



Development Advisory Committee (DAC)

Minutes of Meeting: 12/3/25

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Present: Lori Tschirhart (Chair), John Mansfield, Tom Baird (VP for Development), Conor Neville (Office of Development), Ivy Wei, Erika Hathaway, Sergey Gutor, Jefferson Williams, Kimberly McKee

Absent: Vinay Aakalu, Nakhiah Goulbourne, Stefan Szymanski

Guests: Derek Peterson, Chair of SACUA

Faculty Senate Office: Luke, McCarthy, Eric Vandenberghe

12:00pm-12:02pm: Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Minutes, Announcements

The agenda was approved. The minutes for the October DAC meeting will be reviewed at the next meeting.

12:02pm-12:56pm: Discuss opportunities for development support to obtain funds for new Faculty Senate initiatives to be proposed this year

Summary: The Chair introduces the guests and thanks them for joining the meeting. Director McCarthy introduces a new potential development campaign designed to support academic and intellectual freedom. This campaign, which is being assisted by the Office of University Development, is planned to provide further funding support for the Davis, Markert, Nickerson Lecture on Academic and Intellectual Freedom fund. Director McCarthy provides an overview of the lecture, including the [history behind the name](#). The lecture has had [notable speakers](#) present. The [most recent lecture](#) is discussed, along with plans for the Winter term.

A primary goal of this campaign is to entrench UM as a leader on academic freedom. The fund as it currently stands can fund the marquee lecture, but further funding would be necessary to consistently expand the mission. There have been successful Winter term events over the past few years, and there is a desire to continue this trend, as well as expand it. It is suggested that having a week each year dedicated to academic freedom would be beneficial. This would include other events hosted by various units across UM.

Draft copy for a funding drive is provided to the committee for their feedback. SACUA Chair Peterson discusses UM's current messaging that UM is the leading university for public good. This fits within that framework. VP Baird offers feedback on the structure of the campaign.

The placement of the fund in the FSO is discussed. The FSO permeates every unit on campus, which is unique since it is so decentralized. Other work of the FSO is discussed. The committee discusses whether the focus of the campaign should be the FSO or academic



freedom. Differing opinions are offered. Members offer feedback on specific details of the campaign.

A member discusses ongoing work they are doing to fund an event meant to improve public trust in science. It is discussed that this and related work across campus could fold into the work of the academic freedom fund. A broader discussion on academic freedom takes place, including the necessity to be able to teach and discuss inconvenient truths and unorthodox viewpoints. The necessity of UM being a leader in this space is discussed.

VP Baird offers insight into what separates effective campaigns from others. Having a persuasive narrative to explain the impact of a campaign is very effective. The committee discusses what might be an effective strategy to best move the campaign forward.

Academic freedom is discussed. SACUA Chair Peterson indicates that universities are a bulwark against authoritarianism, and that the work of faculty needs to be protected and supported.

A member asks SACUA Chair Peterson and Director McCarthy about his impression on the effectiveness of faculty governance at UM. Director McCarthy indicates that faculty influence over university administration has ebbs and flows over the years. He indicates that he believes it is currently on the upswing. Examples are shared that showcase faculty governance influencing policy at the University.

Chair Peterson discusses faculty governance models at other institutions and describes examples of faculty involved in top level decisions. He proceeds to describe the importance of Faculty Senate votes as a means of sharing faculty sentiment.

The guests are thanked for joining the meeting. Members are encouraged to share further comments on the draft campaign outside of the meeting.

Action: Discussion

12:56pm-1:00pm: Explore and offer recommendations regarding how the University promotes faculty research and facilitates community engagement to the wider Michigan public

Summary: Chair Tschirhart discusses a possible joint meeting with the Communications Advisory Committee to explore this topic. She provides an overview of the “Look to Michigan Campaign.” The committee is encouraged to provide their insights into this subject between meetings.

Director McCarthy describes efforts to collaborate with the News division of OVPC in order to provide media training to faculty. More information will be shared on this in the coming months.

Action:

1:00pm: Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,



FACULTY SENATE
SENATE ASSEMBLY
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

1120 Ruthven Building
1109 Geddes Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Eric Vandenberghe
Faculty Governance Coordinator
Faculty Senate Office