



Communications Advisory Committee (CAC)

Minutes of Meeting: 9/24/25

Circulated: 12/2/25

Approved: 12/9/25

Present: Henry Seeger (Chair), Kirsten Herold (SACUA), VP Richie Hunter, Lynda Pence, Basit Zafar, Jim Cranford, Brian Love, Thandiwe-Kesi Robbins

Absent: Laura Beny, Nicole Boucher, Phil Christman, Kim Saks

Faculty Senate Office: Eric Vandenberghe

2:03pm-2:06pm: Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Minutes, Announcements

The agenda was approved. The minutes for the March and April CAC meeting were approved. Introductions were made by the committee members.

2:06pm-2:12pm: Comments on the Committee Charge

Summary: The Chair introduces and reads through the [committee charge](#) for this academic year. The Chair worked with VP Hunter, SACUA Chair Derek Peterson, and FSO Director to form this Charge. Much of the charge focuses on work and discussions that came from last year's committee. One theme that emerged last year was the need for data on campus sentiments. The current stage of the plan is to collect data on faculty sentiment initially and then broaden to other populations. A member offers support for the charge.

Action: Discussion

2:12pm-2:16pm: Campus Survey Subcommittee: appointment and organization

Summary: The Chair indicates that the plan for this academic year is to utilize the subcommittee system to have members work on the individual Charge items. The subcommittees will collaborate and work outside of the primary meeting, and the primary meeting will focus on work of individual subcommittees as necessary.

The Campus Survey Subcommittee is meant to address the first charge item: "With the VP for Communications, develop a campus survey to provide data which can drive and shape the agenda for the committee over the course of the year." This survey will seek to determine campus sentiment. The survey will focus on collecting data initially and the scope will broaden from there.

A motion is made to form the Campus Survey Subcommittee by member Zafar. It is seconded by Chair Seeger. The motion is adopted unanimously.

Action: Discussion; creation of subcommittee

2:16-2:20pm: Key Communicators Subcommittee: appointment and organization



Summary: This work was started last year by a subcommittee to find out how the central communications team and the unit level communications teams interact. It is also to provide the committee with insight into how communications generally work at the unit level. A committee member asks about the success of last year's committee. The Chair of the committee indicates that he will request a report.

A member indicates that this could be useful, particularly as it relates to messages about public safety. At this time a subcommittee is not formed and will be revisited at a later meeting.

Action: Discussion

2:19pm-2:45pm: Other Initiatives

Summary: A member asks VP Hunter what changes in communications strategy have occurred since the last committee meeting in April. VP Hunter indicates there has been a lot of transition. The Public Affairs team has had a full staff turnover. Updates to the leadership at the Record have been made. The Record is starting a "leaders" column that will highlight UM Community leaders who are doing good work. The Record is in print this year.

OVPC is taking some of the information that is dispersed across several sites and consolidating it into one site. The goal is to get information to more community members. When information is so spread out, people will naturally only see a portion.

OVPC has recently launched the Look to Michigan campaign. This campaign is being deployed in numerous major markets, as well as across the state of Michigan. The messaging centers on how UM's mission is aligned with the public good. It is staking a claim that the University Michigan is leading the way on the world's biggest issues.

The local NPR affiliate is discussed. UM holds their license, but they are an independent station. They file FOIA requests to UM. They have been affected by federal budget cuts. They recently had a fundraiser that was successful.

UM is contacted constantly regarding federal action. It is significantly higher than normal. Internal communication is discussed. With information constantly evolving, it becomes necessary to disseminate information cautiously, so not to cause confusion. A member indicates that a general message of support to the community when life-altering federal actions are taken would show a level of care that some do not feel is experienced currently.

A member suggests a document from OVPC to the school and unit levels that provides best practices. VP Hunter provides a description of how OVPC shares information with unit-level communicators.

Action: Discussion

2:45pm-3:05pm: Matters Arising

Summary: A member indicates that having policymakers meet directly with students is a good idea. This idea is discussed.



Members discuss the Michigan Minds Podcast series. The committee talks about how this and related communications initiatives need to be promoted further.

A member discusses how in the current moment there is a need for a dedicated space for free speech.

Action: Discussion

Time: Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Vandenberghe
Faculty Governance Coordinator
Faculty Senate Office