

Minutes of Meeting: 2/16/2026

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs

Monday, February 16, 2026, 3:00pm

The hybrid meeting was held in 1100 Ruthven and via Zoom

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 (Senate Secretary), Soumya Rangarajan (Vice Chair), Melanie Tanielian, Kentaro Toyama.

Guests:

Domenico Grasso, President of the University of Michigan

Steve Yaros, Chief of Staff, President's Office

Press:

Genevieve Monsma – Record

Josephine Velo – Daily

Ariel Li – Daily

3:04 pm - 3:05 pm: Come to Order and Approval of the Minutes

- The meeting was called to order and minutes from 2/9/2026 were approved by consent.

3:05 pm - 3:18 pm: SACUA Chair Update

- Chair Peterson welcomed newly elected SACUA member Lauren Smith to her first SACUA meeting. Dr. Smith is in the Department of Pathology, with a specialty in hematopathology, and is also the clinical ethicist at Michigan Medicine.
- Chair Peterson and FSO Director McCarthy were notified that 465 applications had been submitted to the Strategic Innovation Fund. The Faculty Senate Office proposal to create a new U-M Faculty Senate Institute for Academic Freedom is among the submitted applications.
- On Thursday, February 12th, President Grasso met with movants of [Motion 4: Motion on Accountability for the Handling of Gender-Based Violence and Discrimination at the University](#), passed in November of 2024.

Action Item: Chair Peterson is working on next steps regarding the [Resolution in Support of Foreign Language Teaching at the University of Michigan](#), adopted by SACUA on 2/9/2026.

- Follow-up from the February 9th Work Connections discussion will happen at today's SACUA meeting later in the agenda.

- Chair Peterson provided an update about a recent lawsuit filed by a U-M student who says they were wrongly accused by their instructor for using AI to complete an assignment/s. The student says their course work may have appeared to be AI-generated because of the student's disability. The case illustrates the difficult instructional issues raised by AI.
- Chair Peterson and FSO are working on plans for faculty senate chairs from across the state of Michigan to convene in Lansing to advocate for faculty at the state level. The tentative event date is April 3rd with the intent to bring faculty leaders together and to create a collective statewide faculty voice.
- At the Academic Program Group (APG) winter term meeting, Chair Peterson's remarks focused on the need to bring DEI back to U-M. After Peterson's remarks, there was a moving discussion among the deans about DEI, which is a topic that does not appear to be currently receiving active discussion in the upper levels of administration.
- An invitation was extended to SACUA members to attend the Thursday, February 19th Regents meeting. SACUA members Soumya Rangarajan and Lauren Smith expressed interest in attending. There is not an official Faculty Senate Chair reporting slot at Regent's meetings.
- On February 20th, the next [Clinical Faculty/Faculty Senate Dialogues](#) will be held at 7 a.m. at University Hospital South. Vice Chair Soumya Rangarajan has taken the lead on the project and the event is an opportunity to discuss issues important to clinical faculty.
- On February 25th, the Protections for Faculty Working Group are offering a media training event focused on learning skills and strategies for dealing with hostile encounters with the media.

3:18 pm - 3:25 pm: Senate Assembly Agenda Approval

- The draft Senate Assembly agenda was reviewed.

Action Item: For Interim Director Rick Arnold's segment as SA guest, it was suggested that a recap of the scholarly studies from Mike Steinberg's earlier presentation be shared.

Approval: Kentaro Toyama moved and Vilma Mesa seconded a motion to approve. The SA agenda was adopted unanimously without any changes.

3:25 pm – 3:30 pm: Pre-discussion in preparation of President Grasso visit

- SACUA briefly discussed topics to be raised with President Grasso. These potential topics included: the letter from AAUP President Todd Wolfson to President Grasso regarding Wolfson's concerns about expanded surveillance practices at the University of Michigan; the [Resolution Supporting Immigrants who Work and Study at the University of Michigan](#); DEI at U-M including within the context of Dana Nessel's comments at the recent Maize and Courage event and this week's win by UCLA about their DEI programs; AI and instruction including a SACUA member's student who sent their AI chatbot to a meeting with the instructor instead of showing up in person.

3:30 pm – 4:09 pm: President Grasso SACUA visit

- This agenda item was in Executive Session and no minutes were taken.

4:09 pm – 4:40 pm: Work Connections Recommendations

- Chair Peterson provided a brief review of the multi-year efforts to reform Work Connections, including the adoption of the [2021 Faculty Senate Resolution \(Motion 1\)](#). SACUA member Kirsten Herold serves on the Work Connections-related Total Worker Health Advisory Committee (TWHAC), which meets four times a year and has replaced the former Integrated Disability Management Advisory Committee (IDMAC).
- A “Reforming Work Connections” document was displayed, with earlier revisions from SACUA members incorporated into the current version. The document makes six recommendations. These recommendations have also been endorsed by U-M unions, including LEO, LEO-GLAM, and the hospital unions.
- **Approval:** Kentaro Toyama made a call to question, Soumya Rangarajan seconded, and the motion was brought to a vote. The motion passed with seven in favor, zero opposed, and two abstentions.

4:40 pm - 4:41 pm: New Business

- There was no new business and the meeting was adjourned.

4:41 pm: 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.”