



Secretary of the University Advisory Committee (SAC) Minutes for 4/6/26 Meeting

Meeting information:

Circulated: 4/20/26

Approved: 4/27/26

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: Jeff Evans, Assistant Vice President and Secretary of the University

Faculty Senate Office staff present: Ann Marshall

Minutes:

Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Minutes, Announcements

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

Update from VP Jon Kinsey

Summary: VP Kinsey shared that the Regental Bylaw update project is on hold until the new president begins (May 11th). It was noted that communications about the revisions project are delicate, especially on topics such as Bylaws section 5.09.

Action: Discussion

Continued conversation on the ongoing Regental Bylaw update project

Summary: Prior to the meeting, VP Kinsey shared a document, "VPS SACUA committee regarding Bylaws" with questions to help frame the discussion and with benchmarking examples. SAC discussion covered the following topics and comments.

The first question on the document was discussed, "What is the appropriate level of faculty governance that should be memorialized in the Bylaws?" VP Kinsey noted that it could be disempowering for faculty to go to the Regents for changes. Or, it could be a pro and be by design to include detail, even if making a change is more cumbersome.

- A faculty noted that a central question is who is the authority on any set of rules? Should faculty issues be under the purview of the Regents? Or, there may be a risk that procedures would be delegitimized if removed from the Regents Bylaws.
- Any items removed from the Bylaws would need to be relocated, perhaps to procedures held by SAUCA, the Senate Assembly, the Provost's Office, or in the Faculty Handbook.
- What would be the potential consequences of moving Bylaws content into the SPGs?
- There was interest in reviewing Sally Churchill's potential changes. Releasing such



changes without a framework and explanation could lead to miscommunication.

- A faculty commented that the Regents had reduced the public comment time from three to two minutes. What is the ideal role of the Regents? A faculty expressed interest in a potential survey about regents. A faculty remarked that having Regent involvement is good and yet perhaps SACUA should have the flexibility to make some changes.

There was some discussion of [Bylaws section 11](#) and "What are the pros and cons of the academic unit executive committees being detailed in the Bylaws?" and also [Bylaws Section 4](#), "How much detail and language should be in the Bylaws regarding SACUA," and in relation to SACUA "Formation and Charter" and "Operating procedures and rules."

There was discussion on [Bylaws Section 5](#) and "Should section 5.09 (Dismissal, Demotion, or Terminal Appointment for Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty) be in the Bylaws?"

- VP Kinsey asked SAC if portions of Section 5 might belong in the Faculty Handbook? The intent would not be to remove it entirely, but to remove portions of Section 5.
- A faculty remarked that, at U-M Dearborn and U-M Flint, there had been talk of laying off tenured faculty, and having tenure protections in the Regents Bylaws is important. The 5.09 process provides guardrails for an abuse of power. It was noted that, during an era of protest, protections for faculty are very relevant. Several faculty commented that an advantage of the 5.09 being in the Bylaws is that it allows for a level of equal treatment for faculty across the three campuses.
- 5.09 is likely the most sensitive part of the Bylaws for faculty. It was noted that faculty contracts have not been legally binding. A faculty commented that, given U-M decentralization, having a common statement of tenure protections in the Bylaws seems appropriate. It was noted that faculty grievance policies are not in the Regents Bylaws.

The handout provides benchmarking examples with other institutions, including with Northwestern, University of Minnesota, USC, University of Wisconsin, and Michigan State University. The average bylaw length of these institutions is 20-30 pages and U-M Bylaws are 80 pages. Sally Churchill's draft of revised U-M Bylaws is about 23 pages.

There was discussion on question 2 on the handout, "What is the appropriate language and structure for a COI/ethics in the Bylaws?"

- A faculty commented that, without conflict of interest language in the Bylaws, it may leave U-M open to risk and without checks and balances for the regents. Another SAC member noted that faculty complete conflict of interest paperwork regularly and having similar language for the regents makes sense. There is question of where such language should reside for faculty, students, administration, and the regents. Concerns with the SSRR process not being followed were mentioned. Real estate investments were also mentioned as a possible conflict of interest.
- Examples were provided, including U-M's SPG on conflict of interest and policies from Pepperdine, IU, Columbia, Purdue and MSU.

Question 3 on the handout asked, "What do you notice from other university Bylaws that could be considered for U-M?", with University of Minnesota, MSU, and University of California listed as examples. Syracuse University Bylaws might also be reviewed.

- Faculty raised issues related to processes for dean searches, for presidential searches, and about students losing their jobs because of protest activity (see U. of Wisconsin).
- It was suggested that a bylaw review process might occur every 3-5 years and include



both faculty and administrators. What is the approval process like at other institutions?

In closing, VP Kinsey shared appreciation for the discussion and remarked that the intent is to keep the dialog open and to provide updates.

Action: Discussion

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Marshall
Faculty Governance Coordinator
Faculty Senate Office