

Minutes of Meeting: 3/9/26
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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs
Monday, March 9, 2026, 3:00pm
The hybrid meeting was held in 1100 Ruthven and via Zoom

Present: Derek Peterson (Chair), Soumya Rangarajan (Vice Chair), Jesse Capecelatro, Kirsten Herold, Vilma Mesa, Lauren Smith, Melanie Tanielian, Kentaro Toyama

Absent: Rebekah Modrak (Immediate Past Chair), Rogério Meireles Pinto (Senate Secretary)

Guests: Kaitlin Karmen, Solidarity & Political Action Committee (SPAC) Co-Chair, GEO

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

Press:

Jeffrey Bleiler -- Record
Alexa Cheaney -- Daily

3:03pm: Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The agenda was approved. The minutes for the 2/16/26 meeting were approved.

3:04pm-3:20pm: Chair's Update

Summary: The Chair provides SACUA with updates:

- The decision deadline for [Strategic Initiative Fund](#) has been extended to April. The Faculty Senate Office and SACUA Chair submitted a proposal to create an institute for the protection of academic freedom.
- On February 26th, the Senate Assembly passed the [Resolution in Support of Foreign Language Teaching at the University of Michigan](#). The resolution will be shared with upper administration.
- Faculty leadership at UM is working with their counterparts at Michigan State University to arrange meetings with legislators for the purpose of higher education advocacy. Related events are under consideration with more information to follow.
- The SACUA Chair, Vice Chair, and Faculty Senate Office recently held the second in a [series of dialogue events](#) between clinical faculty and the Faculty Senate. The initial session of the semester took place at the medical school. Issues raised include insurance issues and clinician retention. Further events will take place with the next event being held on Zoom on 3/31 with more information to follow.
- On February 25th, the SACUA Protections for Faculty Working Group hosted a workshop on media readiness. This was done with support from the Faculty Senate

Office and in partnership with Michigan News. There will be a similar event focused on FOIA in March.

- SACUA recently passed recommendations regarding Work Connections. These were shared with the Unions and several regents.
- Chair Peterson met with Regent Bernstein prior to Spring Break.
- Two [work retreats](#) were held earlier this month. There will be two more this month on March 18th and 19th at North Quad.
- Chair Peterson and Director McCarthy met with Michelle Casey, the Ethics, Integrity, and Compliance Officer, and President Grasso to discuss the Office of Ethics, Integrity, and Compliance. Chair Peterson advocated for the office to have investigative powers. Casey will meet with SACUA in a few weeks.
- Faculty leaders will meet this week with EVP Hewlett to continue the discussions regarding Collegiate Travel Planners and the faculty's related concerns.
- President-elect Syverud will meet with Chair Peterson this week. The FSO has put together a binder that highlights work and priorities of faculty governance over the past year.
- The slate of SACUA candidates for the upcoming March election has just been circulated. There are 11 candidates.

Action: Updates

3:20pm-3:34pm: Standard Operating Procedure: Open Meetings

Summary: The Chair reintroduces this proposed SOP, which has been reviewed by SACUA. Director McCarthy shares the document for further review. This SOP is meant to guide the Faculty Senate Office.

SACUA members review and finetune the language. A question is raised regarding recording meetings. The committee decides that recordings cannot be made by the public, only by the press for transcription purposes.

After further discussion a motion to approve the SOP is moved by Chair Peterson and seconded by member Capecelatro. The motion carries unanimously.

Action: Discussion

3:34pm-4:06pm; 4:38pm-4:52pm: Committee Chair Recommendations

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

A motion is made by Chair Peterson to approve the slate of Senate Assembly Chairs as determined by SACUA. This is seconded by Vice Chair Rangarajan. This motion passes unanimously.

Action: Discussion

4:06pm-4:36pm: Guest: Kaitlin Karmen, Solidarity & Political Action Committee (SPAC) Co-Chair, GEO

Summary: The guest is introduced and thanked for attending the meeting. Co-Chair Karmen updates the committee on the ongoing contract negotiations between Graduate Employees' Organization (GEO) and Human Resources (HR). Negotiations began in the Fall semester. HR called for a mediator from the Michigan Employment Relations Commission (MERC) and is working through shuttle negotiations. Co-Chair Karmen goes through the difficulties encountered with shuttle negotiations and expresses the desire for face-to-face negotiations.

The MERC mediator that had been working on this recently retired, so a new mediator will take their place. Each party will meet with the new mediator in the coming weeks.

GEO is trying to pass two proposals- one related to salary, and the other related to ICE. On these issues, GEO is not willing to communicate with HR through a mediator.

Following the most recent bargaining session, the [MERC Mediator suspended all contract negotiations for 28 days](#). The meeting location may be moved to Detroit, pending review by the mediator.

Co-Chair Karmen discusses GEO's bargaining team structure. They do not have a lead negotiator, but they do have a contract committee chair. GEO has a bargaining team of approximately 10 at the table, and they are willing to provide their names. Members ask clarifying questions regarding the negotiations.

A member asks how GEO determines their living wage proposal. They use the [MIT Living Wage](#) tool. The member voices concerns about rising tuition rates, and how that affects particular units. Co-Chair Karmen indicates that GEO is thinking about how this affects faculty, and how best to address issues of cost.

There is an ongoing vote to determine if Graduate Student Research Assistants (GSRA) will join GEO. Committee members discuss the ramifications of this for faculty should either determination come to pass.

A member asks how Faculty Governance ought to posture on these negotiations. Co-Chair Karmen indicates that the upcoming meeting with the new MERC mediator will lead to the determination of the location and parameters of future negotiations. Faculty are asked to support on-campus, face-to-face negotiations.

Action: Discussion of ongoing labor negotiations

4:37pm-4:38pm: New Business

Summary: Chair Peterson brings two items to SACUA's attention for future consideration. The first is ongoing efforts to pass a resolution in the Senate Assembly regarding security cameras on campus. The second item is whether there is a desire by faculty to convene a Faculty Senate Meeting in April. This will require a decision in the coming weeks.

Action: Update

4:52pm: 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."