

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Senate Assembly

Monday, January 27, 2025, 3:15

The Hybrid meeting was held in 2000 University Hall, Ruthven and Zoom

Minutes: January 27, 2025

Circulated: February 21, 2025

Approved: February 24, 2025

In-person attendees: Mousumi Banerjee, Meaghan Blanchard, Tom Braun (nonvoting), William Calvo-Quiros, Theodora Danciu, Charlotte Karem Albrecht, Ann Marshall (nonvoting), Luke McCarthy (nonvoting), Laurie McCauley (nonvoting), Rebekah Modrak, Heather O'Malley, Derek Peterson, Soumya Rangarajan, Aruna Sarma (nonvoting), Craig Smith, Deirdre Spencer (nonvoting), Kentaro Toyama, Jonathan Zelner, Eric Vandenberghe (nonvoting)

Virtual attendees: Germine Awad (nonvoting), Jayapalli Bapuraj, Sue Anne Bell, Sybil Biermann, John Branch (alternate), Jonathan Brennan, Helen Burgess, Jade Burns, Jesse Capecelatro, Amy I-Lin Cheng, Meghan Courtney, Simon Cushing, Daniel Drake, Keith Duncan, Terri Friedline, Caren Goldberg, L. Jay Guo, Brendan Haug, Joshua Hausman, Sarah Hawley, Ingrid Hendy, Yihe Huang, Khalid Kattan (alternate), Shake Ketefian (nonvoting), Brad Killaly, Carolyn Kuranz, Corey Lester, Yongqing Li, Brian Love, Charles Lwanga, Vilma Mesa, Shahzad Mian, Alexis Miettinen (nonvoting), Genevieve Monsma (nonvoting), Susan Najita, Mojtaba Navvab, Mukesh Nyati, Phillip Palmbo, Jessica Pasquale, Anna Pierson (nonvoting), Harmony Reppond, Andre Monteiro Da Rocha, Joy Rohde (alternate), Stacy Rosenbaum, Kimberly Saks, Albert Shih, Lauren Smith, Christina Snider, Brian Stewart, Melanie Tanielian, Ashootosh Tripathi, Elizabeth Viglianti, Craig Wilkins, Alex Yasha Yi, Jason Young, Yaqing Zhang, Robert Ziff, Paul Zimmerman

Guests:

Aruna Sarma, Assistant Dean, Research Faculty, Michigan Medicine
Research Professor, Epidemiology

Laurie McCauley, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
Mary Anne Najjar Professor of Periodontics; Professor of Pathology

Press:

Genevieve Monsma – *University Record*

Anna Pierson – *Daily*

3:16 Come to Order, Minutes and Announcements

The meeting was called to order and the minutes from the previous meeting were approved by consent. Senate Assembly meetings are open to the public. Only Senate Assembly members are

allowed to contribute to the discussion. Deirdre Spencer was welcomed as the new Senate Assembly parliamentarian.

3:17 Senate Assembly Chair Update – Chair Rebekah Modrak

1. **Institutional Neutrality:** A number of faculty have contacted Chair Modrak with questions about U-M's institutional neutrality policy. U-M leaders have promised a FAQ on the policy that is not yet available. As reported in a recent *Daily* op-ed, U-M resident assistants were told, with institutional neutrality as the rationale, that they should not speak about the history of Palestine at a planned event. UM's institutional neutrality policy does not cover students. Central Student Government is asking for a town hall to discuss the issue.
2. **Medical Plan:** Dual career employees will save on their benefits if they sign up as individuals instead of as dual career employees. Human Resources is allowing employees to make this change outside of the open enrollment period. Dual career employees with multiple children should enroll with all of their children on one employee's plan for maximum savings.
3. **LSA Chemistry:** There are rumors that the Department of Chemistry may be moved to a new building on North Campus as part of Campus Plan 2050. Neither the College of LSA nor its academic and administrative units appear to have been consulted. A resolution is being drafted that calls for keeping the liberal arts – natural sciences, humanities, and social sciences – together within LSA. Faculty are encouraged to contact Chair Modrak if interested in becoming involved with the resolution.
4. **Services for Students with Disabilities:** As part of the accommodations process, some students have been given permission to record classroom activities. There is concern that controversial exchanges, including comments made by students, could be shared without the consent of faculty or students. Chair Modrak has contacted Student Life, SSD, and the Chair of SRAC to hold a meeting on this topic. Faculty who encounter this issue may ask for another accommodation, such as a note taker, and are encouraged to contact Chair Modrak for support.
5. **DMNC Winter 2025 Lecture:** An update was provided about the DMNC winter term panel being planned for Thursday, March 13th, with details TBA.
6. **Nominations for Senate Assembly Committee Chairs:** Faculty are encouraged to nominate and/or self-nominate for the position of SA committee chairs.
7. **Central Student Government:** Chair Modrak met with Mario Thaqi, the newly elected CSG president. Faculty are invited to attend a CSG-planned Winter Wonderland on the Diag on January 29, 5-9 pm, with ice skating and hot chocolate. Mental health resources will also be available at the event.

3:18 SACUA Nominations Election – Luke McCarthy

- Please [submit nominations and self-nominations](#) for three [SACUA](#) member seats, to serve a three-year term beginning May 1. Nominations are due February 12. Nominees must be a current voting member of the [Faculty Senate](#) and, because of the current

composition of SACUA, cannot be from the Marsal Family School of Education, the School of Medicine, or U-M Dearborn.

- The SACUA candidate slate will be shared with the Senate Assembly by March 3rd and a March *Record* article will announce the slate of SACUA candidates. At the March 17th Senate Assembly meeting, SACUA candidates will be invited to make brief remarks. Senate Assembly members will vote on the slate of candidates beginning after the adjournment of the March 17th Senate Assembly meeting, for a voting period of 72 hours.
- A SACUA Nominating Committee will provide a procedural review of the slate of SACUA candidates. After the adjournment of today's meeting, Senate Assembly will vote on the membership of the SACUA Nominating Committee, to be comprised of two outgoing SACUA members and four outgoing Senate Assembly members. A volunteer was needed to finalize the candidate slate of the four outgoing Senate Assembly members and two SA members volunteered, Daniel Drake and Carolyn Kuranz.

3:34 Matters Arising

- Today's Matters Arising is split into two segments due to Provost Laurie McCauley's visit to Senate Assembly on the agenda from 4:30-5:00 pm.
- A SACUA representative alerted faculty that all Michigan Medicine (MM) email in Outlook, whether @umich.edu or @med.umich.edu, older than two-years, will be deleted on February 28. If MM faculty have email in the Gmail platform, these will not be deleted. Many MM faculty do not use the Gmail platform.
- A School of Public Health representative remarked that many Public Health faculty are very worried about the potential loss of federal funds, including any pause on NIH funding, as well as federal communication halts, and the serious impact this could have on research. Senate Assembly is a venue for bringing together voices across campus and interest was expressed in hearing from others.
- Dean Aruna Sarma noted that there are concerns about the long-term effects of funding and its impact on both salaries and promotion.
- A representative from Engineering commented on threats to federally funded research focused on DEI, noting the many benefits of DEI research to communities. Questions were raised about hiring, such as a job ad that went out prior to U-M's new policy on DEI statements. There is confusion about the status of federal funding agencies, such as program managers at NSF being told to not use the term climate change.
- A representative from the School of Public Health suggested the usefulness of joint efforts and solidarities across universities, both within Michigan and across state lines. Election districts in Northern MI and districts of varied political persuasions are as much affected by these policies as is the University of Michigan.
- A representative from the Medical School remarked that not being able to say words such as climate change and DEI is dystopian. Values focused on DEI and climate change are important for universities even if the federal government does not support these values.
- Another representative from the Medical School echoed these sentiments, suggesting that if faculty can't participate in a grant cycle, U-M could offer a delay with the promotion process. Faculty have expensive labs to manage and it is difficult to make informed

decisions. Similar allowances were made during COVID. The faculty member noted that, even though his work is not focused on DEI, it is important to include DEI considerations within grants.

- Chair Rebekah Modrak thanked Senate Assembly members for their comments, encouraged GRAC members to raise these issues with VP Chris Kolb, and suggested that faculty ask Provost McCauley about these issues later in the meeting.

3:58 Guest Assistant Dean for Research Faculty, Aruna Sarma, PhD, MHA, Medical School, provided an update on research track faculty concerns

- Dean Sarma's responsibilities focus on research track faculty (total of 382 faculty in 2024) and she works in parallel with the MM assistant deans for tenure track faculty and clinical faculty. There are two promotion tracks for research track faculty, the research scientist track and the research professor track.
- 63% of research track faculty are at the research investigator/assistant level, with very few research scientists being promoted to the highest rank. Research track faculty are often the only research scientist in their unit, may feel isolated, and report higher levels of burnout. From a 2006-2012 life cycle analysis, 54% of hired research assistant professors left U-M. More women are on the research track, with a lower proportion of women at the associate level. This is despite research scientists being highly productive and bringing in millions of grant dollars.
- Based on the life cycle analysis, recent MM research track faculty initiatives have included improved education (peer mentoring and improved communication), engagement efforts (research faculty advisory council, seminar series, symposium, liaison council, grants orientation program), advocacy, and hiring (e.g. mentorship teams).

Discussion:

- A question was asked by a Medical School representative about the extent to which visa challenges impact research track faculty, such that international faculty may be pressured to take a job and have less choice in pursuing the position they want.
- Another Medical School faculty commented about how an intense climate of competition can impede collaboration. There are promotion-based incentives to create a research following and then exclude others, with PIs claiming individual credit for collaborative efforts. Dean Sarma noted that promotion policies can be crafted that count co-PIs as a recognized metric.
- A School of Public Health faculty member asked about variability between and within schools. There was discussion about how the Medical School aims to be aligned with OVPR and Provost requirements. At the department level, there is variability of promotion criteria and as well as efforts to work with departments to raise awareness about inequities. There have been equity issues between research and tenure tracks and also between specialties, i.e. surgery and pediatrics.
- A Medical School representative noted that the promotion process may feel insecure for researchers who may then instead take more lucrative positions in industry. An LSA representative asked what U-M might do to better convey that the research track can be a long-term career opportunity and not end after three years.



- Another LSA representative remarked that neither of the research tracks are protected by tenure and that research track faculty may feel they cannot speak out on controversial issues.
- An Engineering faculty noted the importance of having launch committees for incoming research track faculty.

4:32 Presentation by Dr. Laurie McCauley, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

- Provost McCauley has heard from many faculty during this time of uncertainty, including faculty who have expressed concerns about the status of NIH and NSF study panels, DEI, and student loans. A lot of work is being devoted to how to further U-M's research mission. Never has there been a better time to come together collectively as a university. Dr. McCauley expressed appreciation for faculty input, for the robust discussions of vision 2034, and highlighted several Provost initiatives:
 - The [Provost's initiative on disability scholarship](#) has resulted in [six teams being funded for disability-related research projects](#).
 - A faculty salary survey on gender equity is expected to be released in February.
 - The Post-Promotion Academic Career Exploration (PACE) program is a [coaching program for newly tenured faculty](#) that, in year-one, has included seventy-three faculty.
 - SACUA and the Provost have collaborated on a series of events that bring faculty together to have substantive conversations across disciplines.

Discussion:

- A College of Pharmacy representative asked about opportunities for research track faculty. The Provost said that research opportunities most often reside in the Office of the Vice President for Research.
- An LSA faculty member remarked on the gravity of the moment, the threats facing faculty in many disciplines, and the extent of oppression and repression. The faculty member asked about the Provost's approach to leadership, given her unique position in this difficult time, and possible actions other than just compliance. The Provost invited suggestions from faculty and also remarked on the Provost's Office work in [responding to threats and harassment of faculty](#). The Provost is also in conversation with EVP Geoff Chatas about how to support faculty whose research could be impacted.
- A representative from the Medical School asked why the Medical School was not included in the salary study. The Provost responded that it wasn't meant to be exclusive, and that the soon-to-be-released study is the first pass at the data. Michigan Medicine has salary complexities that warrant a separate analysis.
- A representative from Public Health asked if there were plans to provide financial and other support to faculty working on DEI. Without such support, the university could lose faculty. Faculty focused on DEI face a disproportionate burden and minority faculty are more at risk. The Provost responded that there are very active conversations about DEI, including at a recent National Academy of Sciences meeting where a recommended strategy was to "pivot and protect."



- A Medical School faculty member asked if there might be extra time given to the faculty up for promotion because of the uncertainty and delays in funding. The Provost expressed interest in this, noting that it was the first time the issue had been raised with her.
- Another faculty member in the Medical School asked for better support for the Police Oversight Committee, including more staff, funding, tools for accountability, and increased involvement of clinical faculty. The Provost expressed interest in engaging on these issues and stated her support for clinical faculty serving on committees.

4:59 Matters Arising

- A question was asked by the parliamentarian about whether an individual regent is able to set policy rather than Regents acting as a collective body. It was noted that the issue could be raised with the Secretary of the University Advisory Committee (SAC).
- An LSA faculty member asked if SACUA was aware of U-M policies regarding ICE raids. Chair Modrak remarked that SACUA has been working on compiling information and has had conversations with faculty experts and with Mayor Christopher Taylor. The city of Ann Arbor does not cooperate unless they receive a federal warrant.

Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 5:09 pm.

ADDENDUM

Senate Assembly Actions

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

- On January 30th, the following faculty were elected to the SACUA Nominating Committee:
 - Jonathan Brennan, Senate Assembly member
 - Jessica Pasquale, Senate Assembly member
 - Carolyn Kuranz, Senate Assembly member
 - Andre Monteiro da Rocha, Senate Assembly member
 - Rebekah Modrak, SACUA member
 - Simon Cushing, SACUA member

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Marshall
Faculty Governance Coordinator

Upcoming Meetings

- 2/24 Senate Assembly
- 3/17 Senate Assembly
- 4/21 Senate Assembly

[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."