

Secretary of the University Advisory Committee (SAC)

Minutes of Meeting: 3/10/25

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Present: John Tropman (Chair), VP Jon Kinsey, Francine Dolins, Barbara Klein, Samantha Kreklau, John Pasquale, Jonathan Shillingford, Beth Wilensky

Absent: Vilma Mesa (SACUA Liaison), Rashmi Rama, Jay Winkler

Faculty Senate Office: Eric Vandenberghe

10:03am: Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Minutes, Announcements

The agenda was approved. The minutes for the February SAC meeting will be reviewed at the April meeting.

Prior to the first topic, the Chair of the committee brings up the fact that the federal government has implemented a [funding freeze for the Fulbright Scholars program](#).

10:03am-10:23am: Update from VP Kinsey's Office

Summary: VP Kinsey provides an update to the committee on the work that his office and central administration has been doing since the last SAC meeting. The changes made by the federal government since the new administration have taken charge have been a primary focus of the regents and administration.

The regents are corresponding and meeting with Central Student Government and Rackham Student Government. Several regents are meeting with SACUA and/or SACUA leadership. The most recent regent's meeting is discussed, with information provided on statements in support of the university's mission made by regents. The regents are in correspondence with congressional leaders from Michigan, and they continue to advocate for UM's mission. UM Regents are planning on meeting with the Board at Michigan State University in the near future to discuss issues facing both universities.

A question is asked about the regent's alignment on issues facing the university, noting that there are members of both major political parties sitting on the board. It is stated that all of the regent's believe in the mission of the university, and are advocating to meet the goals of the university

The budgets are currently being reviewed and planned as the new fiscal year approaches. The changes in the federal government are creating many questions. This uncertainty is creating a lot of difficulty.

A member brings up the recent arrest of [Mahmoud Khalil](#). The member states that this is extremely troubling and asks that the university work to protect students who could be detained in a similar fashion.



A member suggests that the administration provide more information to the UM community in more frequent intervals.

The gravity of the ongoing changes on the federal level as it relates to higher education is discussed. This is a very serious situation that requires significant attention. Further efforts by the administration are discussed. President Ono is meeting with many groups to assist in advocating for the University. In the past, these efforts have worked. These strategies and how effective they can be now are discussed.

A member suggests that the administration survey the faculty to find out how changes to the federal government are affecting them. This is also affecting students negatively, with some information provided. The FSO Director indicates that the Faculty Senate Office conducted a survey along the lines of what had been described, and discussed benefits to the administration building on this work as a means of advocating for the university. A lot of good work is in jeopardy because of these potential changes to federal funding.

Action: Discussion

10:23am-10:30am: Publicly earmarking funds to assist with funding disruptions

Summary: The Chair references the recent change made to hiring at UM. These decisions now need to go through central administration. A member asks if the Deans were consulted. The FSO Director shares that the feedback he has received regarding this policy change from faculty has been negative. Suggestions for improving the policy are shared, including giving the power back to the Deans. Members agree with this and state that the current approach is not collaborative.

Discussion briefly ensues on the funding issues that are facing the university. There are some funds that are available.

Action: Discussion

10:30am-10:44am: Development of strategy task force

Summary: The Chair introduces this topic, which had been discussed at the prior meeting. Several members voice their support for this idea. A member indicates that changes at the federal level are occurring rapidly. Having the type of strategic task force that has described would be able to assist with strategic responses, as well as long-term plans.

The recent [cancellation of \\$400M in federal funds to Columbia University](#) is discussed.

A member indicates that UM needs to utilize media strategically. How can we collectively show how work at the university benefits the lives of others, both in Michigan, and nationally? This is discussed further.

Action: Discussion

10:44am-11:00am: Round Robin table talk to discuss committee member concerns and experiences

Summary: The Chair asks the members present to indicate how they are doing given the current federal changes.

A member shares that their work has not been directly affected yet, but that they have anxiety and worry about what is happening.

A member shares that a relative of theirs is looking at medical school, and the recent changes makes aspects more uncertain. Everyone is under a lot of pressure.

A member thanks the UM administration for their efforts and knows that it is a difficult time right now. Another member offers similar sentiments.

VP Kinsey asks how UM administration can better support the mission of the university.

A member sees this as the time for the UM community to come together and work towards their common interest.

A member suggests having a meeting with the regents, UM administration, faculty, and students with the purpose of finding the best path forward.

Action: Discussion

11:00am: Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Vandenberghe
Faculty Governance Coordinator
Faculty Senate Office