



Government Relations Advisory Committee (GRAC)
Minutes

Minutes of December 11, 2025, 2-2:45 pm

Circulated: 1/16/2026

Approved: 1/22/2026

Present: Kevin Cokley (Chair), Shevon Desai, Scott Greer, Chris Kolb (VP for Government Relations), Karyn Lacy, Andrea Lewis (Government Relations Specialist), John Mansfield, Ann Marshall (FSO), Rima Mohammad, Rogerio Meireles Pinto (SACUA liaison), Sara Samuel, Jeffrey Yackley, Beth Wilensky

Absent: Jowei Chen, Lisa Fein, Nakhiah Goulbourne, Anouck Girard, Shahzad Mian

1. The meeting was called to order and the minutes from the previous meeting were approved.
2. Chris Kolb update
 - The federal government has reopened, and there has been some new activity within the Republican caucus and between the House and Senate. The U.S. has a non-traditional president which has created challenges for both Republicans and Democrats. At the state level, the MI House cancelled over \$600 million in state appropriations. This could impact U-M, such as 5 million in state funds designated for survival flight, as well as a potential impact on the Michigan Innovation Fund.
3. GRAC initial discussion
 - Concerns about survival flight cuts were discussed, which essentially provides health care for children. There are questions about the U-M LANL joint supercomputing proposed Textile road location, including concerns expressed by Ypsilanti area elected officials. Due diligence about multiple locations is ongoing, with an expected 2027 date to break ground.
4. Discussion about academic freedom within the current political climate
 - The discussion covered the following topics: There has been pressure, including from legislators, to fire faculty, such as that faced by a U-M faculty member for speech about Charlie Kirk. While the U-M faculty member was not fired, the safety of he and his family were threatened, and there was no public U-M statement of support for the faculty member. Both Ono and more recently Grasso have spoken publicly about the importance of academic freedom. A faculty commented that the first amendment does not always seem to apply equally to everyone. There was discussion about what U-M might do to more actively protect free speech. For example, there were questions about what protections might be helpful for visa holders or those who teach about topics such as discrimination or the Middle East. Unlike Florida, Michigan public universities have [constitutional autonomy](#). President Grasso has voiced support for academic freedom within legislative contexts and is also well-respected for his military service.

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Marshall, FSO, Faculty Governance Coordinator