

Secretary of the University Advisory Committee (SAC) Minutes for 3/13/26 Meeting

Meeting information:

Circulated: 3/30/2026

Approved: 4/06/2026

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

Members absent: Samantha Kreklau, Rashmi Rama, Beth Wilensky, Jay Winkler

Guests present: Former VP Sally Churchill

Faculty Senate Office staff present: Eric Vandenberghe

Minutes:

3:02pm-3:03pm: Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Minutes, Announcements

The agenda was approved. The minutes for the February meeting are approved.

3:03pm-3:05pm: Update from VP Jon Kinsey

Summary: VP Kinsey updates the committee that President-elect Syverud came to Ann Arbor earlier in the week and met with university stakeholders. He met with SACUA Chair Peterson.

Action: Discussion

3:05pm-4:32pm: Regent bylaw update project with guest Sally Churchill

Summary: Chair Dolins provides background for the ongoing Regent bylaw update project. She and VP Kinsey welcome back former VP Sally Churchill to provide the committee with more background information, an update on where the project stands now, and how the SAC can best assist.

The guest provides an overview of how the project came to fruition. During her tenure as Secretary of the University, former VP Churchill spent time reading, interpreting, and working closely with the bylaws. She states that the current version of the bylaws is antiquated and requires revision. The bylaws have not gone through a thorough review in the recent past, if ever.

Former VP Churchill describes the review process. She and staff from the Secretary's Office performed a peer review of 24 sets of university bylaws. The peers include representatives from the Big Ten Academic Alliance, public institutions, private institutions, large institutions, and smaller institutions. This review found that UM's regent bylaws were the lengthiest by far.

Former VP Churchill approached her review of the bylaws by starting fresh and inputting the needed information. The UM bylaws currently have a lot of descriptive information that could perhaps be housed somewhere else. UM's bylaws are around 80 pages, where most institutions reviewed had bylaws 20-30 pages in length. She was not making substantive changes to the bylaws in her draft but cleaned up the language and placed items in areas she thought to be more appropriate. Further guidance both internally and externally was sought upon and considered.

Former VP Churchill presented her review of the bylaws to the Regents last summer. The regents expressed interest in her revisions. She didn't make substantive changes, rather she cleaned up the language. Extenuating circumstances have caused delay in gaining community feedback on this project, but it is the hope that it will be picked back up soon. It is expected that substantial feedback will be gathered. Former VP Churchill indicates that she is proud of the work completed.

VP Kinsey offers examples of changes that are being proposed. One such example includes taking school and college descriptions out of the bylaws and housing them within the schools and colleges. In the peer review, UM was the only institution that had these descriptions in their bylaws. Optimism is expressed that the next stages of this project can move forward once President-elect Syverud has had a chance to weigh in.

It is reiterated that no changes will be made to the faculty section of the bylaws without faculty input. The committee discusses section 5.09 briefly.

A committee member asks what criteria former VP Churchill used to craft her draft bylaws. Former VP Churchill shares some underlying principles that guided her revision. She ultimately wants the bylaws to be worthy of the University of Michigan.

The committee discusses the messaging that will need to accompany the university's rollout of any proposed changes to the bylaws. It will need to be a community effort, otherwise there will be suspicion.

The committee discusses the peer review. There wasn't any set that was perfect. There were overarching themes that were identified. Examples are discussed.

The committee discusses how the community, particularly faculty, should be engaged in this project. There may be a need to have smaller groups of faculty review the proposed changes and provide feedback. It is suggested that the SAC could be involved in the review process. This is met with agreement. It is suggested that other relevant experts and others on campus could provide valuable input to ensure a positive outcome.

A member discusses the need for a regularly scheduled review process so that the bylaws do not reach the state that they are in right now. This is met with broad support. It is suggested by a member that each review could focus on a particular section of the bylaws, rather than the entirety of the bylaws. Committee members discuss this point further.

Members thank former VP Churchill for her work on this.

VP Kinsey and the committee discuss how the SAC can be involved in this process before the

term concludes. Differing opinions are shared, and further consideration will be made.

Action: Discussion

4:32pm: Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Vandenberghe
Faculty Governance Coordinator
Faculty Senate Office