

**The University of Michigan Senate Assembly Minutes:
Monday, April 20, 2026, 3:15-5:00 p.m.**

The Hybrid meeting was held in Ruthven Building 2000, University Hall and via Zoom

Meeting Information:

Minutes: 4/20/2026

Circulated: 9/16/2026

Approved: 9/21/2026

In-person attendees: Keith Aaronson, Charlotte Karem Albrecht, Meaghan Blanchard (nonvoting), Steve Buchman, Jade Burns, Alexa Cheaney (nonvoting), Francine Dollins, Kirsten Herold, Kevin Joiner, Charles Lwanga, John Magee, Ann Marshall (nonvoting), Luke McCarthy (nonvoting), Vilma Mesa, Rebekah Modrak, Susan Najita, Ivette Perfecto, Derek Peterson, Rogério Meireles Pinto (nonvoting), Ian Shin, Lauren Smith, Craig Smith, Deirdre Spencer (nonvoting), Melanie Tanielian, Eric Vandenberg (nonvoting), Apryl Williams, Jason Young

Virtual attendees: Christina Aplin-Snyder, Mousumi Banerjee, Sybil Biermann, Jeffrey Bleiler (nonvoting), Helen Burgess, Deepa Butoliya, William Calvo-Quiros, Yi-Su Chen, Amy I-Lin Cheng, Meghan Courtney, Wessam Elmeligi, Terri Friedline, Caren Goldberg, James Gulvas, Jay Guo, Mercy Hanson, Joshua Hausman, Kim Kearfott, Brad Killaly, Kristin Klein, Liz Kolb, Yongqing Li, Jakob McSparron, Pamela Pennock, Soumya Rangarajan, Kimberly Saks, Michael Schubnell, Suzanne Selig (nonvoting), Albert Shih, Brian Stewart, Quentin Stout, Elizabeth Viglianti, Paul Zimmerman

Press:

Jeffrey Bleiler – The University Record

Alexa Cheaney – The Michigan Daily

Guests:

Jonathan Kuuskoski, Chair, Faculty Protections Working Group

John Magee, Chair, Medical Affairs Advisory Committee (MAAC)

Arthur Lupia, Vice President for Research and Innovation

Minutes:

3:19 pm Come to Order and Approval of the Minutes

- The meeting was called to order with quorum and the minutes from 03/23/2026 were approved by unanimous consent.

3:22 pm Senate Assembly (SA) Chair Update

- [SRAC](#) had requested an off-cycle amendment for the [SSRR](#). SRAC discussions about an off-cycle amendment with the Vice President for Student Life have been productive, but no action is expected until fall 2026.
- It is expected that CTP will become optional for travel, but the details are not yet known.

- The childcare and caregiving survey closed on April 1. The survey is a joint project of the U-M Faculty Senate Committee on the Economic and Social Well-Being of the Faculty (CESWF) and ADVANCE. Results will be circulated when available.
- On March 27th, roughly fifty people attended “Transnational and Local Miseries: A Practical Guide to Academic Freedom.” The [event](#) featured the work of [Dr. Demet Bolat](#), whose research examines the political, institutional, and epistemological effects of anti-genderism on academia in Turkey. DMNC was thanked for planning the event.
- On March 31st, a [Clinical Faculty / Faculty Senate Dialogue](#) zoom session was held for all clinical faculty. A white paper on clinical faculty issues is being drafted based upon the dialog sessions. The draft will then be circulated for comment.
- [Three new members of SACUA have been elected](#) for a three-year term beginning on May 1. The newly elected members are Steven Buchman (Medical School), Kim Kearfott (Engineering), and Michael Schubnell (LSA).
- The [Resolution Concerning Surveillance on Campus](#), adopted by the Senate Assembly on March 23rd, will soon be conveyed to DPSS Interim Director Rick Arnold and President Grasso for action.
- Chair Peterson expressed his sadness at the cancer diagnosis facing Kent Syverud, who had to step down from being U-M president elect. Chair Peterson wrote to Kent Syverud and his wife sending wishes for his recovery. Peterson also wrote to the Regents and to Domenico Grasso.
- The [Faculty Senate will meet on April 27th](#) to consider seven consequential resolutions. Senate Assembly members are encouraged to register and to sign-up to speak.
- SACUA adopted, on April 13, [A Call for Robust Faculty Engagement with the Athletic Department](#) and, on April 20, a [Statement Concerning Regent Jordan Acker](#).
- On April 23rd, Chair Peterson and FSO Director Luke McCarthy will be in Lansing with other faculty governance leaders from across the state as part of a coordinated strategy to lobby on issues important to faculty. The event has been organized jointly by MSU and U-M faculty governance leaders.
- The digital accessibility [deadline has been extended for one year](#). The challenges of making materials accessible have been profound and the extra time is welcome as faculty continue to work to make their teaching materials accessible.
- On April 6th, SACUA elected [Kentaro Toyama as 2026-2027 SACUA/SA Chair and Kirsten Herold as 2026-2027 SACUA/SA Vice Chair](#). Chair Peterson commended both faculty for their record of service and for stepping up to take on these roles.

3:37 pm Committee Report: Jonathan Kuuskoski, Chair, Faculty Protections Working Group

- Jonathan Kuuskoski provided an update on the work of the committee. The Faculty Protections Working Group has built upon prior efforts, including the [2024 Responding to Threats and Harassment of Faculty at the University of Michigan](#), from the [Office of the Provost](#). There has nevertheless been an escalation of threats against faculty, as [evidenced by a survey](#) (survey report provided below) which found that about half of faculty respondents had either been censored by others or felt pressure to censor their teaching and/or research.
- Given these findings, the committee has taken several actions. First, the committee organized two events, 1) [Faculty Protections Workshop: Media Readiness](#) and 2) [Faculty Protections Workshop: FOIA](#). In addition, the Working Group published resources, including [Freedom of](#)

[Information Act \(FOIA\) Guidance for Faculty](#) and the [2026 Faculty Censorship Survey Overview](#) and [2026 Faculty Censorship Survey Results](#). The committee plans to meet with the Office of the Provost on April 28th to recommend next steps and to author a position paper. Their intent is that these resources be distributed not only via FSO, but at the unit and department level, and to new faculty.

- Discussion covered the following topics: A Librarians, Archivists, and Curators faculty shared appreciation for the committee's work and commented that the U-M administration has at times been part of the threat. An LSA faculty asked about how the committee approached different kinds of threats, including social ostracism and structural effects such as the loss of a grant or job. Jonathan Kuuskoski responded that the committee has worked to raise awareness and to discuss a range of threats, including how difficult it is for a faculty to remove themselves from a watchlist and faculty who are receiving death threats. Another faculty member encouraged the data on censorship to be published as part of a scholarly study.
- A Medical School faculty asked whether the committee looked at internal threats. Kuuskoski said that, while their focus has been on external harassment, he appreciated the need to address internal threats. An LSA faculty remarked that much more robust support is needed from administration and that the resources provided by the administration have not been adequate. A SACUA member raised a question about needing to consider whether and how to make the names of the members of the Faculty Protections Working Group public and whether a standard practice of sharing committee names would be helpful. Another faculty expressed concern that the University responds to issues instead of being proactive. An LSA faculty suggested the usefulness of studying the threats to specific scholars whose work focuses on Palestine and Arab Studies.

4:03 pm Committee Report: John Magee, Chair, Medical Affairs Advisory Committee (MAAC)

- John Magee provided an update on the work of the committee. [MAAC](#) is charged with advising VPMA-CEO David Miller and the 2025-2026 sixteen-member committee includes six clinical faculty, either tenure track faculty, a librarian, a nursing faculty, and SACUA liaison Soumya Rangarajan. The committee was charged with considering the following issues:
 - Michigan Medicine's (MM) approach given recent federal actions. This discussion focused on how resources had been allocated as well as strong contingency planning regarding indirect costs.
 - Consideration of AI use in Michigan Medicine and in the Medical School. Guest Dana Habers discussed the impact of AI on care delivery and Dr. Lou Edje shared initiatives and guiding principles for AI use as part of the MM education mission. An example of an initiative is for AI to address fax processes, which don't work well, and how to better integrate data so that the clinician receives the information they need. The importance of critical thinking was emphasized as part of the pedagogical mission.
 - The final two meetings focused on faculty oversight and disciplinary sanctioning, professionalism, and feedback to faculty on teaching, clinical work, and research. Dr. Mollie McDermott, Office of Clinical Affairs (OCA) spoke of the clinical-side

processes and provided an overview of credentialing and peer review. Dr. George Mashour, Office of Faculty Affairs (OFA), spoke to faculty oversight processes and safeguards. These processes are complex and not fully known by many and there have been concerns raised. The Medical School bylaws were recently revised and the proposed changes were not effectively communicated, including that rights and protections were removed and made more opaque. There are questions of how conflict of interest is managed, whether the grievance process works well, appeals processes, cultural change, and how anonymous reports are handled. Dr. Magee invited Senate Assembly members to reach out to him with any questions and to raise issues for the committee to consider.

4:19 pm Guest: Arthur Lupia, Vice President for Research and Innovation

- VP Skip Lupia provided an update from the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR). He commented that it is a challenging time for research, but there are also many opportunities. U-M research saves lives and dramatically impacts quality of life at-scale. He went on making several other comments. These comments, below, reflect his manner of speech.
- Cuts made by U.S. President Trump are not binding, and Congress sets the budget. There aren't the votes in Congress to cut science. All federal agencies report to the president which has resulted in a slowing of a distribution of funds. Mid-March to July is when the bulk of funds are spent and, if funds are not distributed, we expect Congress to notice. Universities and hospitals are in Congressional districts.
- Indirect costs have been targeted, with threats of lowering indirect cost coverage to 15%. The indirect cost processes are not well understood. There is bipartisan support for a new model, called [FAIR](#), which offers continuity with improved real-time accounting.
- VP Lupia provided an overview of U-M grant expenditures, noting that FY 2026, July to January, total expenditures were down 1.2%, research submissions down 2.1% with a lot of resilience, and the value of awards was down 11.9%. If you are one of 191 terminated grants, this is devastating, but it is a small percentage of the 8,000 active U-M grants.
- There are a lot of U-M programs supporting grantees. A termination of a grant is the beginning of a conversation not the end. The people in the agencies care and OVPR supports every PI, and the overwhelming majority of appeals have been won. OVPR will call an agency and not immediately hear back, but three months later, there is a response and a reactivation of the grant.
- Regarding NIH funds, there is a perceived challenge in getting immediate funds (similar to not being able to get a loan) with short term impacts, but long term funds may still be available. Given the pressure on agencies, there may need to be a rethinking of open publishing and federal contracts that may try to place limits on publishing on topics such as federal defense and biohazard.
- Discussion covered the following topics: A U-M Dearborn faculty remarked that the division of NSF for her grant funding no longer exists, even though technically the division can't be dissolved because of statute. The division is no longer putting out any calls for new grants and there is no communication. A Library, Archives, and Curators faculty raised ethical concerns about the funds being spent on the Los Alamos project and nuclear weapons research. An Engineering faculty expressed concerns about the Department of Energy and

NSF committing less funds to basic science. An LSA faculty raised concerns about Asian faculty being targeted because of their nationality and the lack of support provided by OVPR.

4:58 pm Departing Senate Assembly Members

- Chair Peterson expressed appreciation for the outgoing Senate Assembly members' service. Appreciation was also expressed for Derek Peterson's service as Senate Assembly Chair.

4:59 pm New Business

- No new business items were raised.

5:00 Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Rogério M. Pinto
Faculty Senate Secretary

[University of Michigan Bylaws of the Board of Regents, Sec. 5.02:](#)

Governing Bodies in Schools and Colleges

Sec. 4.01 The University Senate

"...[t]he Senate is authorized to consider any subject pertaining to the interests of the university, and to make recommendations to the Board of Regents in regard thereto. Decisions of the University Senate with respect to matters within its jurisdiction shall constitute the binding action of the university faculties. Jurisdiction over academic policies shall reside in the faculties of the various schools and colleges, but insofar as actions by the several faculties affect university policy as a whole, or schools and colleges other than the one in which they originate, they shall be brought before the University Senate."

[Rules of the University Senate, the Senate Assembly and the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs:](#)

Senate: "In all cases not covered by rules adopted by the Senate, the procedure in Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed."

Assembly: "The Assembly may adopt rules for the transaction of its business. In appropriate cases not covered by rules of the Assembly, the rules of the University Senate shall apply."

SACUA: "The committee may adopt rules for the transaction of its business."