



To: SACUA

From: John Tropman, Chair, Secretary of the University Advisory Committee (SAC)

Subject: Report on Activities of the Secretary of the University Advisory Committee (SAC) for 2024-2025

Members:

Francine Dolins
Curtiss Engstrom
Barbara Klein
Samantha Kreklau
John Pasquale
Rashmi Rama
Jonathan Shillingford
Beth Wilensky
Jay Winkler

SACUA Liaison:

Vilma Mesa

Meeting Dates:

Thur. 9/12: 1pm-2pm
Thur. 10/10: 1pm-2pm
Thur. 12/12: 10am-11am
Mon. 2/17: 10am-11am
Mon. 3/10: 10-11am
Thur. 4/3: 1pm-2pm

Committee Charge

1. Establish a relationship with the new Secretary of the University, including by exploring how the SAC may have a constructive role in (1) advising the Secretary and (2) sharing information regarding the Board of Regents with the Faculty Senate.
2. Consider current practices involving major changes of University policy being made without prior consultation with the Faculty Senate, such as the July 18th changes to the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities
3. Investigate topics such as the following:
 - a. Establish a Vision 2034 Board of Overseers



- b. Understand the criteria for making Bylaw changes, with SACUA having an opportunity to provide input on those changes.
 - c. Explore hosting an event in the winter term with the Board of Regents to communicate suggested strategic priorities for the university that have been developed by the Faculty Senate leadership, in coordination with SACUA and the FSO.
 - d. Coordinate with the chair of the FAAC regarding future ethical investment recommendations for the Regents.
4. Consider with the Secretary of the University any further issues or topics brought forward by the SAC committee members or the Secretary for discussion over the year. While coordinating with the Faculty Senate Office to help avoid duplicating work that SACUA has now referred to itself or another committee, the committee may also continue discussing any issues or topics raised in the committee's most recent annual committee report.

Committee Actions

1. We discussed an apparent shift in Regental and Executive Officer decision-making protocols from consultative (Community-based) to more corporate models (Boardroom based).

We encouraged a return to Regental consultation with relevant University stakeholders, with special emphasis on developing a consultative structure with SACUA.

2. Strategic Plan Oversight

The committee suggested that the recently unveiled Vision 2034 strategic plan of the university would benefit from robust community oversight. Utilizing the perspectives of faculty, students, staff, alumni, and administrators would lead to better outcomes. Such a committee could be formed for an annual term and may not need to be convened every year. This separate committee would be able to devote their meeting time to the strategic plan fully.

3. Bylaw Revision Information and Discussion

The Regent Bylaws are currently undergoing a full review by a team led by Sally Churchill, for Secretary of the University. The bylaws as currently written have become too lengthy, and some facets may need to be moved to individual units where appropriate. Additionally, the secretary's office is reviewing the bylaws of educational peers and will be producing a new draft version to be shared for community input. This committee recommends that the bylaws be reviewed in regular intervals.



4. Dismay at Actions by the Executive Branch of the Federal Government

Negative Presidential actions are growing steadily among American citizens and institutions. Committee members were invited to share their feelings and perspectives as an informational exercise for the Secretary to utilize and share with his colleagues.

5. Potential Actions for UM Going Forward in light of actions taken by the federal government

The Chair introduced three actions the UM might consider considering Presidential threats to Higher Education:

- a. Develop an emergency fund to ensure the continuation of essential research, clinical trials, animals, etc.
- b. Develop a high-level Strategic Thinking Group including UM Faculty, Staff, and Alumni to think about what is next, and not what just happened.
- c. Take the lead in connecting and collaborating with other institutions of higher learning to form a National Strike Force to demonstrate unity in resistance.

6. Masked ICE Officers grabbing Students and deporting them

Great concern was expressed concerning seemingly random, unsupported arrests and imprisonment of students and university researchers across academic institutions, as well as the canceling of UM student visas for unknown and specious reasons.

7. Mental Health needs of students, faculty, and staff.

The topic of the mental health crisis was discussed, which has been exacerbated by the current climate. Special mention was made of the University Health, which could benefit from updated facilities. Similar concerns were raised about the North, Flint and Dearborn campuses.

Information Obtained

Information was obtained through circulating relevant articles and other materials providing information on late-breaking events affecting the university community.

Recommendations

The Following recommendations were made:

1. The Regents and the Executive Officers return to more frequent and robust consultation with relevant University stakeholders, with special emphasis on developing a consultative structure with SACUA.
2. The university considers the three-pin action strategy of financial backup, the development of a UM Strategic Committee, and the development of a University Strike Force to resist governmental incursion; in conjunction with current needs and future strategic opportunities in the Vision 2034 strategic plan, providing oversight and connections among and between related elements.
3. The university considers a “hot line” for use in the case of ICE arresting UM community members for their use and the use of their loved ones.
4. The university should consider creating a handy Do/Don’t list for UM community members for knowledge and to enhance the safety of arrestees during a frightening moment
5. The university should consider adding further mental health staff and resources to address the needs of the UM community. The facilities on all UM campuses should be reviewed to ensure they meet the needs of the community.