FACULTY SENATE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
University Senate Meeting
Monday, April 27, 2026, 3:00 pm
The Hybrid meeting was held in 2000 University Hall, Ruthven and Zoom
Attendance included approximately 100 in-person and 190 online members

Minutes: April 27, 2026
Circulated: October 30, 2026
Approved: November 9, 2026

Scheduled Speakers:
- Gretchen Keppel-Aleks, Associate Professor of Climate and Space Sciences and Engineering, College of Engineering
- Swapnil Rai, Associate Professor of Film, Television and Media, Communication and Media (Courtesy), Women's and Gender Studies (Courtesy), College of Literature, Science, and Arts
- Salome Viljoen, Assistant Professor of Law, School of Law
- Carina Ray, A.M. and H.P. Bentley Chair in African History, Associate Professor, Department of History, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts
- Neil Marsh, Professor of Chemistry, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and Professor of Biological Chemistry, Medical School
- Dani Jones, Associate Research Scientist, Cooperative Institute for Great Lakes Research, School for Environment and Sustainability
- Sandy Levitsky, Arthur F. Thurnau Professor and Associate Professor of Sociology, and Professor of Law (by courtesy), College of Literature, Science, and the Arts
- Apryl Williams, Associate Professor of Communication and Media and Associate Professor of Digital Studies Institute, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts
- Silke-Maria Weineck, Grace Lee Boggs Professor of Comparative Literature and German Studies, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts
- Rebekah Modrak, Professor, Stamps School of Art & Design
- Jonathan Brennan, Associate Professor of Linguistics, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

Press:
Genevieve Monsma – *University Record*
Dominic Apap – *Daily*
Harper King – *Daily*

The remarks provided below are summaries of comments made by the speakers and are not comprehensive nor a transcription.

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Minutes:

3:03 Chair Opening Remarks

On April 27, 2026, the University Senate met, with a quorum of members present. Chair Peterson provided opening remarks. Appreciation was shared for the work of the Senate Assembly and SACUA over the past year, and the 2026-2027 incoming Faculty Senate Chair, Kentaro Toyama, and Vice Chair, Kirsten Herold, were recognized. Sadness was expressed regarding Kent Syverud stepping down from U-M President-elect due to health reasons. The University Senate will consider seven resolutions and, directly after the meeting, voting will commence for 72 hours open to all University Senate members. Faculty Senate meetings are open to the public and speaking privileges are limited to University Senate members. To speak, University Senate members should raise their hand either via zoom or in-person. Remarks should be kept brief and, as indicated on the agenda, the movant for each resolution is given three minutes to speak, followed by up to two minutes of remarks from any additional scheduled speakers. Then the floor will be open for discussion.

3:11 Approval of the Minutes

- The minutes from the November 3, 2025 University Senate meeting were approved by unanimous consent.

3:12 Approval of the Agenda

- The meeting agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

3:12 Motion 1: Resolution Calling for Support for Faculty and Staff Childcare Needs

- Gretchen Keppel-Aleks moved that motion 1 be adopted. There were multiple in-person seconds of the motion.
- Gretchen Keppel-Aleks then spoke in favor of the motion. It is very difficult to pursue faculty creative work while juggling childcare, and this issue is not just about parental responsibility, but also societal. The resolution asks for flexible, reliable, safe, and affordable childcare, with U-M's childcare costing double the cost of comparable childcare at MSU. In addition, there are challenges with support during weather events and U-M's spring break is not aligned with the local schools' calendars.
- Swapnil Rai also spoke in favor of the resolution. There needs to be better access to a broader bouquet of services such as those offered by care.com and that such care options are available regardless of family income. In addition, the resolution asks for child-friendly co-spaces to address that departments are not equally welcoming of children.
- The floor was then open for discussion. A Pharmacy faculty shared support for the resolution and noted that the U-M childcare hours, if one is lucky enough to get a spot, are not adequate for faculty members' schedules.

3:19 Motion 2: A Call for GenAI-Free Zones

- Salome Viljoen moved that motion 2 be adopted. There were multiple in-person seconds of the motion.
- Salome Viljoen then spoke in favor of the motion. As a legal scholar who specializes in tech regulations, tools can constrain harm and expand benefits, and the resolution recommends meaningful control over tools and resources for instructors to decide if, when, and how AI fits within their courses. Consider the following example: if e-bikes are given out for free, there would need to be some infrastructure within cycling spin classes to encourage students to use their own muscles. Such tools for AI already exist, and there is a delicate instructional balance between creating new experts in a technology and also retaining spaces which encourage pedagogical grit.
- Carina Ray also spoke in favor of the resolution. AI has resulted in changes to instructional methods, such as the use of more group work and shorter assignments, all of which have a positive pedagogical outcome. However, the use of bluebooks introduces pedagogical challenges, such that students don't have the elasticity that comes with a Google doc and that student handwriting may be illegible. U-M needs AI-free zones so students can access the writing technologies that students are used to without the temptation of using AI.
- The floor was then open for discussion. An LSA faculty shared enthusiasm for the resolution, noting that her course on Detroit sports has 150 spots with 40 on the wait list. Only three students dropped the course when it was announced that no laptops or AI would be allowed, with any violators of such policies failing the course. Another LSA faculty noted that bluebooks are not accessible options and alternative modes of test taking methods should be supported by U-M.

3:29 Motion 3: Resolution on the use of Early Decision Admissions

- Neil Marsh moved that motion 3 be adopted. An in-person second of the motion was provided.
- Neil Marsh then spoke in favor of the motion. If U-M offers early admission, the admitted student will feel obliged to accept. Early decision is common for private schools and is now spreading to public institutions. Universities like early decision because it helps lock in admission numbers and the university can make fewer offers. However, early decision students tend to come from wealthier families who can pay full tuition. Students needing financial aid don't yet know their level of financial aid support and can't take advantage of early decisions. For these reasons, early decision is not in line with U-M's mission.
- The floor was then open for discussion. A Michigan Medicine faculty commented that, at seventeen years old, students do not yet know the path they want to pursue.
- An Arts faculty remarked that neither faculty nor admissions had been consulted about the change.

3:35 Motion 4: Resolution in Support of Intersex, Transgender, and Gender-Diverse Students: Inclusive Athletics and Alignment with University Values

- Dani Jones moved that motion 4 be adopted. An in-person second of the motion was provided.
- Dani Jones then spoke in favor of the motion. This motion is about what kind of university we want to be. Intramural sports should not make restrictions based upon biological sex. Such restrictions are not in alignment with scholarly research and likely do not align with Michigan law. Scholarship in the Journal of the American Medical Association have shown that access to sports is associated with positive mental health. The resolution asks for: 1) transparency, 2) a reversal of the removal of intersex, transgender, and gender diverse students from U-M athletics, and 3) policy changes such that all students can participate in accordance with their gender identity. Gender-based exclusion from athletics is a pattern, and nationally over 1,000 bills were introduced in 2025, with more expected in 2026. Parents are watching closely, and U-M should be clear about its values and welcome all genders to participate fully.
- Sandy Levitsky also spoke in favor of the resolution. U-M had previously set the standard for other universities for gender inclusivity. Discriminatory policies have adverse effects. We know unequivocally that transgender and intersex students are more likely to drop out of school and we need to stand by our values during times of threat.
- The floor was then open for discussion. An LSA faculty spoke in favor of the resolution noting that the current policy harms gender diverse students during a time when such students already receive a disproportionate amount of discrimination and such a policy is not in line with U-M institutional neutrality. A Michigan Medicine faculty expressed support for the motion, noting: 1) the policy is not about a level playing field, but about excluding students from the gym, and 2) if a policy implies that sex is knowable, it puts all genders at risk to evaluation and abuse, and 3) it is not acceptable to exclude based upon genetics. A Dentistry faculty shared that she is a mother of a transgender child, and U-M does not welcome trans students, excluding them from health care and intramural sports. A social work faculty commented that the issue is about more than sports. It is about trans misogyny, taking away body autonomy, the risk of transwomen not being able to live in women's dorms, and with the result of making students more scared. A Medical School faculty raised questions about how the resolution might impact varsity sports and NCAA rules.

3:54 Motion 5: Resolution to Offer Tuition Support to Faculty

- Swapnil Rai moved that motion 5 be adopted. An in-person second of the motion was provided.
- Swapnil Rai then spoke in favor of the motion. A faculty colleague wanted to take a course at the School of Social Work, but for it to be reflected on their CV, the colleague would need to formally enroll in the course without any tuition support. U-M does have a tuition support program for staff. Faculty may want to take a language or other course at U-M to support their research.
- Apryl Williams also spoke in favor of the resolution. When the work of faculty – teaching, research, administration, or grant writing – requires a new skill, the university

should support faculty financially for the training, whether it is a language or business course.

- The floor was then open for discussion. An LSA faculty spoke in support of the resolution, noting that she had tried to seek out training to support new areas of research. Mellon has a program focused on those who have recently received their Ph.D., and it would be beneficial for scholars to make use of in-house education opportunities. An Engineering faculty commented that, in addition to research, seeking new skills, such as in mathematics, had the benefit of improving conversations with students and provided insights relevant to their teaching.

4:02 Motion 6: Resolution to Reject Collaboration with the Senior Service College Fellowship Program

- Silke-Maria Weineck moved that motion 6 be adopted. An in-person second of the motion was provided.
- Silke-Maria Weineck then spoke in favor of the motion. U-M has long collaborated with the Department of Defense through U-M's thriving ROTC program, and all students are to be cherished, including those serving in the military. The issue before the Faculty Senate is something separate – the Department of Defense has eliminated a graduate-level education program in collaboration with top-ranked universities and has replaced it with a list of new partners that puts U-M in alignment with the policies of Secretary of State Hegseth.
- Rebekah Modrak also spoke in favor of the resolution. The current federal administration has attempted to rewrite history, removing slavery, racial injustice, and social justice. The Department of Justice (being called the "Department of War" by Secretary of Defense Hegseth) is carrying out this erasure, notably impacting women and blacks. Hegseth has stopped the promotion of women soldiers and has attempted to weed out intellectuals. By participating in the SSCF, there is an implicit agreement for UM to support a "warrior ethos" with any opposing viewpoints being censored. U-M already has a censorship problem with the elimination of DEI. Motion 6 defends pedagogical excellence at U-M.
- A friendly amendment was proposed to replace the phrase "Department of War" with "Department of Defense." The changes were adopted by unanimous consent.
- The floor was then open for discussion. A Michigan Law faculty reflected on the language in the resolution, commenting that the University needs to certify new programs and there are criteria that such programs must satisfy.

4:21 Motion 7: Motion to Update Research Track Faculty Senate Membership Language

- Jonathan Brennan moved that motion 7 be adopted. An in-person second of the motion was provided.
- Jonathan Brennan then spoke in favor of the motion. In 2023, the University Senate was expanded to include clinical professors, lecturers, archivists, and curators. Research-track faculty were already members of the Faculty Senate, but not at the 50% appointment threshold of the newly added groups. The Rules, Practices and Policies Committee (RPP) is recommending this inconsistency be addressed to include Research-track faculty at the

50% appointment level. The University Senate is encouraged to support the resolution and welcome these added colleagues to the University Senate.

4:24 Matters Arising

- Silke-Maria Weineck expressed appreciation to Derek Peterson for his service as Faculty Senate Chair over the past year.
- Chair Peterson encouraged all Faculty Senate members to please vote. When more faculty vote, it allows Faculty Senate leadership to be effective in advocating for the resolutions.

4:52 Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Rogério M. Pinto
Faculty Senate Secretary

ADDENDUM

University Senate Actions

Following the meeting of the University Senate held on April 27, 2026, the University Senate approved by electronic vote the following motions:

- Motion 1: Resolution Calling for Support for Faculty and Staff Childcare Needs
  - *Results: Yes, 1863 (87.9%); No, 256 (12.1%); Abstain, 217 – Motion PASSED*
- Motion 2: A Call for GenAI-Free Zones
  - *Results: Yes, 1711 (82.8%); No, 356 (17.2%); Abstain, 269 – Motion PASSED*
- Motion 3: Resolution on the use of Early Decision Admissions
  - *Results: Yes, 1364 (76.3%); No, 424 (23.7%), Abstain, 548 – Motion PASSED*
- Motion 4: Resolution in Support of Intersex, Transgender, and Gender-Diverse Students: Inclusive Athletics and Alignment with University Values
  - *Results: Yes, 1299 (69.4%); No, 572 (30.6%); Abstain, 465 – Motion PASSED*
- Motion 5: Resolution to Offer Tuition Support to Faculty
  - *Results: Yes, 1961 (90.3%); No, 211 (9.7%); Abstain, 164 – Motion PASSED*
- Motion 6: Resolution to Reject Collaboration with the Senior Service College Fellowship Program
  - *Results: Yes, 1440 (77.7%); No, 413 (22.3%); Abstain, 483 – Motion PASSED*
- Motion 7: Motion to Update Research Track Faculty Senate Membership Language
  - *Results: Yes, 1713 (92.1%); No, 147 (7.9%); Abstain, 476 – Motion PASSED*

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."