committee, which has been considering the issue of a tentativeness of students in offering their opinions on certain issues. A worry about discussion making students feel unsafe is brought up. Speech can offend, but this is to be expected. Being uncomfortable is not the same as being unsafe. It is noted as a controversial thought, but that is what college is all about.

The high workload of faculty is discussed. A member points out that team teaching may increase the workload, and that this would need to be reflected in the faculty member's workload. A member suggests sending out a survey to students and faculty to gauge interest in team teaching. A suggestion is made for a faculty committee on this.

The next topic is brought up regarding the recommendation for an extra course meant to showcase the necessity of experiencing differing opinions. A member provides examples that they felt already addresses such a need. Pushback on this is offered. A member suggests



existing courses mentioned are too narrow in focus. Discussion ensues. There is concern about duplication of efforts. Alternate concerns are discussed.

A member brings up the topic of syllabus statements and asks the committee for their thoughts on these. Differing opinions are shared. A point is made regarding disability services. Any statement regarding this needs to be correct and updated regularly.

The committee is asked about invited speakers with diverse viewpoints at UM. Is their enough diversity of thought? Differing opinions are shared.

Action: Discussion

11:12am-11:20am: University Senate motions

Summary: The recently passed [University Senate motions](#) are brought up by a member. Differing opinions on these motions are shared.

Action: Discussion

11:20am: Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Vandenberghe
Faculty Governance Coordinator
Faculty Senate Office