



**Academic Affairs Advisory Committee (AAAC) Minutes:**

March 13, 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: 4/1/2026

Approved: 4/8/2026

Present: Kentaro Toyama (Chair), Hayley Bedell, Netta Berlin, Bilal Butt, Christine Gerdes (Special Counsel to the Provost), Gavin LaRose, Ann Marshall (FSO), Luke McCarthy (FSO), Laurie McCauley (Provost), Rafael Neis, Mireille Roddier,

Absent: Ceren Budak, Colleen Conway, Mick Kennedy, Albert Liu, Rahul Mannan, Soumya Rangarajan (SACUA liaison), Scott Spector, Jennifer Trigger, Jon Wargo

**Minutes:**

1. In preparation for the arrival of the Provost, the minutes were approved by consent and AAAC members briefly discussed agenda items.
2. Executive Committee composition and selection rules
  - a. AAAC raised an issue about the membership composition of unit-level executive committees. There is interest in having a wider representation of faculty voices serve on executive committees, including more diversity, more variety in rank, and representation from smaller departments. Marginalized voices have not always been heard, and, in some cases, the same people serve repeatedly. It was noted that practices may vary by unit and by the unit's bylaws.
  - b. **Action Item:** The Provost offered to raise the issue of executive committee composition at an upcoming meeting with deans as part of matters arising.
3. Grievance procedure updates and alternative dispute resolution options
  - a. **Update:** Christine Gerdes provided an update about in-process revisions to faculty grievance procedures. Input has been solicited from Karen Staller, who has much experience as a Faculty Grievance Monitor, SACUA, and others. The revised policy will, as before, be a model policy that units may adopt as-is or modify. A new faculty advocate role will be added.
  - b. **Discussion:** Support was expressed for alternative dispute resolution (ADR) that is well-trained and has the needed resources. A revised and more robust policy might increase the number of grievance cases or may lead faculty to pursue ADR. Regardless of number of cases, a grievance case has been an incredibly difficult experience for faculty and may also reflect negatively on U-M. It was suggested that ADR remain optional, but be strongly encouraged.
  - c. **Overtaken grievance cases:** Given the tremendous amount of effort required by grievance cases, faculty are concerned when a faculty grievance decision is overturned by administration. Overturned cases may be due to a procedural issue. Ideas for addressing such concerns include: 1) articulate the possible reasons for overturning a case in the grievance policy, 2) increase training and support for grievance board members and the involve experienced grievance board members, and 3) provide more information about why a grievance case was overturned. There was related discussion about how grievance board members are chosen. Typically, two members



- are internal to the grievant's unit and one is external. Another idea is for a multi-year, non-voting, cross-unit role be created to attend grievance meetings across all units in order to develop a knowledge base about grievance case decision making.
- d. **Action Item:** AAAC looks forward to reviewing the new draft grievance policy language when available.
4. Discussion on fostering interdisciplinarity
- a. The Provost invited AAAC suggestions on how to enhance interdisciplinary opportunities at U-M. AAAC offered the following suggestions.
- i. Faculty face challenges when trying to do international work within an international context, especially when such interdisciplinary work involves: solving the world's most difficult problems, traveling to such locations for extended time periods, and actively fostering international collaboration. Much of this work relies on the faculty member, and the system doesn't recognize such labor or expertise.
  - ii. Faculty are working in a more oppressive environment with regards to race, class, and gender. Interdisciplinary institutes focusing on gender studies and African American studies have been under attack. Cutting-edge, interdisciplinary research on trans study has not yet received institutional support at U-M.
  - iii. A faculty member reflected on being a cluster hire 14 years ago and how this enabled interdisciplinary work. For faculty who are working alone, it isn't possible to meet grandiose visions, and support is needed for slow and undervalued scholarship.
  - iv. Another faculty reflected on how the origins of their field were deeply interdisciplinary, but, as the field of study grew, the scholarship became very specialized.
  - v. There were also reflections on the benefits of Mcubed funding, with remarks that the program was cancelled when there wasn't a clear conversion of funds to larger grants.
  - vi. **Action Item:** Consider developing a well-crafted, perhaps subtle, call for interdisciplinary and collaborative scholarship that has been marginalized, understudied, and/or underrepresented. What is needed are incubator funds that are "cutting floor." The Strategic Initiative Fund is targeted to a higher levels of eligibility, and the Inclusive History Program is locally-focused.
  - vii. **Action Item:** Chair Toyama will create a document where these and other ideas can be compiled. AAAC members are encouraged to offer concrete ideas of what they would most like to have available.
5. After the Provost left the meeting, there was brief additional committee discussion. Possible topics of discussion for AAAC's April meeting are 1) follow-up on Fitness for Duty SPG, 2) concrete ideas on academic freedom, and 3) follow-up on interdisciplinarity discussion.
6. Adjournment

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