

Student Relations Advisory Committee (SRAC)

Minutes of Meeting: 2/21/25

Circulated: 3/14/25

Approved: 3/21/25

Present: Marita Rohr Inglehart (Chair), Charlotte Karem Albrecht, Jonathan Brennan, Myles Durkee, Cindee Giffen, Bruno Giordani, Jamie Niehof, David Potter, Joel Scheuher, Martino Harmon (VP for Student Life), Connie Tingson Gatuz (Associate Vice President for Student Development, Learning, and Social Change Education), Angelique McCann (Office of the Vice President for Student Life)

Absent: Marna Clowney-Robinson, Anouck Girard, Charlie Koopmann, Kaitlin Karmen, Oliver Kozler, Om Shah

Guests:

Mario Thaqi, CSG President

Jake Frederick, CSG Vice President

Laura Blake Jones, Dean of Students & Associate Vice President for Student Life

Kelly O'Mara, Program Manager, Maize & Blue Cupboard

Faculty Senate Office: Eric Vandenberghe

11:36am-11:37am: Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Minutes, Announcements

The agenda was approved. The minutes for the 1/24/25 SRAC meeting were approved.

11:37am-11:47am: Student Life Updates and Current Issues

Summary: VP Harmon provided the committee with updates on the work of OVPSL.

Comments are offered on the recent passing of a community member. Communication will be offered by the university for these and similar situations based on several factors. OVPSL works with the affected families to send out information based on their wishes. Ongoing investigations by authorities are also considered when determining proper communication. The broad circumstances for this instance are shared with the committee.

Brief discussion ensues on this topic. In situations where a UM community member passes, UM administration reaches out directly to students affected. Counseling services are offered when appropriate. An annual memorial is held for individuals who pass within the UMICH community. Often when it is a student who passes, the specific unit or cohort may receive more communication than the full university community.

Upon conclusion of that topic, further updates are offered.

The recent [wheelchair basketball game](#) between the University of Michigan and Michigan State University was held in Crisler Arena on 2/16/25. This was held through SAAS. A record crowd was in attendance.

There will be five spring break immersions for interested students, sponsored by OVPSL. Three will take place in New York City, one in Lansing, and one in Ann Arbor. Each immersion has a specific subject focus.

The Ginsberg Center's Alternative Break Grants are discussed. Per the Ginsberg [website](#), this grant program "provides up to \$1,000 for student organizations planning an Alternative Break or immersive service experience. Grant recipients receive advising and training to plan strong, meaningful alternative breaks for their members."

Action: Updates

11:47am-12:20pm: Central Student Government updates and student perceptions of a healthy campus social climate

Summary: The Chair introduces the guests, Mario Thaqi, CSG President, and Jake Frederick, CSG Vice President. They had previously shared their presentation slides, as well as their remarks from the most recent regent's meeting, with the committee members. The guests provided brief introductions of their background and listed the members of their cabinet.

The guests shared the policy priorities of their administration. The two broad priorities are centered on affordability and campus climate.

Housing affordability is the first of the priorities discussed. The guests are working with the Ann Arbor Tenants Union on providing more resources to protect students. One such initiative is working towards the elimination of junk fees associated with rental applications. The guests acknowledge that the large housing projects around campus by UM are welcome developments, but that these will take time and not provide relief for students facing these issues at the current moment.

Food insecurity is the next priority discussed. The guests would like to advocate for expansion and increase funding for the Maize and Blue Cupboard. The guests are working to provide guidance to students regarding their eligibility for SNAP benefits, as a way of increasing their use by students. The guests are working on a grocery store transportation initiative. This would help students access grocery stores in the area more easily.

The presentation shifts to campus climate, with speech and protest as the initial priority of this section discussed. A priority stated is for there to be student representatives on the Board of Regents. The guests have met with individual regents to bring this idea to their attention.

The guests have met with DPSS representatives to address issues of activism management, immigration enforcement, and information dissemination. Further discussions with DPSS have included improving lighting in certain parts of campus. A rideshare related Late-night transportation partnership is also discussed.

The guests conclude their presentation by offering their observations on the current social climate on campus. The guests are thanked for their presentation, as well as for their work on campus.

Action: Presentation and discussion

12:20pm-12:43pm: Maize & Blue Cupboard Updates

Summary: The Chair introduces the guest, Kelly O'Mara, who is the Program Manager of the Maize & Blue Cupboard. Prior to the meeting, the committee had received the program's 2024 annual report. Program Manager O'Mara provided an overview of the Maize & Blue Cupboard, and the service provided. The history of the program is briefly reviewed. The location and description of the space is offered. It is currently open 6 days a week, and the hours have recently shifted to allow for more individuals to participate.

There is no demonstration of need, meaning anyone can get food through this program. They gather metrics through an optional survey. Through this data, they can understand the community they serve better and continually improve.

The logistics of how the program obtains and distributes food is reviewed. They are currently receiving ~12k-15k lbs. of food a week. Program Manager O'Mara discussed space for innovation, including popup distributions, as well as online ordering.

The shopper experience is shared and reviewed. Shoppers make an appointment to better utilize the space and prevent long wait times. The shoppers show their M-Card, but it is not scanned. There are suggested limits for taking most items, with a few firm limitations on other items, that fluctuate due to scarcity of items. They do not turn anyone away without food.

A member asks what the biggest need the program has currently. Program Manager O'Mara indicates that the program could benefit from expanded space.

Funding is discussed. The initial seed money for this program came from OVPSL. They currently operate off donations.

A member suggests student groups that could collaborate with the Maize & Blue Cupboard for certain events. The guest is thanked for her presentation, and for the work done on campus.

Action: Discussion

12:43pm-1:08pm: SSRR recommendations cover letter discussion

Summary: At this time, VP Harmon exits the meeting as scheduled. The Chair provides an overview of the timeline of completion of the amendment to the SSRR process to the committee. The Chair proceeds to discuss issues related to the letter being submitted supplementally from the committee with the final amended version for administration consideration. The committee also agrees that they wish to meet with the General Counsel's Office to get their feedback. This will be requested through the FSO.

Differences between this committee's review process and prior committee processes are reviewed. Differing opinions are voiced. The plan to move forward is finalized, and the meeting concludes.



1120 Ruthven Building
1109 Geddes Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Action: Discussion

1:08pm: Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Vandenberghe
Faculty Governance Coordinator
Faculty Senate Office