SACUA SENATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

1120 Ruthven Building
1109 Geddes Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1079

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA) Minutes:
Monday, November 2, 2026, 3:00pm
The hybrid meeting was held in 1100 Ruthven and via Zoom

Minutes: 11/2/2026
Circulated: 11/13/2026
Approved: 11/16/2026

Present:
Kentaro Toyama (Chair), Steven Buchman, Jesse Capecelatro, Kirsten Herold, Kim Kearfott, Ann Marshall (FSO), Luke McCarthy (FSO), Derek Peterson, Rogério Meireles Pinto (Senate Secretary), Soumya Rangarajan, Michael Schubnell, Melanie Tanielian

Press:
Genevieve Monsma – Record
Kevin Gonzaga -- Daily

Meeting Minutes:

3:00 pm: Come to Order and Minutes
- The minutes from 10/12/2026 were approved by consent.

3:02 pm: SACUA Chair Updates
- SACUA Chair Kentaro Toyama, Vice Chair Soumya Rangarajan, and Luke McCarthy met with President Grasso on October 16th. Items discussed included clinical faculty updates (see the whitepaper and the Faculty Senate Chair newsletter) and President Grasso's pause of the grade-covering pilot. In addition, Chair Toyama shared possible dates for hosting President-Elect Raver at Senate Assembly and SACUA, and Chief of Staff for President Grasso offered to follow-up with President-Elect Raver and relevant staff.
- SACUA Chair Kentaro Toyama and Luke McCarthy met with Provost McCauley. In the future, these small group meetings with the Provost may also include a guest from SACUA. The meeting with the Provost covered the following topics. Chair Toyama relayed early positive faculty impressions about new dean hires. He asked about instances where deans do well with external relations and fundraising, but may not resolve internal issues effectively. The Provost shared that extensive due diligence checks are completed with dean searches, and such reviews are taken very seriously. Chair Toyama also shared that Professor Rebekah Modrak would be the new Faculty Grievance Monitor. The Provost has asked units to submit unit-level AI competencies. Finally, the creation of a Faculty Senate gifts-focused account with U-M Development was discussed, and the Provost expressed no objections to FSO moving forward with such an account.
- Elena Frank will serve as the chair of the 2026-2027 SACUA Child and Family Care Committee and the full roster of the committee has been approved by

1120 Ruthven Building
1109 Geddes Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1079

SACUA by a recent e-vote.

- Chair Toyama was invited to have a conversation with the search firm managing the next athletics director search (see Record article). Toyama solicited input from SACUA members which he subsequently passed on to the search firm. Toyama also learned that the search firm specializes in high-profile athletics searches, has multiple staff who are U-M alumni, and the firm seems supportive of promoting diversity as well as a positive athletics culture. The university appears to hope to announce a new athletics director by January, with a start date TBA.
- Luke McCarthy shared a final call for SACUA members to RSVP for the DMN Lecture dinner to be held after the DMN Lecture.
- The following SACUA liaison updates were provided:
    - Jesse Capecelatro shared a Communications Advisory Committee (CAC) liaison update. There have been ongoing concerns about U-M communications about the U-M/LANL facility. CAC also discussed a Daily article. Chair Toyama met with VP Hurn who provided a different framing of the issue, sharing that the article about the faculty member's research would be published in January. There was discussion about U-M Communications' role, and a comment was made about the Michigan Daily and U-M Communications offering checks and balances. U-M Communications works closely with the Office of the President. SACUA members expressed interest in more transparency.
    - Soumya Rangarajan provided a Faculty Affairs Advisory Committee update, noting slides about the university budget were available. Compensation is up 6%, but mostly at Michigan Medicine, and salaries are otherwise flat or decreasing. In addition, the SACUA task force on U-M salaries met and will be considering these issues in-depth.
    - Michael Schubnell provided an Information Technology Committee update about an ITC discussion on AI and teaching. A graduate student's perspective was helpful, and the student appreciated AI's help with coding and yet also raised potential concerns with using AI to learn.

3:20 pm: AI Discussion

- The discussion on AI covered the following topics. There had been much attention given to a reddit post by a student who railed against a course in which the instructors themselves claimed much of the course was designed by AI. It was shared that the post's claims were exaggerated, as the instructors associated with the course were very diligent, but that there was nevertheless a valid underlying concern, especially among students who object to all AI use. Grading of essays in the humanities seems inexcusable, but rubric-informed AI-grading of some types of reports seems potentially possible. In some contexts, such as multiple choice exams, automated grading is widely accepted. Using AI to detect plagiarism could be helpful, but technologies for detecting AI use are unreliable. There is a concern that AI is anti-labor, shaped by corporate profit, and is counter to universities' mission and creativity. There was discussion on how to formulate policy without enforcement mechanisms. There is not a one-size fits all pedagogical approach to AI, and more department-level activity around AI is expected.

1120 Ruthven Building
1109 Geddes Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1079

3:40 pm: University Senate Meeting

- This item was in the Executive Session and no minutes were taken.

4:00 pm: Guest: Provost Laurie McCauley

- This item was in the Executive Session and no minutes were taken.

4:33 pm: University Senate Meeting

- After the session with the Provost concluded, SACUA returned to the discussion on the University Senate Meeting.
- This item was in the Executive Session and no minutes were taken.

4:59 pm: Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Rogério Meireles 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 polices 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.”