

Statement of Principles Concerning the Upcoming Presidential Search

Having canvassed the views of the Senate Assembly, the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs now urges the university's leadership to adopt the following principles in connection with the upcoming presidential search.

Concerning process

A president chosen behind closed doors is unlikely to command the support of our university communities. We seek a leader who is willing to meet the people they aspire to lead and earn their confidence. As stewards of the University's academic mission and democratic values, we call upon the Board of Regents to ensure that this search process honors the principles upon which this university was built.

The search process must be conducted with the highest degree of openness compatible with best practices in executive hiring. Private searches have increasingly become the norm in presidential searches. However, scholars who study presidential searches write that this privacy is based on "a premise for which we can find no empirical support." In fact, they [find that](#) open searches are key to mitigating the risk of discovering—after the fact—issues such as plagiarism, research misconduct, and poor leadership. We recognize that early confidentiality may be necessary to attract a strong and diverse pool. We believe that at minimum finalists for the presidency must engage in campus visits that include interviews with representative groups of faculty, staff, and students, with structured opportunities for meaningful dialogue and input to the Regents and the search committee. This process would ensure that the university's next leader is not only vetted for administrative skill, but also for alignment with the academic, democratic, and public values of the institution.

The search committee itself must include representatives from SACUA, student government, and staff governance bodies, who will serve as active participants in shaping the finalist pool and assessing candidates' qualifications.

A search process that is as open and inclusive as possible is the first and necessary step in building the mutual trust that will be essential for the university's future.

Principles and Qualities

The next President of the University of Michigan must demonstrate a clear, actionable commitment to the university's core values. We expect presidential candidates to affirm these principles not only in word, but through a record of leadership and a willingness to collaborate with faculty, staff, and students in defending and advancing them.

As such we expect that candidates will be ready to take decisive action in defending and advancing the core values of the University. The new president must possess both moral clarity and strategic acumen—resisting pressures that seek to erode free expression, compromise university values, or suppress protest. More specifically, they should

- Lead the effort to form a Big Ten Mutual Defense Compact or a similar body, actively protecting academic autonomy from external interference.
- Continue diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives that are in alignment with our university's values, an extension of the mission of our schools, and legally compliant.
- Affirm the University's commitment to improving accessibility and lower costs for all Michigan students by building on the current expansion of programs like the Go Blue Guarantee and Wolverine Pathways.
- Take a firm stand against political intrusion into academic and campus life and implement measures that assure the safety of our community.
- Commit to equitable investment and engagement across Ann Arbor, Dearborn, and Flint, recognizing the full scope of the university's mission.
- Have experience working productively with federal agencies to advance research.
- Reverse the recent consolidation of budgetary authority in the Office of the President and re-empower deans and heads of schools to set their own priorities.
- Share the University's commitment to achieving carbon neutrality without further delays.
- Respect campus unions and engage in constructive labor relations.
- Commit unequivocally to shared governance by meeting regularly with faculty and student leaders and by approaching university challenges through dialogue, shared responsibility, and mutual respect.

Adopted by the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA) on May 21, 2025