



Government Relations Advisory Committee (GRAC) Minutes

Minutes of November 14, 2024, 3:15-4:00 pm, regular meeting

Circulated: 2/7/2025

Approved: 2/13/2025

Present: Mike Shriberg (Chair), Shevon Desai, Chris Kolb (Vice President for Government Relations), Andi Lewis (Government Relations Specialist), John Mansfield, Shahzad Mian, Soumya Rangarajan, Sara Samuel, Beth Wilensky, Jeffrey Yackley

Absent: Sue Anne Bell, Jowei Chen, Anouck Girard, Nakhiah Goulbourne

1. The meeting was called to order and the minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

2. VP Kolb – Election Update

- VP Kolb provided a synopsis of the election results and its impact on higher education, i.e. beginning in January, the Republican party will have a majority in all three federal branches (both House & Senate, President, and Supreme Court). Key policy issues that could impact U-M include China, immigration, Title IX, LGBTQ issues, antisemitism, NIH reform, financial aid, and federal budget cuts, among others. As a public university and, given the federal funds that support higher education research, U-M could be impacted. Representatives in [Michigan's House delegation](#) seeking leadership roles are [Lisa McClain](#), [Tim Walberg](#) and [John Moolenaar](#). Opportunities for increased federal funding include the Department of Energy and Department of Defense.
- On the state level, there will be divided government, with Republicans having a majority in the [MI House](#) and Democrats having a the majority in [MI Senate](#).

3. Discussion

- There were several questions about how U-M will support individual faculty members who could experience political attacks and what U-M administration can do to prepare for such threats.
- Concerns were raised about potential negative impacts on Michigan Medicine, including the pressure to be neutral on medical-related policy issues; negative effects on Palestinian medical fellows and physicians; the risk of cuts to NIH funding; the need to provide better medical policy information to not just leaders, but to the wider public.
- An important role for Government Relations is to convey strong narratives about the essential and far-reaching impact of U-M research. For example, U-M works with legislators on bills, in support of U-M faculty providing expert testimony, and with regards to messaging on UM-related policy issues.
- Discussion also included: U-M's record of ROI for students, i.e. high U-M graduation rates and lower student debt; concerns about national policies in relation to undocumented students and staff; stories as a form of effective messaging; confusion over the U-M institutional neutrality policy with plans to provide an FAQ.

4. GRAC next steps and plans for January 2025 meeting



- The plan for the January GRAC meeting is to focus on how to communicate the importance of U-M faculty members' work to legislative leaders.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Marshall, FSO, Faculty Governance Coordinator
(With thanks to GRAC member Shevon Desai for contributing notes for the final segment of the meeting)