

Secretary of the University Advisory Committee (SAC) Minutes for 2/2/26 Meeting

Meeting information:

Circulated: 3/12/26

Approved: 3/13/26

Members present: Francine Dolins (Chair), Barbara Klein, Liz Rohan, John Tropman, Vilma Mesa (SACUA Liaison), Jonathan Shillingford, Samantha Kreklau, VP Jon Kinsey

Members absent: Rashmi Rama, Beth Wilensky, Jay Winkler

Faculty Senate Office staff present: Eric Vandenberghe

Minutes:

12:02pm-12:05pm: Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Minutes, Announcements

The agenda was approved. The minutes for the November and December meetings are approved.

12:05pm-12:26pm: Update from VP Jon Kinsey

Summary: VP Kinsey updates the committee on the naming of [President-elect Kent Syverud](#). President-elect Syverud has met with individuals on all the UM campuses and recently met with members of the Faculty Senate at a reception hosted by the Faculty Senate Office. VP Kinsey asks members for their impressions of the President-elect.

Members offer their opinions. A member indicates that they are optimistic, and that it is good that he met members of the community on all three campuses after his announcement. Another member indicates that he is impressed with his willingness to listen to all perspectives. Members who were able to attend the FSO reception indicated that they were impressed with his speech. A member indicates they appreciate President-elect Kent Syverud's willingness to engage with the community. A member suggests that it would be good to have the President-elect attend a SAC meeting. This is met with enthusiasm from committee members.

A member asks if Syverud was selected for his legal background given the current landscape of higher education. VP Kinsey indicates that this was not one of the committee's expressed considerations but is a good trait. He suggests that an invitation to an SAC meeting be accompanied with a short list of questions and/or topics. President-elect will begin tentatively on July 1st and will ramp up his collaboration with UM in the meantime.

A member offers suggestion of asking the President-elect what he views as his priorities at UM, and what strengths the university has. The committee will continue their brainstorming on this between meetings.

A member asks about the ongoing search for a UM-Dearborn Chancellor. Will Interim

President Grasso and/or President-elect Syverud be involved in the process? VP Kinsey indicates that Interim President Grasso has expressed his commitment to involving President-elect Syverud in decisions that will have ramifications once he takes over in July.

A question is asked if Interim President Grasso will stay on until President-elect Syverud takes over. VP Kinsey offers his insights and indicates he does not know definitively.

VP Kinsey provides an update regarding guidance the UM community received in late January from VP Kolb and VP Lynch regarding issues of immigration. This guidance is meant as a reminder of our rights.

A member shares their concern, and that expressed of some online, about the high salary being given to President-elect Syverud.

Action: Discussion

12:26pm-1:02pm: Cancellation of the RCI/Block grant

Summary: Chair Dolins provides the committee with an overview of this topic. Over the summer OVPR ended funding for a particular program that provided support for faculty in the professional arts units. It is noted that this will limit the work of faculty and may be particularly harmful to junior faculty working towards promotion.

A member asks about the role that the SAC can play in this issue. Chair Dolins indicates that the issue needs to be raised on several fronts. A member discusses the current federal funding landscape and how funding of new projects is down significantly.

One issue raised is that there are fewer funding sources that support the arts in the US. The arts are not always profitable for the university in a way that some scientific research is, but the arts provide cultural value.

A member indicates that the lack of input from faculty on this decision is concerning.

The Faculty Senate Office will reach out to VP Lupia to invite him to the next committee meeting in March.

The committee discusses broadly how the committee can be effective in sharing information with the regents, as well as upper administration. This leads to an extended conversation in which members offer their opinions on what the role of the committee is, and how they can be most effective at conveying the opinions of faculty at UM. The committee discusses VP Kinsey's role at the university.

Action: Discussion

1:04pm-1:27pm: Discussion on UM and the federal government

Summary: Chair Dolins discusses efforts by the federal government to dictate the values of higher education through compacts and investigations. This is seen as an attack on academic freedom. UM has not been approached yet regarding the signing of any compact with the federal government, as several of UM's peer institutions have. Chair Dolins asks if

SACUA has considered this issue.

The SACUA liaison confirms that this is on SACUA's radar and describes their ongoing efforts. She describes her feelings on the situation, with examples from her own scholarship.

VP Kinsey is asked about upper administration plans for the current landscape, as well as contingencies as circumstances evolve. The most visible ongoing efforts include the bridge funding provided for cancelled contracts. Several Regents have expressed their unwillingness to sign any government compact in the current circumstances. The discontinuation of gender-affirming care for minors at Michigan Medicine is discussed in this context.

A member discusses a desire to be less reliant on government funding as to rid their influence from the mission of the university. This is discussed with differing opinions offered.

Action: Discussion

1:28pm: New Business

Summary: No new business is brought forward and the meeting concludes.

Action: Discussion

1:28pm: Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Vandenberghe
Faculty Governance Coordinator
Faculty Senate Office