

Minutes of Meeting: 2/9/2026

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN**

Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs

Monday, February 9, 2026, 3:00pm

The hybrid meeting was held in 1100 Ruthven and via Zoom

Present: Derek Peterson (Chair), Soumya Rangarajan (Vice Chair), Susan Najita, Vilma Mesa, Rebekah Modrak (Immediate Past Chair), Jesse Capecelatro, Kirsten Herold, Kentaro Toyama, Melanie Tanielian

Absent: Rogério Meireles Pinto (Senate Secretary)

Guests: Provost Laurie McCauley and Christine Gerdes, Special Counsel to the Provost

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

Press:

Reese Kizy- The Daily

Nasen- The Daily

Genevieve Monsma- The Record

**3:04pm-3:05pm:** Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The agenda was approved. The minutes for the 2/2/2026 meeting were approved.

**3:05pm-3:17pm: Chair's Update**

Summary: Chair Peterson provides further context for matters arising from the 2/2 SACUA meeting minutes:

- An election will begin in the coming days to fill the vacant SACUA seat. Several nominees have come forward and will be considered by the Senate Assembly.
- Interim Chief Rick Arnold will attend the February Senate Assembly meeting and will discuss surveillance on campus.
- President Grasso sent a letter to the AAUP in response to their letter concerning surveillance practices.
- SACUA recently passed a [Resolution Supporting Immigrants Who Work and Study at the University of Michigan](#). This resolution will now be considered by the Senate Assembly. This resolution will also be considered in the coming weeks by Central Student Government.

Chair Peterson provides further updates:

- Chair Peterson and Director McCarthy recently applied for the Strategic Innovation Fund. The proposal requested funds to support a new Institute for Academic Freedom, housed in the FSO.
- Recent faculty on-campus work retreats have been well-attended. The next retreats will take place on [February 25th and 26<sup>th</sup> from 9am-1pm in the Hatcher Gallery in the Hatcher Graduate Library.](#)
- Chair Peterson and Director McCarthy are set to meet in the coming days with President Grasso and Ethics, Integrity, and Compliance Officer Michelle Casey.
- On Thursday, President Grasso will meet with faculty regarding [Motion 4: Motion on Accountability for the Handling of Gender-Based Violence and Discrimination at the University.](#) The meeting will focus on university efforts to address the concerns raised in the motion, which was passed in November 2024.
- [The Department of Education dropped its legal appeal in support of its “Dear Colleague” letter.](#) This letter was part of the reasoning given for shuttering the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion last year. Given this, Chair Peterson indicates a need to work towards reinstating aspects of the mission of ODEI. He recently met with VP Angela Dillard to discuss this matter. He will advocate for this at a meeting with the Deans and Provost scheduled for later this week.
- The Maize and Blue Courage webinar will take place on Tuesday, February 10, 2026, from 7:00-8:00pm. The speakers will include SACUA members Kentaro Toyama and Jesse Capecelatro. The keynote will be given by Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel.

Action: Updates

### **3:17pm-3:27pm: Resolution in Support of Foreign Language Teaching at the University of Michigan**

Summary: Chair Peterson puts forth a Resolution in Support of Foreign Language Teaching at the University of Michigan. This came out of the discussion held last meeting with Youngju Ryu, Director, International Institute and Professor of Asian Languages and Cultures. Director Ryu had a chance to review the language and offer feedback that was incorporated into the draft. SACUA members work together to edit the resolution.

Action: A motion is made to approve the text as written by member Herold. This motion is seconded by member Toyama. The motion carries unanimously. The resolution will be placed before the Senate Assembly for further discussion and possible adoption at the next Senate Assembly meeting.

### **3:27pm-4:00pm; 4:34pm-4:52pm: Work Connections Discussion**

Summary: There are currently ongoing efforts by labor unions and faculty governance members to address widespread concerns regarding Work Connections. Member Toyama shares several of the issues that have been raised by the community.

Members Herold and Toyama have drafted a list of proposed Work Connections reforms.. These reforms have been shared with SACUA for their consideration and are not ready to be distributed widely at this time. SACUA members review and offer extensive feedback on the proposed reforms.

These discussions continue after the Provost's visit. At the conclusion of the discussion members agree to consider the proposed reforms further between meetings. Pending further email discussion, a vote on supporting the list of reforms may take place.

**4:00pm-4:34pm: Guests: Provost Laurie McCauley and Christine Gerdes, Special Counsel to the Provost**

Summary: This portion of the meeting was held in executive session.

**4:53pm-4:54pm: New Business**

Summary: No new business is brought forward.

Action: None

**4:54pm: 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 polices 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.”