

Minutes of Meeting: 1/12/2026
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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs
Monday, January 12, 2026, 3:00pm
The hybrid meeting was held in 1100 Ruthven and via Zoom

Present: Derek Peterson (Chair), Melanie Tanielian, Soumya Rangarajan (Vice Chair), Kirsten Herold, Rogério Meireles Pinto (Senate Secretary), Kentaro Toyama, Rebekah Modrak (Immediate Past Chair), Jesse Capecelatro, Vilma Mesa

Guests: Regent Jordan Acker

Faculty Senate Office: Luke McCarthy, Meaghan Blanchard, Eric Vandenberghe

Press:

Dominic Apap -- Daily
Genevieve Monsma -- Record

3:04pm: Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The agenda was approved. The minutes for the 12/8/25 meeting were approved.

3:04pm-3:17pm: Chair's Update

Summary:

Chair Peterson provides updates to the committee:

- President-elect Syverud was announced over the weekend to serve as the next President of UM. A special Regent's meeting was held today to introduce him to the community and to vote him into office. Chair Peterson and Director McCarthy met him briefly at a reception that followed that meeting. President-elect Syverud will be invited to join a welcome reception hosted by faculty governance, as well as a meeting of SACUA in the coming term.
- Chair Peterson invites members of SACUA to nominate or self-nominate candidates for a committee focused on reviewing and recommending a U-M policy addressing gambling and sports-betting.
- Chair Peterson met with VP Lupia to discuss the previously announced institute for civil discourse that will be opened in the near future. Chair Peterson shares brief details, with more information to follow.
- The Provost's Office has formed a new committee focused on artificial intelligence in the classroom. This committee is to be led by a SACUA-nominated member of the faculty.

- AAAC Chair Weineck has resigned from her duties as Chair. Chair Peterson thanks her for her service to the committee and looks forward to working with her moving forward. An update is provided on efforts to fill her position, which are ongoing.
- Chair Peterson and Vice Chair Rangarajan will host upcoming events to engage with clinical faculty. The [next event](#) will take place on February 20 at 7:30am on the medical campus.
- The next set of [Faculty Work Retreats](#) are discussed. The dates for this month are January 21st and 22nd in North Quad.
- The Working Group on Faculty Protections will host events in February and March. The February event will focus on how faculty can best respond to media overtures. More details to follow on this event.

Action: Updates

3:17pm-3:22pm: SA Agenda Approval

Summary: The committee reviews the draft agenda for the Senate Assembly meeting that will take place on 1/26. Chair Marita Inglehart of the Student Relations Advisory Committee and Chair Becky Peterson of the Financial Affairs Advisory Committee are scheduled to join the meeting to update the Assembly on the work of the committees.

This agenda is approved by unanimous consent.

Action: Approval of the January Senate Assembly agenda

3:22pm-3:25pm: Initiate SACUA Vacancy Replacement Process

Summary: Given the departure of former SACUA member O'Malley, a vacancy election will take place pending approval of SACUA and the Senate Assembly. Director McCarthy provides SACUA with a brief overview of the process, which is described in full in the [Faculty Senate Standard Operating Procedures](#).

Vice Chair Rangarajan moves to initiate a SACUA vacancy election as described in the [Faculty Senate Standard Operating Procedures](#). Member Herold seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously, with no abstentions.

Action: Approval of initiation of a SACUA vacancy election

3:25pm-4:10pm: Guest: Regent Jordan Acker

Summary: Chair Peterson and SACUA welcome Regent Jordan Acker to the meeting. Brief introductions are made. Chair Peterson provides Regent Acker with a copy of the motion language and vote results from the [11/3/25 University Senate Meeting](#) for his review. Chair Peterson highlights [Motion 4: Resolution Demanding a Comprehensive Policy Addressing the Role of Generative Artificial Intelligence at the University of Michigan](#). He proceeds to describe the trepidation of faculty regarding artificial intelligence in the classroom. Regent Acker acknowledges the gravity of this issue and describes the high level of attention the Board is giving to artificial intelligence at UM. He indicates that this is one of the primary topics discussed with the presidential candidates throughout the hiring process.

SACUA and Regent Acker proceed to discuss the hiring of the next President of UM- Kent Syverud. Regent Acker describes Syverud as a strong leader who is good at listening to the community. He further describes him as a good leader to navigate UM through the current issues it is facing. His orating style is discussed.

Syverud has deep ties to UM. He holds degrees from UM, taught in the Law School, and served as an administrator. He has been given a tenured position and will teach at the Law School. He is described as personable.

Regent Acker and SACUA discuss the search process. It was a smaller search committee this time, with several faculty on the committee. Previous presidential tenures are described. Regent Acker describes a desire for the UM administration to focus on policies and other pressing matters at UM, while the Regents focus on bigger picture goals. A member discusses planning for future presidential searches.

President-elect Syverud will begin his tenure at UM on July 1st. A member raises concern about having several interim leaders in the current administration. Regent Acker acknowledges this concern. President-elect Syverud will hit the ground running when he begins his tenure and will be engaged prior to his tenure starting. A member asks about the President-elect's priorities. President-elect Syverud will have a chance to share these when he meets with SACUA. It is anticipated that President-elect Syverud will have more communications with Faculty leaders.

A member asks about President-elect Syverud's lack of experience leading a medical enterprise. Regent Acker indicates that President-elect Syverud is aware of his blind spots. He will work with leaders on the medical campus to ensure the enterprise thrives. His prior experiences leading diverse, complex organizations is described. This included him serving as chair of the Board of Directors of the Atlantic Coast Conference from 2019-21. Regent Acker indicates that President-elect Syverud understands UM has a global mission.

A member discusses issues raised by a colleague at Syracuse University, including shifting control of tenure to the Board of Trustees which, in the opinion of the Syracuse colleague, led to more conservative research. The Syracuse colleague also describes Chancellor Syverud as not supporting the arts and liberal arts by comparison to other areas of the university. The colleague describes the raising of tuition. Regent Acker acknowledges these statements. He briefly discusses the financial challenges SU has faced and indicates that UM is in a different position.

Regent Acker is thanked for attending the meeting.

Action: Discussion

4:10pm-4:20pm: Censorship Survey

Summary: A draft of the censorship survey had been circulated with the group previously for their review. If approved, the survey will be disseminated in the next couple of days. Members discuss minor changes to the survey, including altering the order in which the available options appear. After further discussion and alterations, the survey is approved by

unanimous consent.

Vice Chair Rangarajan exits the meeting at this time.

Action: Approval of the censorship survey

4:20pm-4:40pm: Statement on Doxxing or Other Forms of Intimidation

Summary: This motion is brought forth by Member's Capecelatro and Herold. SACUA proceeds to edit the statement. Once finished, the statement reads as follows:

In recent years, members of the University community have increasingly faced threats related to their work, research, teaching, or extra-mural speech. These have included threats of violence, the publicizing of home addresses, and, more recently, appearing at individuals' homes in attempts to intimidate. Targeting individuals with threats or intimidation is unacceptable and undermines academic freedom.

SACUA urges all members of the University community to commit to civil dialogue for meaningful exchange and understanding. Academia should be a place for open debate, inquiry, and the resolution of differences through discussion rather than intimidation.

Member Capecelatro motions to approve this Statement Against Doxxing and Other Forms of Intimidation. Member Herold seconds this motion.

The motion carries unanimously.

Action: Approval of a Statement on Doxxing or Other Forms of Intimidation

4:40pm-4:53pm: New Business

Summary: Chair Peterson introduces a resolution welcoming Kent Syverud as President of the University of Michigan. SACUA proceeds to edit the statement. Once finished, the statement reads as follows:

The Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs welcomes Kent Syverud as the 16th president of the University of Michigan. Mr. Syverud is no stranger to Ann Arbor. His record as a teacher and an administrator is impressive. At Michigan Law and at Vanderbilt Law he played a leading role in keeping the doors open to previously under-represented groups. As Chancellor and President of Syracuse University Mr. Syverud invested in the research enterprise, worked with students to address racism, built new dormitories, and created new support structures promoting mental health. He earned a reputation as a willing listener and engaging interlocutor. At Syracuse Mr. Syverud served ex officio on virtually every committee of faculty government, and we are told that he was an active participant in faculty-led administrative work. These are all qualities of leadership we need here at U-M, and we trust that he will bring this disposition toward consultative administration to

Michigan.

We are heartened by these and other aspects of Mr. Syverud's record, and we look forward to working with him to advance this university's public mission in the months and years ahead.

Member Toyama motions to approve this resolution welcoming Kent Syverud as President of the University of Michigan. Member Mesa seconds this motion.

The motion carries unanimously.

Action: Approval of a Resolution welcoming Kent Syverud as President of the University of Michigan

In other new business, the Secretary requests that, at the next meeting, SACUA engage in a discussion to improve communication among SACUA members.

Additionally, Chair Peterson indicates that the agenda item regarding SACUA goals for the term, which due to lack of time was not addressed this meeting, will be continued at the next meeting as unfinished business.

4:53pm.: Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Rogério Meireles 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.”