



Academic Affairs Advisory Committee (AAAC) Minutes
October 1, 1:45 – 3:15 pm (Provost attending 2-3 pm)
Ruthven Conference Room 1140 and via Zoom (hybrid)

Minutes of Meeting: 10/1/2025

Circulated: 10/17/2025

Approved: 10/22/2025

Present: Silke Weineck (Chair), Netta Berlin, Meaghan Blanchard (FSO), Ceren Budak, Bilal Butt, Colleen Conway, Christine Gerdes (Special Counsel to the Provost), Gavin LaRose, Ann Marshall (FSO), Laurie McCauley (Provost), Rafael Neis, Soumya Rangarajan (SACUA liaison), Mireille Roddier, Scott Spector, Jon Wargo, Yi-Li Wu

Absent: Robert Deegan, Mick Kennedy, Albert Liu, Rahul Mannan

1. In preparation for the arrival of the Provost, the minutes from 9/10/2025 were approved, and AAAC members briefly discussed AAAC agenda items.
2. Chair Silke Weineck welcomed the Provost and AAAC members introduced themselves.
3. The Provost offered opening remarks.
 - With the start of the fall term, there are many joyful events to attend, including [U-M Climate Week 2025](#), [Open Inquiry Week](#), [U-M Arts Festival](#), [ArtsRx](#), and [National Disability Employment Awareness Month events](#).
 - The Provost has convened a student advisory committee that meets twice each term.
4. AAAC & Provost discussion of revisions to SPG 201.15-1 Fitness for Duty
 - Prior to the meeting, AAAC members reviewed both the red-lined SPG provided in May and the subsequent letter from AAAC to the Provost in response to the red-lined SPG.
 - AAAC shared recommended changes to the red-lined SPG and provided a handout with revised SPG language.
 - SACUA Liaison and SACUA Vice Chair Soumya Rangarajan shared her expertise as an MD and geriatrician, presenting on behalf of AAAC and explaining that the SPG should be in alignment with medical care best practices.
 - Key recommendations include that the SPG should include the right to a second and third opinion by a board-certified physician, a longer and more robust appeals process, and more focused language to clarify scope and prevent the SPG from being applied inappropriately.
 - To address issues of scope, more specific language about the SPG being limited to medical or psychological conditions should be added. In its current form, a faculty might be considered unfit for duty because of something they said in class or because of politicized issue, e.g. gender affirming care.
 - Additional language is needed in the SPG on the following topics: 1) The appeals timeline should be lengthened, i.e. from 7 days to 30 days. The appeals process should be strengthened and spelled out, e.g. who will contact you? Additional roles for the U-M



ADA Coordinator should be provided, 2) There should be a means to stop working in a dignified way, to retire with benefits, and to not penalize people because of the nature of their medical condition, 3) There should be a path for returning to work and ADA protections and accommodations should be offered. There should be a process for cases initially viewed as irreversible to become reversible and/or treatable, 4) More specific language needs to be added to prevent stigmatization and offer protections, e.g. for neurodiversity.

- A number of concerns with Work Connections were shared, including problems with independent medical examinations (IMEs). A compilation of 50-60 complaints about Work Connections has been shared with Chair Weineck. The perspective of the physician who knows the patient the longest should be valued. Work Connections processes have not allowed for the inclusion of robust medical histories. Privacy concerns were raised about Work Connections, e.g. faculty needing to provide proof of a condition without HIPPA protections (e.g. use of insecure email and uploading processes, etc).

4. Discussion of recent developments impacting international faculty, staff, and students, including changes to the H-1B visa policy.

- Concerns were raised about the new H-1B policy and its impact financially, on the Los Alamos project, on clinical faculty and graduate students, and on the U-M Dearborn and Flint campuses.
- The policy changes pose [severe negative impacts on healthcare in Michigan](#). In fields such as nephrology and gerontology, the pipeline for as many as half of clinicians could be lost.
- This policy is yet another way in which internationalism is being threatened, seriously diminishing incentives to do global work, and creating barriers to international fieldwork. The result is also that Americans are negatively impacted when applying to do international work. For example, some European countries are taking advantage of the situation to recruit global researchers.
- Interest was expressed in a survey to collect stories about faculty experiences related to international work so that steps can be taken to plan proactively and to not capitulate.

5. Matters Arising

- A AAAC member shared that a student had reported, and shared with the *Michigan Daily*, that U-M buildings under construction might not offer gender inclusive bathrooms. The Provost offered to follow-up.

6. Additional Committee Discussion

- After the Provost left the meeting, there was brief committee discussion about AAAC next steps. There will be some adjustments to the previously drafted order of addressing charge issues because of faculty travel.

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Marshall, Faculty Governance Coordinator (FSO)