

Minutes: December 9, 2024
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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs
The hybrid meeting was held in 1100 Ruthven and via Zoom

In Person Attendance: Chair Rebekah Modrak, FSO Director Luke McCarthy, Professor Vilma Mesa, Professor Derek Peterson, Professor Soumya Rangarajan, Librarian Craig Smith, FSO Coordinator Ann Marshall, Secretary Deirdre Spencer

Remote Attendance: Vice Chair Heather O'Malley, Professor Simon Cushing, Professor Melanie Tanielian, Professor Alex Yi,

Press

Genevieve Monsma -- *University Record*
Delilah Dakis – *Michigan Daily*

The meeting was called to order at 3:04. The SACUA meeting minutes from November 25, 2024 and December 2, 2024 were approved.

3:05 Chair's Update

The meeting was called to order at 3:05

1. Chair Modrak noted that she, FSO Director McCarthy, Professor Peterson, and Secretary Spencer had attended the Regents Meeting on Thursday, December 5. Librarian Craig Smith protested with the group outside of Ruthven and said he was glad they were audible at the regent's meeting. During his public comments at the Regents Meeting, Professor Stephen Ward had called for a moment of silence so that the protesters could be heard. Professor Peterson expressed concern about the three levels of security protecting the Ruthven Building at a public university. It was noted that the Regents Meeting room was "artificially organized" to limit the number of attendees and those allowed to participate. A faculty member from American Culture delivered an outstanding speech, as did the chair of Rackham graduate student government. Prof. Keith Riles, a former SACUA chair, offered a public rebuke of DEI. During the meeting, Regent Behm said there were no plans to cut DEI, and they didn't know how this info was spread. (The regents implied that SACUA had fabricated the threat to DEI though two of the Regents had spoken to the press about potential cuts and a top administrator had confirmed their intention to cut DEI.) At the meeting the Regents committed to expanding the Go Blue Guarantee, which was reassuring.
2. Six faculty writing retreats were sponsored this semester and were well attended. There will be six more retreats in the winter term: two each in January,

February and March. Chair Modrak thanked the provost for the funding of these retreats, which help protect time and space for faculty writing and creative endeavors. Professor Mesa expounded on the WOCAP two-day writing retreats and the opportunities for faculty to mentor each other. Chair Modrak likes the idea of a writing retreat for assistant faculty only. The Secretary mentioned the cluster hires created by Provost Collins. The writing retreats also allow assistant professors to build a sense of community.

3. The Secretary mentioned that statistics consistently show that white women are the primary beneficiaries of DEI and affirmative action efforts, but those efforts are regularly castigated as giveaways for Black people.

4. Chair Modrak is receiving gratitude for her efforts from faculty on DEI, informational emails, etc.

5. Professor Mesa's faculty colleague, Professor Demetri Morgan, will address the Senate Assembly about higher education and faculty governance. Todd Wolfson from Rutgers University and national president of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) will also address the Senate Assembly.

3:15 SOP: Faculty Senate Office Event Coordination with U-M Offices and Groups

For the sake of transparency, the FSO Director reported on the office's coordination of events with other campus groups and organizations. The FSO has a small staff, and the new operations lead brings extra support, but sometimes working with other groups, like recently with the Ford School and CEW+ for a reading panel with Judith Butler, increases what can be accomplished. The Director is recommending that SACUA adopt an SOP to provide a more transparent framework for the FSO's coordination with other campus groups/offices that permits SACUA oversight/input.

The Director monitors the workload of the staff. 95% of collaborations are initiated by FSO. The Chair wants to encourage more groups to reach out to collaborate with us. It takes time to get the word out about what we do.

The SOP requires the Director to provide to SACUA regular reports on new collaborations, an annual report, and to obtain SACUA Chair approval as well as the approval of any committee chairs relevant to the collaboration.

After discussion and revision of the draft SOP on "Faculty Senate Office Event Coordination with U-M Offices and Groups," SACUA approved the SOP.

3:30 Discussion on Support for DEI

As the leading public university, we should address the attacks on higher education and Senate Assembly discussions are a place to start.

It was suggested that we start with the Big 10, which now stretches coast to coast, and a meeting in Chicago is a possibility. The BTAA sponsors a conference on women in DEI leadership.

What national platforms do we have at our disposal to address the questions that we are asking? How should we engage as a public institution vs the private institutions? What would a future curriculum look like? We should meet with faculty senate offices from around the country, expanding beyond the Big 10, and engage with faculty writ large and not just DEI representatives.

A strategy used by the right is to create caricatures and then call them problems. Some white conservatives say they are disrespected.

Our strategy might be to find a variety of people to testify about the good of DEI. (A member shared an example of a student who took a course on red-lining, and it changed his life and understanding.) We could compile the perspectives of people from all races who have benefited from DEI, recorded in a report.

The Chair stated that we should lead the undergirding narrative vs responding to the problems. We can take the lead in the conversation and use it as a framework to defend the UM in a time of fascism. Also discussed was the fundamental approach to a college education as only a means for finding employment vs coming to UM for enrichment.

The FSO director informed us that the alumni association is interested in meeting with us. The idea of engaging alumni and retirees to tell their stories of the benefits of DEI would be significant if they were open to contributing.

Another member wants to advertise more to the faculty. What do we want our universities to look like? We need to figure out where we are going and how to protect the university from what is to come within the next 3 years. Our focus should be more about creating a framework for a path forward.

The potential of AI to increasingly affect our jobs was mentioned as an aside.

4:00 Discussion of ARC3 Campus Climate Survey Related to Sex and Gender

The Rankin Report is a survey to obtain a general sense of the university's status in addressing matters of sex and gender. The report consisted of several statistics which were informative on a superficial level but left readers wanting deeper analysis.

For example, 8% (1300-1400 undergraduate women per year are raped). 22% of women reported unwanted sexual contact in the past year. (What does this mean?) The percentages result in 7,000-10,000 individuals.

One SACUA member led the discussion and questioned the percentages vs the actual numbers and their meaning.

How are they extrapolating those numbers and what exactly are they reporting? If the percentage is 8% of the entire campus, then it is more than 7,000 -10,000 individuals. Of the 10,000 responses, how many are students, and we don't know how many students from the total numbers are included. How many of the 800 (8% of 8000 reported are students and what are they reporting? How much double reporting and double counting of assaults were included? We want actual numbers so that we can probe them.

Another consideration is the context of the assaults such as intimate partner violence as well as fraternity parties, etc. Intimate partner rape is underreported. Some of the same perpetrators assault victims in different places. Getting a breakdown of where these assaults have occurred would help us to attack them, better address the issues and how to prevent them.

Intimate partner violence is not often reported, similarly, if the assaults didn't happen on campus, victims think that perhaps it shouldn't be reported, but they should report it because the university has many resources to assist them. People felt shame and were reluctant to share their information.

The numbers are horrible, and we should be moved by them, yet the numbers are aligned with those of most other colleges and universities. We may not ever get exact numbers, but we should expect to have numbers which are as accurate as possible.

The question was asked, how big a sample is needed in order to extrapolate the necessary demographic breakdowns of the kinds of students, staff and faculty. If the base numbers are smaller, it is harder to apply reasonable weight to them.

SACUA was described as a FOCUS group, however they were 'spoken at', and not really engaged in the discussion. Were we asked to do anything? Was SACUA supposed to write up a report or something? What are we supposed to do with this? Some SACUA members were concerned with the survey itself. It was an invasive line of questioning which removed the violence from the language.

A member thought it would be beneficial to include nursing specialists trained in sexual assault examination services, (Slides 9-12). She would like to know if there are reports of medical professionals. It would be good to get them involved as well.

Are non-binary and transgender victims recorded? What are their numbers? It may be a very small number. We must go through ECRT to contact Rankin with our questions, and we can provide feedback on the presentation of the survey. There is confusion about what this all means. Perhaps we should have access to Dashboard, Tableau, and Web Climate dashboard

The Record article said the university is reviewing its response to the survey. There is a coalition led by Ann Arbor, Flint and Dearborn officials and there is a report being prepared by PEAR. *The Record* article was shared with SACUA to establish next steps and perhaps create an evidence based report. ECRT and PEAR are creating a

development level action plan.

Since there were no numbers that we could see and we could not see their Dashboard for transparency, some categories had to be aggregated.

Some in the community didn't think the university would handle these situations well since they had botched similar situations in the past. For example, the university lamented that the Anderson case caused problems for the university and expressed little concern for the victims. This sends the wrong message.

One member mentioned the limited hours of 9-4 for hospital reporting (which is not when most sexual assaults occur). Maybe sexual assault nurses can visit central campus.

It would be good to establish an office of AVALON here in Ann Arbor.

The question was asked if young women walking alone on the streets of Ann Arbor contributes to assaults? It is not clear where assaults occur. How does this affect where and when the assaults happen. There are no reports regarding assaults at fraternity parties, but the FSO will inquire.

4:20 Senate Assembly Agenda Approval

The meeting will be very focused on governance in higher education. Prof. Demetri Morgan from the UM School of Education will present for 10 mins and Prof. Todd Wolfson from Rutgers University and president of the national AAUP will present. Each speaker will give 10-minute presentations, then there will be 20 minutes for Q&A
SACUA voted to approve the Senate Assembly agenda.

4:30 Matters Arising / New Business / Agenda Building

There was acknowledgement of this being Secretary Deirdre Spencer's last SACUA meeting as secretary.

4:45 Adjourn The meeting adjourned at 4:45

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 polices 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."