

Dear Procurement Services,

We write to express concern regarding the [upcoming requirement](#), effective July 1, 2025, that all University of Michigan employees book flights for university-related travel exclusively through Collegiate Travel Planners (CTP).

This policy appears to have been developed and implemented with relatively little input from faculty. We have heard from faculty across a wide range of units—including the College of Engineering, the School of Information, the Marsal Family School of Education, the Department of Mathematics, and Michigan Medicine—who are deeply concerned about the practical and financial implications of this change.

Preliminary use of CTP has revealed that it often provides fewer flight options and in some cases significantly higher fares, especially for international travel, than those available through the airlines' own platforms. In some cases, the price difference can amount to several hundred dollars per ticket. Additional booking fees, restrictions on itinerary changes, and limited flexibility to coordinate travel with collaborators further increase costs and administrative burden. These issues are particularly problematic for grant-funded travel, where principal investigators are obligated to secure the most economical arrangements. We understand that CTP promises to match the lowest price available, but the process for obtaining such a price-match is cumbersome, requiring an email back-and-forth before the lower fare can be realized. Faculty should not have to bargain over ticket prices with CTP agents: it imposes upon us an unwelcome tax on our time and our attention.

To take one example: the chair of SACUA regularly flies on Delta between Detroit and Entebbe. A search made on 20 June 2025 shows that the CTP price for DTW to EBB, outbound on 5 July and returning on 31 July, is \$2,542. The same flights are available on the Delta website at \$2,265, a difference of \$280. We have had many similar examples sent to us over the past weeks by aggravated and worried members of the UM faculty.

We note that faculty are the individuals most highly motivated to search for the most economical flights, as we have a vested interest in ensuring that our scarce research funding is utilized as effectively as possible. For those of us holding external grants the ethical use of research funds is the responsibility of the principal investigator, and restrictive booking mandates may complicate compliance with both sponsor requirements and university financial policies. For years we have been doing the work of identifying the cheapest travel options available. Outsourcing this work to CTP will add unnecessary costs and fees to the process, impose upon us unnecessary administrative work, and may place us in violation of the terms of the grants that we hold.

We are concerned over the lack of transparency regarding the savings for the university and the units. Where is the evidence of the cost savings accruing to the University out of this new policy? Which part of the University is saving money by this new policy, and by what means?

What is the rationale for imposing a deadline for the implementation on July 1, during summer, when most faculty are engaging in various academic and research activities? We are aware that the University has made efforts to disseminate information about this new policy to faculty, but it is clear from the angry messages that we have received that this communication has failed.

We are especially concerned over the negative impact this policy will have on faculty who are visa or green card holders. CTP currently lacks the capability to store or process required immigration documentation—such as visas or green cards—which many airlines require at the time of online check-in. As a result, affected faculty will be forced to check in at the airport rather than online or via mobile app, adding significant stress and inconvenience. More troubling, it makes these individuals more visible as immigrants at a time when many already feel vulnerable. This policy imposes disproportionate burdens on international faculty members and may discourage global academic engagement.

We urge VP Chatas and Procurement Services to halt the implementation of this policy on July 1 and instead engage in a substantive dialogue with faculty before this policy is implemented. We urge VP Chatas and Procurement Services to share with SACUA information about the contractual terms and the evidence gathered about cost savings. If for contractual reasons it is not now possible to row back on this policy, we urge that it should be reconsidered at the earliest opportunity. As it currently stands, it is hard for us to see the financial or administrative benefits that this policy is meant to achieve.

Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs

Adopted by the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs on June 24, 2025.