

University of Michigan

Item for Information

Subject: May 2026 Faculty Governance Update

Executive Summary

- 1) Congratulations on graduating UM's 1 millionth Wolverine!
- 2) As of May 1, there has been a transition in SACUA leadership and membership.
- 3) SACUA would like to request a seat on the search committee for the next UM President.
- 4) In April, the Faculty Senate Chair visited Lansing to convey the importance of state funding for Michigan's public universities
- 5) In April, the Faculty Senate passed 7 motions, which SACUA will take up with Executive Officers.

1. Congratulations on 1 Millionth Graduate!

Congratulations to the University of Michigan community for graduating our 1 millionth Wolverine! We recognize the collective effort of a long line of regents; administrators; faculty; staff; alumni; donors; parents; governments; and the students themselves. A quick online search suggests that none of Michigan State, Ohio State, or Harvard have yet graduated 1 million students. Not that anyone is keeping tabs.

2. New SACUA Leadership and Transitions

Prof. Derek Peterson and Dr. Soumya Rangarajan ended their tenures as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively, of the Faculty Senate on April 30, 2026. April 30 was also the last day of service for Professors Vilma Mesa, Susan Najita, and Lauren B. Smith. We are grateful for their service.

The new Faculty Senate Chair as of May 1, 2026 is Prof. Kentaro Toyama (Information). He is joined by Dr. Kirsten Herold (Public Health) as the new Vice Chair; for both, this is the second year of their three-year terms on SACUA. SACUA also has three new members: Prof. Kim Kearfott (Nuclear Engineering and Radiological Sciences); Prof. Steven R. Buchman (Plastic Surgery, Neurosurgery); Dr. Michael Schubnell (Experimental Cosmology and Astrophysics). Continuing on SACUA are Professors Jesse Capecehatro (Aerospace Engineering); Soumya Rangarajan (Internal Medicine); Derek Peterson (History); and Melanie Tanielian (History).

As happens each year, this is a newly constituted SACUA. We look forward to a collaborative working relationship with UM leadership.

3. Request for Presidential Search Committee Seat(s)

News of President-Elect Kent Syverud's health was very sad to hear, and we heard similar sentiments from faculty across UM. We wish him the very best. Even before his formal

appointment, he began engaging with Faculty Senate bodies, and many of us hope we will see him on campus.

We also congratulate President Domenico Grasso for his appointment. Last year, he and his wife extended a warm welcome to the Faculty Senate Assembly at his residence, which we appreciated. We are glad to have been able to develop a good working relationship with President Grasso over the past year and look forward to continued positive engagement with him and his staff.

Finally, as another presidential search may be underway, SACUA – acting on the wish of [88% of 2592 faculty](#) who voted last November – would like to request that we be allowed to name one or more elected Faculty Senate members to the search committee; or, if no search committee is formed, that we be consulted during the decision-making process. We will of course honor any requirements of the process.

4. Faculty Senate Chair Visit to Lansing

On April 23rd, Prof. Derek Peterson, in his capacity as Faculty Senate Chair, visited Lansing along with faculty government leaders from eight other Michigan public universities. They met with Sen. Sarah Anthony (Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee) and Rep. Nancy DeBoer (Chair, House Education and Workforce Committee), impressing upon them the importance of state funding for Michigan public universities. The legislators expressed appreciation for the visit, as well as for the value of higher education for the people of Michigan. A [University Record article](#) about the visit is available.

5. April Faculty Senate Motions

In late April, the Faculty Senate proposed and voted on seven motions, all of which passed, with varying degrees of support. The motions concerned the following matters: (1) increased support for staff and faculty childcare; (2) request for AI-free zones on campus; (3) concerns about Early Decision admissions; (4) including gender-diverse students in athletics; (5) enabling faculty to take university courses for professional development; (6) rejecting collaboration with the Senior Service College Fellowship Program; and (7) updating research-track Faculty Senate membership. SACUA and the Senate Assembly will take up these topics with the appropriate Executive Officers. We mention them here for your awareness. Further details about the motions are [available online](#).

Respectfully submitted: May 8, 2026



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May 2026