

Dear Faculty Senate members,

Welcome back from the holidays. I write to share some important information and opportunities with you.

CLASS ACTION LAWSUIT ON BEHALF OF ALL TENURE-TRACK 9-MONTH FACULTY

You may have seen the [recent news article](#) about the class action lawsuit on behalf of U-M tenure-track faculty on 9-month contracts on all three campuses. This is related to a concern brought to the Senate Assembly last year wherein faculty on 9-month contracts have been underpaid since at least 2008. The crux of the issue is that the 9-month faculty contracts begin on July 1 but faculty aren't notified of the annual raise until two months later, at the end of August, and the raise doesn't begin until September 1. Thus, each year, faculty have not been paid for the July and August portion of the raise. When notified of the error, the University agreed to correct the problem beginning in 2025, but not to compensate faculty for missed backpay.

While SACUA and the Senate Assembly discussed this issue, neither body initiated the lawsuit or has been in contact with the attorneys representing this case. Rather, independent faculty took the initiative to consult with an attorney. The attorneys are looking to recover three years of missed pay for all faculty. The process ahead is for them to ask the judge to allow the case to go forward, to enter the discovery process, and to pursue settlement negotiations.

We have been receiving questions from faculty about this case but, as SACUA is not involved, we redirect you to the law firm of Sommers Schwartz and the information [linked here](#) that they provide.

OPPORTUNITY TO SIGN OPEN LETTER SUPPORTING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

This past Sunday morning, [Regent Hubbard spoke with a Fox News reporter](#) and confirmed that the Regents may vote to end DEI programming at the December 5 meeting. The reporter cited a 5% Black student enrollment as evidence that DEI has failed, with no acknowledgment of the devastating impact of Prop 2 in 2008, which caused Black enrollment to plummet. Neither

did Regent Hubbard mention that Black student enrollment is now at 7.5% and has increased by 87% since 2020, largely due to the work of U-M DEI programming. You can also read “[A Black perspective on the attack on DEI](#),” written by a U-M student.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are [core values of the University of Michigan](#). They inspire a commitment to work toward economic, racial, gender-based, cultural, religious, and ability-based diversities that are integral to our research and teaching.

If you’d like to show your support, faculty are circulating an [open letter](#) affirming “support for the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, its leadership, the unit-level DEI leads, and the many members of our community who continually work to make our University more diverse, equitable, and inclusive.”

COURSE CANCELLATIONS: COLLEGE OF ARTS, SCIENCES AND LETTERS FACULTY — UM-DEARBORN

Faculty at the College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters (CASL) at UM-Dearborn have shared their concerns about stark austerity measures in which the dean has instructed department chairs to cancel Winter classes taught by Lecturers and to increase the course caps (maximum number of student enrollment) for courses taught by tenure-track professors. Some examples are:

- Comp 220 Honors Writing had a cap of 15 that will increase to 30
- Philosophy 233 Critical Thinking online had a cap of 30 that will increase to 50
- Communication 310 Narrative Writing Journalism/Media had a cap of 22 cap that will increase to 40
- Comp/English 223 Intro to Creative Writing had a cap of 20 that will increase to 30

There is concern that high course caps violate guidelines of the National Teachers of English (NCTE) and will lead to a decline in quality instruction and student-faculty engagement. The process for making these changes—without consulting faculty—has raised significant concerns about shared governance and accountability. According to bylaws and policy guidelines, course caps should be negotiated by departments’ curriculum committees. Additionally, LEO’s contract states that workload changes have to be announced by March 1 for the following year. This didn’t happen.

SACUA and the LEO Union Counsel wrote to President Ono and the Regents, and that letter was sent to Chancellor Grasso.

SACUA and the Faculty Senate Office are in the process of setting up a town hall to meet with faculty from U-M-Dearborn. We'll share information about this meeting asap.

AAUP PRESIDENT TO SPEAK TO THE SENATE ASSEMBLY

The new AAUP President, Todd Wolfson, a professor at Rutgers University, will speak to the Senate Assembly (SA) for 15 minutes, followed by about 35 minutes for Q&A on Monday, December 16 from 4-4:50pm. Dr. Wolfson has offered to speak about "the crisis in higher education and how to respond."

The Senate Assembly are the 77 elected faculty representatives from all units from the Ann Arbor, Dearborn and Flint campuses. The meetings are open to the public and larger university, but only SA members may participate in the Q/A.

The zoom link for the meeting is: <https://umich.zoom.us/j/96489485564?pwd=GMrkR4UbBleQR193ae4iU4Ulr8oYlq.1>

Thank you for your attention to faculty matters.

All best,
Rebekah Modrak

SACUA Chair

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University of Michigan · Faculty Senate Office · 1109 Geddes Ave, Ste 1120 · Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1079 · USA