

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA)
The hybrid meeting was held in 1100 Ruthven and via Zoom

Minutes of Meeting: September 29, 2025

Circulated: October 3, 2025

Approved: October 6, 2025

Present: Derek Peterson (Chair), Meaghan Blanchard (FSO), Kirsten Herold, Ann Marshall (FSO), Luke McCarthy (FSO), Vilma Mesa, Rebekah Modrak (Immediate Past Chair), Heather O'Malley, Rogério Meireles Pinto (Secretary), Soumya Rangarajan (Vice Chair), Melanie Tanielian, Kentaro Toyama.

Absent: Jesse Capecelatro

Press:

Genevieve Monsma – *University Record*

Halle Pratt – *Michigan Daily*

Guests:

Provost Laurie McCauley, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Christine Gerdes, Special Counsel to the Provost

3:03 Call to Order and Approval of the Minutes

The September 15, 2025 meeting minutes were approved.

3:04 SACUA Chair's Update

- The [Resolution Regarding the UM Presidential Search Committee](#) was adopted at the September 22nd Senate Assembly meeting. The resolution was first adopted by SACUA on September 8th, and the resolution will next be considered by the Faculty Senate at its November 3rd meeting.
- Seventeen out of eighteen of the 2025-2026 Senate Assembly committee charges were approved at the September 22nd Senate Assembly meeting. The Research Advisory Committee (RAC) charge is in the process of being revised and will then be considered for approval.
- Since the prior meeting, SACUA voted electronically, with a vote of seven in favor and zero opposed, to approve the SACUA-authored Open Letter Regarding Consultative Decision-Making. The letter will next be submitted to the *University Record* to be published as a [Faculty Perspective](#) article.
- Faculty On-Campus Work Retreats were held on September 24 and September 25 in Hatcher Graduate Library, with about fifty people attending, and with a wide range of disciplines represented. Attendees were grateful for the sessions and also happy to be in dialog. Over lunch, the library provided presentations. The next faculty work retreat will be held on October 8th on North Campus. Gratitude was shared for the Provost for providing financial support for the work retreats.
- The first of the fall 2025 Political Speech and the Public Square events was held on

- the Diag on Tuesday September 23rd on the topic of “What Do I Want in a New U-M President?” Neeraja Aravamudan, Director of the Ginsberg Center served as moderator, and [the event was covered in an article by the Michigan Daily](#). The next event in the series will be held on October 21, 12-1 pm, on the topic of “Artificial Intelligence: Is it a Good Thing?” Recommendations for speakers can be sent to the Faculty Senate Office.
- Orsolya Lautner-Csorba, Michigan Medicine/Surgery, will serve as the new Research Advisory Committee Chair. The prior chair stepped down due to family issues.
 - To date, nine nominations have been received for the current vacancy on SACUA. The next step is for FSO to confirm if the individuals nominated are available to be a candidate for the open seat.
 - Chair Peterson is working on inviting Regents members to attend a SACUA meeting/s. Some regents have already expressed interest in being a guest at SACUA. SACUA members also discussed extending open public invitations to the Regents and communicating open public invitations in general to be a guest at SACUA. SACUA members also expressed interest in having informal conversations with the Regents such as holding a cordial joint SACUA-Regents lunch. It was noted that, while Regents are in the building for Regent meetings, their schedules are very full on these days.
 - Vice Chair Soumya Rangarajan is working on plans to reach out to clinical faculty to encourage better representation of clinical faculty interests in faculty governance. Soumya and Derek will partner on events to reach clinical faculty across three general areas: Michigan Medicine pediatrics/OBGYN, Michigan Medicine adult medicine, and clinical faculty on central campus. A date of January or February 2026, after the new MM Pavillion opens, is being targeted as a possible initial event date. It was suggested that three sessions be held and that the sessions target faculty by their areas of expertise.

3:25 Accessibility and Course Materials

- SACUA members raised concerns about the timeline for being in compliance with the federal accessibility mandate. The new federal regulations have an implementation deadline of April 2026. The project is described in the [January 2025 Record Article about the university’s Digital Accessibility Strategic Initiative](#) and each unit has a [Digital Accessibility Liaison \(DAL\)](#).
- Faculty shared challenges with trying to make materials accessible. For example, there have been difficulties with making historical documents, materials with foreign language content, images, and graphical content accessible. In addition, the number of documents that are currently inaccessible is overwhelming. Faculty also shared concerns about [Panorama](#), a software program in Canvas that generates low scores (25%, etc.) for many content types (e.g. as listed above). Faculty have tried strategies such as hiring students (paid by with their discretionary or research funding) and having department staff dedicate time to the project and have made little progress. It was noted that large units, such as Michigan Medicine, could benefit from having more staff dedicated to the project.
- It was recommended that having each individual faculty member make their course

- materials accessible is not an effective campus-wide strategy and this will take faculty time and energy away from teaching, service and research..
- The secretary shared possibilities for best practices, such as Social Work holding office hours and workshops to help faculty make their teaching content accessible. There was interest in best practices at other universities, such as at Berkeley and at Big Ten institutions. It was noted that the ADA passed 35 years ago and that digitally accessible content has been very slow to be made widely available.
 - **Action Item:** SACUA will discuss accessibility in greater depth with guests from ITS and ECRT at an upcoming meeting.

3:46 New Business

- There were no new business items.

3:46 Pre-Guest Discussion

- This agenda item was in Executive Session and no minutes were taken.

4:00 Guest: Provost

- This agenda item was in Executive Session and no minutes were taken.

4:32 Post-Guest Discussion

- This agenda item was in Executive Session and no minutes were taken.

4:46 Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Rogério Meireles Pinto
Faculty Senate Secretary

Addendum

Pending Matters

At the close of the meeting, the following items were pending matters for later resolution:

- SACUA will digital accessibility with guests from ITS and ECRT at an upcoming SACUA meeting.

SACUA Actions

Between regular meetings, SACUA has performed the following actions that should be included in the SACUA minutes:

- On September 12th, SACUA nominated the following faculty to Clinical Faculty University Award Advisory Committee:

- **Jayapalli Bapuraj**, Clinical Professor of Radiology and Program Associate, Radiology, Medical School
- **Sybil Biermann**, Clinical Professor of Radiology and Program Associate, Radiology, Medical School
- **Debi Khasnabis**, Clinical Professor of Education and Director Academic Program, Educational Studies, Marsal Family School of Education
- **Liz Kolb**, Clinical Professor of Education, Marsal Family School of Education
- On September 15th, SACUA nominated the following faculty to a Chancellor of UM-Dearborn Search Advisory Committee:
 - **Francine Dolins**, Associate Professor of Psychology, Department of Behavioral Sciences, College of Arts, Sciences and Letters, The University of Michigan-Dearborn
 - **Bruce Maxim**, Narasimhamurthi "Nattu: Natarajan Collegiate Professor of Engineering and Professor of Computer and Information Science, College of Engineering and Computer Science, The University of Michigan-Dearborn
 - **Liz Rohan**, Professor of Rhetoric and Composition, Department of Language, Culture, and the Arts, College of Arts, Sciences and Letters, The University of Michigan-Dearborn
- On September 15th, SACUA nominated the following faculty to a Executive Director of Police and Public Safety Search Advisory Committee:
 - **Michael Hickok**, Lecturer I in History, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts
 - **Nora Krinitsky**, Lecturer III in the Residential College, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts
 - **Shelley K Spivack**, Lecturer II in Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice, Department of Behavioral Sciences, College of Arts, Sciences and Education, The University of Michigan-Flint
- On September 26, SACUA approved an Open Letter Regarding Consultative Decision-Making, which will be presented to the *Record* as a Faculty Perspective article.

[University of Michigan Bylaws of the Board of Regents, Sec. 5.02:](#)

Sec. 4.01 The University Senate

"...[t]he Senate is authorized to consider any subject pertaining to the interests of the university, and to make recommendations to the Board of Regents in regard thereto. Decisions of the University Senate with respect to matters within its jurisdiction shall constitute the binding action of the university faculties. Jurisdiction over academic polices shall reside in the faculties of the various schools and colleges, but insofar as actions by the several faculties affect university policy as a whole, or schools and colleges other than the one in which they originate, they shall be brought before the University Senate."

[Rules of the University Senate, the Senate Assembly and the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs:](#)

Senate: “In all cases not covered by rules adopted by the Senate, the procedure in Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed.”

Assembly: “The Assembly may adopt rules for the transaction of its business. In appropriate cases not covered by rules of the Assembly, the rules of the University Senate shall apply.”

SACUA: “The committee may adopt rules for the transaction of its business.”