



Academic Affairs Advisory Committee (AAAC) Minutes:

January 30, 2026, at 10:45 am – 12:15 pm (Provost attending 11 am to noon),
Ruthven Conference Room 1100 and via Zoom (hybrid)

Meeting Information:

Circulated: 2/6/2026

Approved: 2/13/2026

Present: Kentaro Toyama (Chair), Netta Berlin, Ceren Budak, Bilal Butt, Christine Gerdes (Special Counsel to the Provost), Gavin LaRose, Ann Marshall (FSO), Luke McCarthy, Laurie McCauley (Provost), Soumya Rangarajan (SACUA liaison), Mireille Roddier, Scott Spector, Jon Wargo

Absent: Hayley Bedell, Colleen Conway, Mick Kennedy, Albert Liu, Rahul Mannan, Rafael Neis, Jennifer Trigger

Minutes:

1. In preparation for the arrival of the Provost, the minutes were approved by consent and AAAC members briefly discussed agenda items.
2. Block Grants for U-M arts and humanities projects
 - a. Chair Toyama shared concerns about the defunding of the \$500,000 U-M Block Grant Program that had provided faculty in Architecture, School of Music, Theater, & Dance, and the Stamps School of Art and Design with small grants critical to faculty work. A AAAC member from architecture had been both a grant recipient and served on the grant committee, remarking that these grants had been very impactful, especially for junior faculty and for funding prototypes that then led to larger grant-funded projects.
 - b. The Provost responded that the Block Grants were funded by the VP of Research, and OVPR has been focused on being resilient during federal funding cuts. The Provost encouraged faculty to ask their deans to advocate for the block grant funds. The Provost's Office does not fund individual faculty requests, but does fund school/college budget requests. Proposals supporting more than one unit are prioritized by the Provost's Office. The [Strategic Initiatives Fund](#) is a possible funding source.
3. Employment policy exceptions for GSIs/GSRAs trapped abroad
 - a. Chair Toyama asked if there are ways the Provost's Office might more proactively support graduate students at risk of getting trapped abroad. GSIs and GSRA positions are not possible for those abroad and the current political situation puts graduate students at risk of losing such funding because of travel issues. The Provost encouraged graduate students to contact the International Center before traveling out of the country and shared that the General Counsel's Office and the General Counsel's Advisory Committee (GCAC) has been looking into this, including legal and tax issues.
4. AAAC presentation -- "Faculty concerns about AI at UM," by Kentaro Toyama



- a. Globally, AI has profoundly impacted employment, medicine, democracy, transportation, environment, everyday life, and civilization.
 - b. A survey of Senate Assembly representatives and AAAC members had received twenty faculty responses about AI. From the survey, positive impacts include using AI to facilitate some research tasks and to reduce time on less critical tasks. Negative AI impacts include harms to student learning, major concerns about teaching, environmental concerns, and academic misuse of AI. Studies have found that poorly supervised use of AI harms learning and it is very difficult to provide the needed student supervision of AI use.
 - c. Top concerns about AI at U-M are 1) U-M's overall AI messaging as one-sided and overly positive and 2) Concerns about the U-M LANL supercomputing center plans in Ypsilanti
 - d. **Recommendation** – form multiple, granular task forces, each with a focused goal of identifying viable pedagogical strategies.
5. Discussion on AI at UM
- a. Faculty shared the following experiences with AI: AI makes it very difficult to assess what students are doing on their own and almost impossible to detect cheating. Students ask AI to “explain a math problem to me” and then think they have learned. There are concerns about AI-powered glasses and contacts. AI is an existential threat – how do you get students to think about their learning? For the first time, an architecture faculty is teaching first year drawing to ensure students have this skill set. The office of academic integrity in LSA has been very supportive in the past, but AI makes their work very difficult. Many faculty already have AI policy statements on their syllabus, but the policies seem unenforceable. A GSI had carefully crafted scaffolded, writing assignments only to have half of the class use AI inappropriately. In an environmental data justice class, students shared their fears about AI, commented on how AI drives empire, and expressed concerns about weaponized use of AI, including by U-M and ICE. Some students use AI iteratively (vibe writing) – prompt after prompt without using any of their own words.
 - b. The Provost said that she believes strongly in faculty's ability to make the right choices for their courses and looked forward to the recommendations of the AI in Education Working Group. The Provost offered to talk with the LSA dean about the office of academic integrity. The Provost also noted that the Vice Provost for Sustainability and Climate Action is engaged on the environmental aspects of AI.
 - c. VP Pendse is planning a symposium that will focus on the negative impacts of AI.
6. AAAC Presentation – “Environmental impact of AI” by Mireille Roddier
- a. The draw of AI on water and semiconductors is huge, with U.S. tech companies building data centers in Chile and drought in Taiwan pitting chip makers against farmers. Globally the share of renewable energy is growing but not as fast as the total increase in energy consumption. Power outages lead to reliance on generators. It is not possible to decouple GDP growth from increased energy consumption. Energy return on investment is shrinking, e.g. solar needs to be replaced every 30 years. You can't create green energy with green energy. Open AI will likely need as much electricity as India's 1.5 billion population.
7. Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Marshall, Faculty Governance Coordinator (FSO)