



Rules, Practices and Policies Committee (RPP)

Minutes of Meeting: 10/29/25

Circulated: 11/7/25

Approved: 11/14/25

Present: Jon Brennan (Chair), Audrey Bennett, Heather O'Malley, Howard Bromberg, James Gulvas, Mitchel Sollenberger, Neil Marsh, Nick Montgomery, Sun-Yung Bak, Ken Alfano

Absent: Lynette Hoelter, David Potter, Heather O'Malley (SACUA)

Faculty Senate Office: Eric Vandenberghe, Luke McCarthy

3:00pm-3:01pm: Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Minutes, Announcements

The agenda was approved. The minutes for the September RPP meeting were approved.

3:01pm-3:10pm: Updates on regent bylaw review process

Summary: Chair Brennan attended the most recent meeting of the Secretary's Advisory Committee to discuss the planned review of the Regent's bylaws. VP Kinsey expects that the review process will begin in the month. The process had been delayed due to a need to focus on the ongoing presidential search, as well as critical issues affecting higher education.

Former VP Sally Churchill had begun reviewing the bylaws in 2024 to see what changes could be made, with an eye for making the bylaws more concise. VP Kinsey indicated that the review process will be considering any potential changes to the bylaws to allow for sufficient community input.

Faculty will be asked to review suggested revisions and will have an opportunity to provide feedback. SACUA will submit suggested revisions of the bylaws based on the work completed by the RPP last academic year.

It is suggested that this is an opportunity to improve the rules with which the university is governed, and that faculty need to take advantage of the opportunity. Director McCarthy indicates that he and Chair Peterson had met with VP Kinsey previously about this project, and that they will do so again now that the community review process will be considered shortly.

Action: Update and discussion

3:10pm-3:40pm: University Senate authority

Summary: The Chair discusses the Regent's bylaws. The University Senate is defined in [Section 4.01](#). From the bylaws: "Decisions of the University Senate with respect to matters within its jurisdiction shall constitute the binding action of the University faculties. Jurisdiction over academic policies 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.” This is the authority specified in the bylaws. There is not any hard power specified. Faculty governance at UM is advisory.

The committee discusses what power is bestowed on the University Senate. It is an advisory body. In section 4.04 there is information about requesting information from any member of the university staff. The bylaw does not say the requested information needs to be provided. The section also talks about the Senate Assembly’s ability to invite staff of the university to offer advice. The Senate Assembly can establish committees, as mentioned in section 4.06.

To what extent do units have control over academic policies? The Provost has confirmed to the SACUA Chair and Director McCarthy in the past that the academic policy decisions are intended to primarily rest in the hands of the individual units. Hiring practices are brought up where higher ups need to sign off.

Members discuss their experiences of faculty governance at this and other institutions. Members discuss how units create and maintain academic policy.

Examples are given of areas in which faculty governance could have oversight when it comes to academic power. When academic courses or modules are required across the university, such as with [Talking Maize and Blue](#), it would be beneficial to have faculty governance input. Faculty governance also should be involved regarding issues of faculty grievances and dismissal cases. A member indicates that faculty should have a say in the forming of the academic calendar.

A member shares the “[Principles of Faculty Involvement in Institutional & Academic Unit Governance at the University of Michigan](#).” This was developed and cosigned by the Provost and SACUA Chair at the time. The Second edition came out in 2008.

In comparing UM to other institutions, a member indicates that other institutions will have more centralized policies, and that UM’s decentralized nature is not common.

Action: Discussion

3:40pm-4:00pm: Review peer senate summary

Summary: A peer comparison of faculty governance was prepared by the Faculty Senate Office last academic year. This document is reviewed by the committee.

The institutions with faculty government having substantial power are still limited and still give way to the administration in many regards.

There are pros and cons to faculty governance having increased power. It is noted that the administration has more power in faculty governance at some institutions. The power dynamics at UM are discussed. A member indicates the need for Faculty Governance to stay faculty led and independent. Further discussion ensues and the meeting concludes.

Action: Discussion

4:00pm: Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Vandenberghe
Faculty Governance Coordinator
Faculty Senate Office