



**Academic Affairs Advisory Committee (AAAC) Minutes**  
**December 12, 12:45 – 2:15pm (Provost attending 1-2 pm)**  
Ruthven Conference Room 1140 and via Zoom (hybrid)

Minutes of Meeting: 12/12/2024

Circulated: 1/9/2025

Approved: 1/16/2025

**Present:** Aubree Gordon (Chair), Colleen Conway, Robert Deegan, Christine Gerdes (Special Counsel to the Provost), Emmanuelle Marquis, Ann Marshall (FSO), Luke McCarthy (FSO), Heather O'Malley (SACUA liaison), Laurie McCauley (Provost), Frank Pelosi, Mireille Roddier, Jordan Siegel, Kentaro Toyama, Arthur Verhoogt, Jon Wargo

**Absent:** Albert Liu, Rahul Mannan

1. In preparation for the arrival of the Provost, the minutes from 11/7/2024 were approved and members briefly discussed AAAC agenda items.
2. The Provost presented on the Office of the Provost's faculty promotion process
  - The Provost remarked that the promotion and tenure process is one of the most important things U-M does as a campus.
  - As required by [Regents' Bylaws 5.08](#), the provost is an integral part of the P & T process, with the provost reviewing all casebooks. After the provost's review, P & T recommendations go to the president and then to the Regents for review and approval. The provost's process involves an additional set of eyes regarding credentials and with the schools and colleges' procedures.
  - The Office of the Provost's review includes a primary and secondary reviewer. The identities of the two reviewers are confidential and may, for example, be prior associate deans and/or have had other administrative roles. All new reviewers go through an orientation, and casebooks are assigned as close to the reviewers' area of expertise as possible. The size of the school influences whether the reviewers are external or not, with reviewers typically external to the department. In large schools, reviewers may be internal to the school. The two reviewers conduct and present their reviews independently.
  - A meeting(s) is then held to review the casebooks. If concerns are raised about the merits of a case, the provost inquires with the relevant dean. The provost makes the final academic judgement and forwards these judgements to the president. The provost and president meet to review these judgements and, if there are concerns, these concerns would then be discussed with the president. It is rare that a casebook would be considered incomplete. An example of an incomplete casebook could be that one of the P & T candidate's external reviewers is not an arm's length review, and this candidate could then be asked to submit an additional external review letter.
3. Discussion of the faculty promotion process
  - Over a five-year period, there were two cases (.2% of cases) where the provost did not follow the dean's recommendation, out of 831 total cases. One was a negative recommendation (tenure denied) and the other a positive recommendation. The Provost's Office doesn't "reverse" decisions, it either "accepts" or "does not accept" the dean's recommendation.
  - Over the last two years, the Provost has accepted all of deans' recommendations for P & T cases.



- Given the Provost's Office process for the primary and secondary reviewers and the role of the vice provost, the provost doesn't review all 800 pages of every case, but the provost does review all casebooks. The Provost has been impressed by the thoroughness of the reviews.
- The Provost expressed a willingness to post the Office of Provost's P & T casebook review procedures on the provost's website.
- A AAAC member shared that, in some units, the candidate can share a list of people they'd prefer not be included as external reviewers. A question was asked about whether this list (e.g. those with different disciplinary philosophies) can also be shared with the Provost's Office. The Provost offered to follow-up on this question.
- It was noted that the Provost's Office reviewers could have a conflict of interest and that, yes, there is a standard process used by the Provost's Office to address such conflicts of interest.

#### 4. Threats and Harassment Survey (Preliminary Report)

- A preliminary and advisory *Threats and Harassment Survey: Report to Provost - November 20, 2024* was shared with AAAC members. In brief, the survey found that, while the total percentage of faculty experiencing threats is relatively small, the impact of threats on these faculty is very serious.
- Based upon the preliminary report, the Provost's Office is planning additional resources, including a single contact email/phone and case manager model to support faculty who have been threatened. Types of support could involve legal (OGC), safety (DPSS), communication resources, as well as ongoing support from the unit, with information treated confidentially and on a need-to-know basis.
- Two AAAC members shared their own experiences with harassment and, at the time, the need for more U-M support. This included one AAAC member who changed their home phone number due to attacks and a second faculty whose academic work was attacked with threats made upon one of their graduate students.

#### **Recommendations**

- Concerns were raised that these types of attacks could increase substantially and AAAC recommended that the university prepare for such increases.
- AAAC members recommended IT software for scrubbing social media accounts, such as DeleteMe.
- It was recommended that universities also work together on these issues through both Big Ten and national organizations.

#### 5. Additional Committee Discussion

- After the Provost left the meeting, there was brief committee discussion related to AAAC next steps.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ann Marshall, Faculty Governance Coordinator (FSO)