



THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Senate Assembly

Monday, October 27, 3:15

The Hybrid meeting was held in 2000 University Hall, Ruthven and Zoom

Minutes: October 27, 2025

Circulated: November 20, 2025

Approved: November 24, 2025

In-person attendees: Meaghan Blanchard (nonvoting), William Calvo-Quiros, Jesse Capecelatro, Rogerio Castilho, Theodora Danciu, Johannes Foufopoulos, Josh Hausman, Kevin Joiner, Charlotte Karem Albrecht, John Magee, Ann Marshall (nonvoting), Luke McCarthy (nonvoting), Vilma Mesa, Susan Najita, Heather O'Malley, Derek Peterson, Rogério Pinto (nonvoting), Michael Schubnell, Craig Smith, Deirdre Spencer (nonvoting), Melanie Tanielian, Kentaro Toyama, Ashu Tripathi, Eric Vandenberghe (nonvoting), April Williams, Jason Young, Paul Zimmerman

Virtual attendees: Keith Aaronson, Carlos Aguilar, Mark Allison, Mousumi Banerjee, Rajiv Bapuraj, Sybil Biermann, Helen Burgess, Jade Burns, Deepa Butoliya, Yi-Su Chen, Meghan Courtney, Francine Dolins, Robert Duncan, Caren Goldberg, James Gulvas, L Jay Guo, Mercy Hanson, Kirsten Herold, Justin Hodge, Ryan Hudson (nonvoting), Robert Jones (nonvoting), Kim Kearfott, Elizabeth Keren-Kolb, Brad Killaly, Kristin Klein, Yongqing Li, Jakob McSparron, Shahzad Mian, Genevieve Monsma (nonvoting), Mukesh Nyati, Louise O'Brien, Pamela Pennock, James Rampton, Soumya Rangarajan, Kimberly Saks, Suzanne Selig (nonvoting), Jill Shake (nonvoting), Maddyn Shapiro (nonvoting), Albert Shih, Lauren Smith, Christina Snider, Brian Stewart, Quentin Stout, Krithika Suresh, Christine Veenstra (alternate), Elizabeth Viglianti, Yi-Li Wu, Liuyan Zhao

Press:

Genevieve Monsma – The University Record

Maddyn Shapiro – The Michigan Daily

Guests:

Ravi Pendse, Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer

Laurie McCauley, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

3:17 pm Come to Order, Minutes and Announcements

- The meeting was called to order, with quorum, and the minutes from the September 22 Senate Assembly meeting were approved by consent.
- Susan Najita was congratulated [on being elected to fill a vacancy on SACUA](#)
- There are continuing conversations with ECRT about protections for faculty given the expansion of ECRT mandatory reporting obligations.



- To date, the survey collecting U-M feedback about Collegiate Travel Partners (CTP) has received over 700 responses. On November 3rd, the Faculty Senate will consider a [resolution that calls for making CTP optional](#).
- Faculty Senate will also consider, on November 3rd, a resolution on a [Statement Concerning the Presidential Search Committee](#). This resolution was approved by a vote of the Senate Assembly at the September 22nd meeting.
- A public facing event about the impact of federal funding cuts on faculty research is being organized, and Chair Peterson will soon meet with VP Chris Kolb about plans for the event.
- There are not yet additional updates regarding the new DPSS committee to consider use of surveillance technology at U-M. The committee has been formed, but has not yet met.

3:20 pm Discussion of Artificial Intelligence and Agenda-Setting

- Reading materials on AI were shared with the Senate Assembly prior to the meeting. Chair Peterson invited comments from Senate Assembly members in preparation for VP Ravi Pendse's visit to SA at 3:30 pm.
- A faculty member from the Medical School remarked that students often know more about AI than faculty members and there is a need to up-scale faculty expertise on AI.
- A faculty member from LSA remarked that, having previously avoided AI, is now using AI a lot, for better or worse, noting that while there are strong opinions for and against, there is less middle ground. How can U-M take seriously the concerns about AI, including environmental issues, and also help students build necessary skills with reading and comprehension?
- Another LSA faculty shared that certain fields are more likely to be vulnerable in the face of AI and that AI will likely not affect everyone equally.
- A faculty member from the Medical School shared that there is a lot of expertise among faculty and there should be steps taken to connect those with expertise with others who are desperate to learn more.
- Another Medical School faculty member recommended that questions be raised about the facility being built in conjunction with the Los Alamos lab, including environmental concerns.
- A SEAS faculty member also encouraged questions about environmental impact and noted that AAAC has asked for an assessment of AI-related university costs and had not yet received a response.
- The Faculty Senate Secretary remarked that the inevitability of AI is a narrative that is local to the U.S. It is a narrative of privilege that is not true across the globe. Faculty have freedom to choose to use (or not to use) the tools they want to use in their classroom and for their research.
- **Possible Action Item:** A faculty member from LSA suggested that some mechanism be created to collect concerns from faculty about AI. It will not be possible to fully discuss the issue of AI in the thirty minutes allotted to the topic.

3:31 pm Guest Ravi Pendse, VP for IT & CIO, on the topic of AI

- VP Pendse shared appreciation for the opportunity to speak with Senate Assembly members and to learn from faculty. VP Pendse shared opening remarks, including that AI is one of many technologies and that AI has the potential for positive disruption if used responsibly, ethically, and thoughtfully. In 2022, a university-wide committee was created on AI (see [2023 AI report](#)) and AI challenges us and raises questions about learning, creativity, assessment, and ethics. The internet raised similar questions and has not been without its problems, including VP Pendse's difficult decision to shut down the internet one day before classes began in August 2023. Since 2024, there have been over 140 [workshops on AI offered by ITS](#). More workshops will be provided and VP Pendse would be happy to work with faculty to fill gaps and provide needed resources.

Discussion

- A faculty member from Pharmacy asked about AI's impact on jobs and how to best equip students who are entering the job market. VP Pendse remarked that having AI skills can enable higher achievement by students and, for example, that his IT team's use of AI has resulted in a 40 to 60% increase in coding efficiency. This does not mean a reduction of ITS staff, but instead better overall coding and more opportunities for health and wellness. Students can be encouraged to pursue career (not job) security and lifelong learning.
- An LSA faculty member remarked that they use AI in their research and noted that some skills have gone by the wayside. Yet education is different from research and how, given AI, can faculty teach critical thinking? VP Pendse shared that many are thinking about such questions very intentionally and that AI is not a good fit with all problems.
- Another LSA faculty member raised concerns about the environment and the new data center in Ypsilanti, and also raised concerns about AI and mental health. VP Pendse noted that his son, a new UC faculty member, has shared the challenges that he sees in this space, and that longitudinal studies are needed on both the positive and negative impacts of AI on mental health. For the environmental question, while a single search of AI uses very little energy and water, with a billion searches a day, AI uses an enormous amount of energy and renewable energy is needed. The Los Alamos project is a research partnership with a national lab that includes involvement with U-M faculty, staff, and students.
- A Medical School faculty, who is a regular user of AI, asked how often the U-M model of ChatGPT will be improved. VP Pendse responded that ChatGPT 5 has not yet been implemented because ITS does extensive testing, noting that U-M ChatGPT is a private environment where questions submitted by U-M affiliates are not shared with ChatGPT.
- Chair Peterson thanked VP Pendse for his visit. The Provost and VP Pendse will be forming a new committee to consider AI. SA members are encouraged to contact colleagues about serving on the committee, especially those who are skeptical of AI.

4:02 Senate Assembly Chair Update

- On Friday October 24, a contingent of SACUA members visited U-M Flint and met with Chancellor Alexander, U-M Flint Faculty Senate Council, and the new UMF AFT-AAUP



Local 5671 union. The union negotiated a contract in April 2025, that included pay for extra work in the summer, a raise index larger than at U-M Ann Arbor, and a grievance policy with protections beyond that offered at U-M Ann Arbor.

- The most recent [Political Speech and the Public Square](#) was held on October 21 on the topic of “Artificial Intelligence: Is it a Good Thing?” The next event is on November 18 on the topic, “Surveillance: Does it Make Us Safer?” Senate Assembly members are encouraged to [sign up](#) to be a speaker at upcoming events.
- The [Faculty On-Campus Work Retreats](#) will be held on November 19th and 20th at the North Quad, allow faculty to work alongside each other and to then have a congenial discussion over lunch. All Senate Assembly members are invited to attend.
- On November 3rd the [Faculty Senate will consider nine resolutions](#), including on the topics of the CTP travel policy, the U-M pause on gender affirming care, AI, the U-M presidential search committee, H1B visa policy, and more. Faculty are encouraged to submit comments about the resolutions via a Google doc or with a video comment.
- On Thursday, November 6th, the [annual DMN lecture](#) will be held with virtual keynote speaker Ruth Ben-Ghiat to be followed by a panel of three U-M faculty -- Karima Bennoune, Jean Hong, and Ronald Grigo Suny.

4:10 pm RAC Charge

- **Approval:** The Research Advisory Committee (RAC) charge was approved by unanimous consent.

4:15 Framing discussion for Provost McCauley’s visit

- Chair Peterson reviewed three questions for Provost McCauley that were shared with the Provost prior to the meeting. Chair Peterson then invited Senate Assembly members to raise additional issues to discuss with the Provost.
- A Librarian, Archivist, and Curator faculty asked about what type of AI quality control efforts could aid with students’ susceptibility to believe the accuracy of AI content.
- An LSA faculty raised a question about how U-M leadership can reconcile Climate Blue goals with the energy demands of AI.
- Chair Peterson raised the issue of transitioning digital course materials to be ADA compliant by the April 2026 deadline.
- A Pharmacy faculty member raised questions about funding cuts to the budgets of research institutes and the Medical School. An LSA faculty had a follow-up question regarding whether U-M leadership is making financial sacrifices with their own budgets during these difficult times.
- A Stamps faculty member asked about the cuts to U-M block funding and the impact of such cuts on schools such as Taubman, Stamps, and SMDT. A \$500K cut is a small fraction of the entire U-M budget and yet such cuts to block funds is devastating for the faculty relying on these grants for their research. In addition, in the prior year, the Provost had formed a committee to look into the U-M grievance policy after U-M administrators overturned three grievance case decisions, and to-date there has been no update or action by the committee.



4:31 Guest: Provost Laurie McCauley

- Provost McCauley offered opening remarks and expressed gratitude for all that faculty do to support students, remarking that students are having a very positive U-M experience even as the state of higher ed weighs heavily on both faculty and administrators. The Provost highlighted recent initiatives including [Open Inquiry Week](#), the [Arts Festival](#), and [First Gen Week](#). U-M had the [largest fall enrollment on record](#). [Life-Changing Education is the 2025-2026 Look to Michigan](#) theme, and U-M also has plans to [expand the Disability Navigators Program](#). During a time of challenges to higher ed, President Grasso has spoken out strongly that the world should look to Michigan and, as academic freedom is under attack, U-M will establish a [center dedicated to freedom of speech and civil dialog](#). The Provost also has also created a [site of resources for faculty facing threats and harassment](#).
- Chair Peterson asked the Provost each of the three questions prepared in advance.
- **AI:** First, what can U-M do to support faculty struggling with the intense challenges AI poses, including students turning in work that is not their own? The Provost remarked that she and VP Pendse are jointly putting together a committee that will revisit the work a similar committee began in 2023. AI is the topic of the [November 10th Provost's Seminar on Teaching](#), and the Center for Academic Innovation has provided opportunities for [faculty to lead projects on education and AI](#). AI issues have been raised during the Provost's traveling office hours, including regarding ethics and how the impact of AI varies by discipline. The Provost also remarked on the question posed earlier in the meeting about AI's impact on the environment and on the large freshwater resources in Michigan. The Provost encouraged faculty to consider the work of Shalanda Baker, Vice Provost for Sustainability and Climate Action, suggesting that it is important to do modeling so that technologies can be deployed in beneficial ways and not to the detriment of the environment.
- **BTAA Mutual Defense Compact:** Second, in April, the Faculty Senate passed by an overwhelming majority a [resolution urging U-M to join a mutual defense compact](#) in alignment with other Big Ten Schools. What steps has U-M taken on this issue since this resolution passed? The Provost responded that she regularly interacts with Provosts at other institutions in collaborative settings. While such exchanges are not a formal compact, the AAU, BTAA, and other leadership groups have definitely worked to address the intent of the resolution and U-M has signed on to support the AAU among other legal strategies. The challenge within the BTAA is that some peer institutions are in states that have very different state legislatures, and their leanings and challenges are quite different.
- **October 2025 Compact from the federal administration:** Third, does the University intend to respond to the federal administration's "Compact"? And, are there any plans for any proactive steps? The Provost responded that there has not been wide support for the compact from the nine institutions invited to participate, and U-M has not been formally asked to consider such a compact. The Provost hasn't heard any interest in engaging in any aspects of the compact.



- The floor was then opened for additional questions and several questions raised earlier in the meeting were restated.
- A question was asked by a Pharmacy faculty about budget cuts and what has been the overall logic to such cuts? The Provost responded that there is a general fund and that these general funds go to the schools and colleges. If there are less funds available within the units, it is because there has been less activity within the units in terms of research and/or students, and that these are not cuts per se. Grants have also been rolling out slower because there are fewer federal employees.
- A question was asked by a Stamps faculty about SACUA's report with recommendations regarding U-M's faculty grievance policy and whether any actions have been taken? The Provost responded that the report was shared with leadership and that action will be forthcoming. It was asked that any report might be shared with SACUA before action is taken.
- A faculty member from Education asked about how decisions to make cuts are made, such as those to CSCAR and block grants? Did administration consult with faculty and have administrators reviewed their own budget with such cuts in mind? The Provost responded that these particular budget items fall under the Office of the Vice President for Research, and VP Lupia is the person to ask about this topic. If OVPR is pursuing new initiatives to support faculty then they may need to reduce their efforts with other items.
- A faculty from LSA asked a follow-up question. Given the highly decentralized nature of U-M, centralized decisions continue to be made, and yet decentralized decisions seem to be devoid of centralized leadership? Will this be normalized and what is administration doing during a time when faculty are asked to do more with less? The Provost responded that this is a common tension, and much autonomy for the schools and colleges is allowed so they can be as agile as they want to be. Last spring, centralized leadership did ask schools and colleges to model out 5-10% cuts. Peer institutions were being much more aggressive with layoffs, and U-M has tried to be cautious financially in case a more dire situation might arise in the future.

5:05 New Business

- Chair Peterson invited the Senate Assembly to raise any new business. Hearing none, the meeting was adjourned.

Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rogério M. Pinto
Faculty Senate Secretary

[University of Michigan Bylaws of the Board of Regents, Sec. 5.02:
Governing Bodies in Schools and Colleges](#)

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 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."

[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."