

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA)
The hybrid meeting was held in 1100 Ruthven and via Zoom

Minutes of Meeting: February 2, 2026

Circulated: February 6, 2026

Approved: February 9, 2026

Present: Derek Peterson (Chair), Meaghan Blanchard (FSO), Jesse Capecelatro, Kirsten Herold, Ann Marshall (FSO), Luke McCarthy (FSO), Vilma Mesa, Rebekah Modrak (Immediate Past Chair), Susan Najita, Rogério Meireles Pinto (Secretary), Soumya Rangarajan (Vice Chair), Melanie Tanielian, Kentaro Toyama

Press:

Genevieve Monsma – *University Record*

Alexa Cheaney – *Michigan Daily*

Guests:

Youngju Ryu, Director, International Institute and Professor of Asian Languages and Cultures, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

3:00 Call to Order and Brief Executive Session

- A brief matter was discussed in Executive Session and no minutes were taken.

3:04 Approval of the Minutes

- The meeting minutes from 1/12/2026 were approved by consent.

3:05 SACUA Chair Update

- As a follow-up from Chair Peterson's meeting with VP Lupia, several SACUA members will attend a February 26th event about U-M's new Center for American Dialogue (CAD).
- Chair Peterson shared appreciation for SACUA member Kentaro Toyama taking on the role of AAAC Chair for the remainder of the academic year.
- The vacancy process for Heather O'Malley's SACUA seat has begun, with eight nominations received. FSO will next confirm each nominee's interest in running. The election is expected to be complete by the February Senate Assembly meeting.
- Appreciation was shared for the Faculty Senate Office's efforts with a January 22nd reception to welcome President-Elect Kent Syverud.
- The Faculty Protections Working Group's survey has received 738 responses to-date. 30.7% of respondents have felt an obligation to self-censor and an additional 10.9% have resisted such pressure. In total, over 40% of respondents have felt pressure to self-censor and over 30% have self-censored. The survey is still open. Additional survey results will be forthcoming.
- The two recently approved SACUA actions, [Statement Against Doxxing and Other Forms of Intimidation](#) and the [Resolution welcoming Kent Syverud as President of the University of Michigan](#) have been forwarded to the relevant authorities.

- On January 30th, Derek Peterson, Luke McCarthy, and a history faculty colleague received a tour of the DPSS operations center located next to Crisler on a site that was previously a spring factory. The tour was at the invitation of DPSS Interim Chief Rick Arnold, who was welcoming and accommodating, and he showed the security gear of the DPSS 911 response center. DPSS is working on new policies to address the cameras on the Diag and Law Quad, including procedures to digitally blur images of students' rooms. Interim Chief Arnold will be a guest of the Senate Assembly for thirty minutes at the February SA meeting. Arnold received the letter authored by AAUP on surveillance and Derek Peterson signed this letter as SACUA chair. SACUA has not, at this time, taken a position on the AAUP letter.
- The next Faculty On-Campus Work Retreat will be held on February 4th, 9 am to 1-pm, in the Lurie Engineering Center on North Campus. The event registration is full, with both Derek Peterson and Jesse Capecelatro planning to attend.
- Chair Peterson attended a meeting about the [motion on gender-affirming care](#) and, while he is not able to provide any additional details at this time, he is keeping his eye on this issue.
- Chair Peterson and Director McCarthy met with Mika LaVaque-Manty, Chair of the AI in Education Working group. Chair LaVague-Manty shared the working group's charge with Peterson. Chair LaVague-Manty, along with other members of the working group, will meet with SACUA. The deadline for the working group's report is April.
- President Grasso is scheduled to meet with representatives of the Student Relations Advisory Committee regarding the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities S within the next couple of weeks.
- President Grasso is also scheduled to meet with the movants of [motion 4](#) from the 2024 University Senate meeting, with that motion addressing gender-based violence and discrimination.

3:19 SACUA Open Meetings SOP Draft

- In brief, the draft SOP provides that: 1) SACUA meetings would be generally open to the press, unless the guest requested that their part of the meeting be closed and if this request was reasonable, 2) a motion could be made by a member of SACUA for a segment of the meeting to be closed. Such a motion could be made during the meeting or in advance, and 3) guests would be informed at the time of invitation that meetings are generally open and be asked whether they have any concerns about attending in open session.
- There was discussion about whether SACUA meetings should be open to anyone at U-M and/or also open to the general public. A question was raised about whether the President Syverud might regularly sit in and contribute to faculty senate meetings as is the custom at his prior institution. The issue of "public" meetings might be usefully addressed in a separate SOP.
- **Action:** Consideration of the SOP was tabled until a future meeting due to time constraints and the question raised about "public" meeting status.

3:29 Resolution Supporting Immigrants Who Work and Study at the University of Michigan

- **Approval:** Kentaro Toyama moved and Susan Najita seconded consideration of the [resolution](#). There was no further discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

3:35 Guest: Youngju Ryu, Director, International Institute (II) and Professor of Asian Languages and Cultures, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

- Director Ryu presented on “Language and Area Studies at U-M.” Less commonly taught languages (LCTL) enrollment for 2024-2025 was 3,314 with study of 26 languages supported by the II. Language study with low enrollment may be at risk. Federal legislation – the post-Sputnik [National Defense Education Act of 1958](#) and later the Higher Education Act of 1965 Title VI -- has funded language study. This federal legislation has provided for decades of language study funding.
- [Federal funding cuts to II](#) have been devastating – a U-M loss of 3.4 million annually, including funds from the Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) that supported 66 students in 2024-2025, funds from the National Resource Centers (NRC) that supported six U-M NRC centers, and a \$245,000 loss in language lecturer salary support.
- U-M has been a singular place for area studies. See, for example, the [history of CJS](#) and Robert Hall’s 1947 blueprint, “total war, total peace, total knowledge.” Some languages are offered because of community requests and are supported with external funding. II majors are very popular and include six terms of language study.
- Is the current situation a perfect storm for language education? In addition, AI poses potential threats.

Additional discussion – including how SACUA might help

- Consider building more connections with Michigan Medicine (MM), including in relation to the necessity of translators at MM.
- The status of indigenous language study is unknown.
- High school enrollment in U-M language study is an important pipeline, e.g. enroll in 4 years of high school Mandarin and continue with year 5-6 as a college student.
- Language study is an essential tool to understand culture and to build empathy, i.e. the chance to be a child again as a language learner.
- II is advocating for a physical II space, a “café polyglot,” that is both café and book exchange, with music, a daily DJ, and as a space to give dignity to language study and to be free from the digital harshness of AI.
- There are fund-raising challenges for II -- LSA and others have austerity status and II needs more direct fund-raising support.
- Are there opportunities to work with ROTC to build language study? Are there potential opportunities to fund language study from a national security perspective?

Action Items: Chair Peterson will mention the II in his newsletter and consider strategies to advocate for II.

4:22 Discussion of Goals for Remainder of the Academic Year

Potential SACUA Action Items:

- **Positive definition of tenure** – create a potential whitepaper on tenure that would build upon Syverud’s 1994 work. Some campuses have pursued post-tenure reviews, raising a risk of such reviews being considered for U-M. U-M Flint recently [faced threats to tenure](#). Michigan Medicine tenured faculty have portions of their salary

- dependent on the amount of their clinical work. At a future meeting, Chair Peterson will provide the 1994 report and an AAUP report on tenure for SACUA review. Definition/s of demotion is one possible issue.
- **Academic Freedom & 5.09 process** – take potential actions regarding academic freedom. The 5.09 process provides some important faculty protections. Note that lecturers have the same academic freedom as all faculty and, as per LEO, it is possible for lecturers to lose their job due to lack of work and as articulated in Article 20. Academic freedom language has been removed from two SPGS (campus surveillance SPG and in regard to teaching and learning). Academic freedom is referenced in the Faculty Handbook, but these are guidelines. Should content within the Faculty Handbook be an SPG?
 - **AI in Education Working Group** – will visit SACUA to discuss its work.
 - **Campus Surveillance** – will be further considered with the potential for a resolution.
 - **Work Connections** – will be a potential thirty-minute agenda item for SACUA. Key reforms are being discussed, such as: 1) an appeals process, 2) a relocation out of risk management, and 3) privacy protections that prohibit blanket sharing of an employee’s entire medical history.
 - **CTP and Ethical Investing** – have been considered by FAAC and other entities, and SACUA/SA may want to take additional action.
 - **Student Relations Advisory Committee** – Similarly, SACUA/SA may want to take actions in support of SRAC’s ongoing work.
 - **Public Facing Event in Lansing** – Chair Peterson is collaborating with faculty governance leaders at MSU to bring faculty governance leadership together from across the state to advocate with legislators at an April event.
 - **Faculty Protections Working Group event** – is planned for March.
 - **Benefits Coverage** – there was interest in SACUA support for U-M coverage of GLP medications. The issue has been fluid, and Luke McCarthy and Derek Peterson offered to investigate.
 - The “Compact” ([Motion 3](#)) was raised --- at this time, no further steps seem needed since U-M leadership is not interested in the compact and its proponents are pursuing other goals.

4:53 New Business

- There was no new business.

4:54 Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Rogério Meireles Pinto
Faculty Senate Secretary

[University of Michigan Bylaws of the Board of Regents, Sec. 5.02:](#)

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."