

## **Secretary of the University Advisory Committee (SAC)**

Minutes of Meeting: 2/17/25

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Approved: 4/3/25

Present: John Tropman (Chair), Jon Kinsey (VP and Secretary of the University), Francine Dolins, Curtiss Engstrom, Barbara Klein, Vilma Mesa (SACUA Liaison), John Pasquale, Rashmi Rama, Jonathan Shillingford, Jay Winkler

Absent: Samantha Kreklau, Beth Wilensky

Faculty Senate Office: Eric Vandenberghe, Luke McCarthy

### **10:00am-10:01am: Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Minutes, Announcements**

The agenda was approved. The minutes for the December SAC meeting were approved.

### **10:01am-10:10am: Bylaws project update**

Summary: VP Kinsey Provides the committee an update of this ongoing revision to this project. Former VP Churchill has invested significant time in updating the bylaws, which will be considered by the Regents, with input from community stakeholders. It is mentioned that the bylaws in their current form are significantly longer than certain peer institutions. There may be certain instances in which current sections or segments do not need to be contained within the bylaws. VP Kinsey further describes the process by which the bylaws will likely be reviewed. This is described as a deliberate process that will warrant significant time and consideration.

Discussion ensues on this topic, and questions are answered. A member indicates that transparency will be critical.

Action: Discussion

### **10:10am-10:26am: Faculty Senate Updates**

Summary: The Faculty Senate Director joined the meeting and offered updates from the Faculty Senate Office. The University Senate rules have undergone review by the Senate Assembly's Rules, Practices and Policies Committee (RPP). Director McCarthy provides insight to the issues reviewed by the committee. There are instances in which the Regent's bylaws are referenced directly in the rules, and the implications for faculty governance at UM are offered. Director McCarthy indicates that these rule changes will be in coordination with VP Kinsey and his office to ensure that both the University Senate rules and Regent's bylaws align.

The Davis, Markert, and Nickerson Academic Freedom Lecture Committee (DMNC) is hosting a winter panel on academic freedom on March 14<sup>th</sup>. Further details will be shared with the community in the coming days. The subject of the panel will center on the ongoing



barrage of executive orders that the current presidential administration is issuing.

The Chair of SACUA has been providing information to the faculty senate members via her newsletter. She continues to meet with members of the administration regarding the current issues facing faculty. Director McCarthy discusses the upcoming February Senate Assembly meeting in which Interim VP Lupia will share information regarding the state of federal funding.

Director McCarthy brings up the [Statement in Support of Valued Members of Our Community](#) which was endorsed by SACUA, and submitted by several other groups. This statement was made in the wake of related executive orders.

There are ongoing discussions on how faculty governance leadership at UM can confer and band together with peer institutions to face the mounting challenges posed by external forces.

SACUA will be consider recommending a faculty liaison to serve on the board of Regents. The purpose of this would be to provide the Board of Regents with consistent faculty input on key issues. The model at Michigan State University is shared and discussed. The SACUA Chair met with her MSU counterpart to discuss this and other issues.

Discussion ensues. A member states that higher education is under attack. A strong statement from President Ono and other university presidents is suggested to face the ongoing threats.

Action: Discussion

### **10:26am-10:59am: Discussion: Potential impact of federal executive orders**

Summary: VP Kinsey provides an overview of a few recent developments from the federal government of particular concern. These are unprecedented developments that affecting the university adversely. Many of these actions are being contested on several fronts, including in court. Federal funding is being threatened.

The floor is opened up to the committee for discussion. A member asks if UM is considering taking direct legal action challenging these executive orders. There are groups currently filing lawsuits challenging these measures. These are issues facing every academic institution in the country.

A member suggests that UM should work closely with other universities to face these issues together. VP Kinsey indicates that President Ono is in constant contact with other universities. It is indicated that a similar approach should be taken with faculty governance. How do we preserve our mission?

Several members indicate the administration needs to contest these executive orders vociferously. Members voice that compliance with these are not an option. UM's voice will be louder with other groups joining.

Members state that the administration should make use of the bright minds here at UM. It is indicated that there could be a group put together focused on strategic thinking. Specific

individuals are suggested.

A member mentions the importance of unifying university stakeholders to focus on preserving the mission of the university.

A member discusses the financial impact of cuts to federal funds would have on the Dearborn and Flint campuses. It would be catastrophic. It is suggested that the university leaders need to think about how the university will survive in the long-term.

A member echoes previous sentiments shared about working with other institutions. The political differences within governing boards are mentioned.

The Chair suggests meeting more frequently as a committee, and this is met with agreement by several members. The FSO will work to schedule a March meeting.

Action:

**10:59am:** Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Vandenberghe  
Faculty Governance Coordinator  
Faculty Senate Office