



## Government Relations Advisory Committee (GRAC) Minutes

**Minutes of March 13, 2025, 11-11:45 am**, regular meeting

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Approved: 4/10/2025

**Present:** Sue Anne Bell (Chair), Shevon Desai, Anouck Girard, Nakhiah Goulbourne, Chris Kolb (Vice President for Government Relations), Andi Lewis (Government Relations Specialist), John Mansfield, Soumya Rangarajan, Sara Samuel, Jeffrey Yackley.

**Absent:** Jowei Chen, Shahzad Mian, Beth Wilensky.

1. The meeting was called to order and the minutes from the previous meeting were approved.
2. VP Chris Kolb Update
  - It is difficult to know how to provide an update with so much activity occurring at the federal level. There is the issue of using the power of funding to get entities to do what the government wants or to punish entities that do not adhere to the policies the federal government is trying to implement, i.e. Columbia. Additional issues include the extraction of an international student and having their visa be revoked. Such decisions have come from the highest levels of government, and it is sobering news. There is a recognition of the value of research, and, during visits to D.C., VP Kolb stresses the importance of research to legislators. The continuing resolution to fund the U.S. government is currently being considered by the Senate.
3. Key federal and state policy activities specific to higher ed, including recent and future events
  - A faculty member asked about awareness of a recent [Forbes article](#) reporting on how NIH funds have fueled \$95 billion in economic activity in FY 2024. VP Kolb remarked that there is discussion of indirect costs in relation to NIH funding, and that many alternatives are being negotiated, including individual and tiered rates, e.g. a specific rate for engineering. The negotiated rate could be anywhere between 15% and 70%. Legislative officials have varying perspectives, with some legislators most focused on the issues of their committees.
  - **Appropriations at the state level:** The state passed an initial “skinny” budget, and action is not expected on this initial budget. The MI House is expected to be conservative, and the parameters are unknown until future meetings. The MI legislature will be on spring break into mid to late April. Transportation funding is expected to be a focus, and a victory may be the status quo.
  - **Roundtable with Debbie Dingell:** Representative Debbie Dingell has hosted a series of roundtables, including a recent successful event with junior researchers each having 1-2 minutes to tell the human impacts of their research and what would happen if such research stopped. Such stories emphasize the equipment and data needed to be a scientist. They hope to do a similar event/s in a lab setting to illustrate the impact of both direct and indirect costs. The intent is to pull together narratives, especially those that generate jobs that a person on the street can relate to.
  - A faculty member asked about strategies to come together, as a critical mass, to push back. For example, Johns Hopkins is being targeted even though they haven’t been political. VP Kolb noted that a lot of the expected action will come at the level of national associations, such as the Association of American Universities (AAU) and the Association of Public Land-Grant Universities (APLU). There is hope that the courts continue to push back, and the unknown is if the judicial findings are not adhered to.



4. The next meeting is April 10<sup>th</sup>.

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,  
Ann Marshall, FSO, Faculty Governance Coordinator