

To: Faculty Senate Office, University of Michigan  
From: Wayne C. Petty, chair, Committee on Oversight of Administrative Action (COAA)  
Date: May 11, 2026  
re: Final Report on COAA activities, 2025–2026

## Overview:

- *From:* Wayne Petty, Chair, Committee on Oversight of Administrative Action (COAA)
- *Subject:* Report on Activities of the Committee on Oversight of Administrative Action (COAA) for 2025-2026
- *Committee Members:* Devi Chiravuri, Mimi Dalaly, Mary Franklin, Cynthia Gabriel, Adam Matzger, Hari Nathan, Wayne C. Petty, Lauren Smith, Kristen Verhey, Oleg Zamulin
- *SACUA Liaison:* Vilma Mesa
- *Meeting Dates:*
  - Mon. 9/29 from 10-11am
  - Mon. 10/27 from 10-11am
  - Mon. 12/8 from 10-11am
  - Mon. 1/12 from 10-11am
  - Mon. 3/23 from 10-11am
  - Mon. 4/20 from 10-11am

## 2025-2026 Committee Charge

1. Review the university's implementation of its tenure procedures. Your focus may include the following:
  - . The Provost Office's published materials regarding the promotion and tenure process;
  - . The Provost Office's internal procedures, following the publication of those procedures [on the Provost's website](#).
  - . Unit consistency, i.e. the degree that a large service or teaching load serves as alternative to substantial scholarship;
  - . Timing concerns resulting from the impacts of childcare, medical leave, federal grant cuts, administrative delays in providing lab space, or transfers between campuses or units.



2. In partnership with SACUA, review the report issued by the Provost's Grievance Task Force and support a collaborative process involving Faculty Senate input and approval, before changes are implemented.
3. In concert with SACUA, evaluate the newly announced ECRT policies communicated on September 2, 2025 to the U-M community:
  - a. [Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct \(SPG 601.89\)](#)
  - b. [Discrimination and Harassment by employees \(SPG 201.89-1\)](#)
  - c. [U-M Interim Policy and Procedures on Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation by Students](#)
4. In partnership with the Faculty Senate Office, explore the development of a framework that could support the governing faculties in the university's decentralized units with faculty-led efforts to revise their unit's bylaws to promote stronger shared governance practices.
5. Consider emergent issues or topics brought forward by COAA committee members for discussion over the course of the year. The committee may also continue discussing any issues or topics raised in the committee's most recent annual committee report.

#### Report:

The Committee on Oversight of Administrative Action (COAA) spent the year on a single policy document, "Tenure and Promotion Review in the Office of the Provost," published on June 26, 2025. Unusual though it may seem for a committee of the Faculty Senate to focus so single-mindedly on one policy statement from a single office of the university, that policy is so far-reaching in its implications for faculty governance and in many ways marks so radical a refocusing of the power to shape the university's future away from faculty experts toward a small corps of administrators that it became urgent for COAA to exercise its oversight role by assessing, and challenging where appropriate, this attempt by the Office of the Provost to impose a new tenure and promotion regime on the entire university. It would be one thing if these new policies provided for transparency or fostered accountability for the basis on which decisions on specific tenure and promotion cases would be made; but the increased authority envisioned for the Office of the Provost comes with provisions that render the decision-making process more opaque than ever.

The COAA acknowledged from the start that the Office of the Provost has an appropriate role in tenure and promotion, especially to ensure a level of formal consistency in preparation of casebooks and to standardize to a reasonable degree the evaluation of tenure and promotion cases across the university's many schools and colleges. But on

reviewing the “Tenure and Promotion Review in the Office of the Provost” line by line and discussing each of the document’s provisions, the COAA discovered several areas in need of revision: (1) the scope and purpose of the proposed review of tenure and promotion cases by the Office of the Provost; (2) the potential of that office to solicit its own set of evaluations without the knowledge or consent of the unit or the candidate, evaluations that may be used to vitiate expert judgments in a casebook; (3) the use of sub rosa discussions between the provost and dean with no requirement of a written record of the substance of those discussions. These were not the only areas identified by COAA members as needing revision, but on these the COAA reached consensus.

(1) The new policies state that one purpose of the tenure and promotion review is to provide “additional review of the academic credentials of the candidate.” The COAA regards the appropriate role of the Office of the Provost as limited to a **procedural** review, since neither the Office of the Provost nor its hand-picked internal reviewers (“primary” and “secondary”) can be assured the expertise required for a substantive review of cases for tenure and promotion.

(2) When the Provost’s “review of academic credentials” raises “concerns about the merits of the case” the policy allows for the Office of the Provost to solicit its own set of evaluations without the knowledge or consent of the candidate, without procedures to ensure a necessary level of subject-matter expertise by the new evaluators, and without safeguards against bias toward the candidate or the candidate’s work. The COAA regards this use of hand-picked evaluators as lacking in transparency, potentially unfair to candidates, and contrary to the interest of the university as the views of non-experts can supersede the judgments of carefully vetted experts in the candidate’s field. If questions arise about the merits of a case, COAA considers it more appropriate to **return the case to the unit for reevaluation**, complete with all new documents that have been added by the Office of the Provost as supplements to the original casebook.

(3) In situations where the provost discusses “concerns about the merits of the case” with the candidate’s dean, the policy does not require a written record of the substance of those conversations. In the interest of transparency, the COAA believes that a **written record** of the main points for discussion should be included in the unit-level reevaluation of the case envisaged under (2) above.

Given the seriousness of tenure and promotion review -- not only for the candidates themselves but for the overall health of the university -- the COAA believes that a new set of policies needs to be developed, this time with the full participation of the faculty through the Faculty Senate and its elected bodies.