

Minutes 2 October 2017  
Circulated 2 October 2017  
Approved 9 October 2017

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA)  
Monday, October 2, 2017 3:15 pm  
Fleming Building, Regents' Room

Present: Atzmon, Beatty, Carlos, Ortega (chair), Malek, Marsh, Schultz, Szymanski, Wright, Potter, Schneider, and Snyder

Absent:

Guests: Vice President Churchill, Members of the Press

3:17 Call to Order/Approval of Minutes

The Agenda was approved; the minutes for September 11 and 25 were approved.

3:20: Announcements

- October 3: Davis, Markert, Nickerson (DMN) Academic Freedom Lecture. The Lecture will be held at 4:00pm in the Law School, the lunch in conjunction with the lecture will be in the Michigan Room at the Michigan League.
- October 9: SACUA Meeting.
- President Schlissel will be the guest from 3:30-4:00; Geoffrey Frumkin from Academic Human Relations will also be invited to join the meeting after 4:00.
- October 16: Fall Study Break
- October 23: Senate Assembly Meeting. The Provost will be the guest

Professor Beatty raised the question of the format of Senate Assembly meetings. She and Professor Marsh said that the format in Assembly Hall made it difficult for people to participate. Ms. Snyder said that the Great Lakes Room, which has been used for Senate Assembly meetings in the past, will not be available and that venues were in short supply. Professor Szymanski observed that meetings in the Great Lakes Room did not promote active discussion. Professor Potter recalled that Senate Assembly used to meet in Rackham but decided to move to Forum Hall for cost reasons. Chair Ortega said that this would be the time to discuss budgetary issues with the new Provost. Professor Beatty said that SACUA should showcase the fact that the Senate Assembly is an interactive group by moving to a space that allows for active discussion (e.g. rooms in Rackham). Chair Ortega will explore the possibility of changing the room for the November meeting.

3:30 Tri Campus Update

Professors Schultz and Beatty agreed that the chair from the Tri Campus Task Force should not come from SACUA. President Schlissel met with the Faculty Council at Flint today. Professor Beatty will meet with the members of the Task Force from Dearborn.

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3:40: Matters Arising

Chair Ortega proposed the use of a UMID Scanner for Senate Assembly sign-in (the scanner will cost \$95.00). It was agreed that SACUA will pay for the scanner.

Chair Ortega raised the issue of finding a licensed Parliamentarian for Senate Assembly meetings. As there is currently no licensed Parliamentarian on the University campus, he would like to suggest to the Provost that the Provost's office support the certification and employment of a trained Parliamentarian (for training requirements see <http://www.parliamentarians.org>). Professor Wright stressed that a Parliamentarian's role is to help manage meetings.

Professor Potter introduced a letter from Professor Richard Janko (see appendix) about the failure of campus bookstores to provide adequate supplies of books this term, noting as well that adequate supplies were not available from Internet vendors. Chair Ortega said that students are told by Amazon that a book has been delivered, but not getting the books. Professor Potter observed that campus bookstores, serving the Humanities, tended to sell used books at lower prices than were available through Internet sellers (also noting that prices increase when Amazon's algorithms pick up a high sales volume and short supply for an individual title). He stressed obvious differences between the market for specialized books in scientific areas and for those in the Humanities.

Professor Potter said that the bookstore situation is symptomatic of the lack of information about best practices in the book industry on the Michigan campus (a situation compounded by the failure of the library, which controls the University of Michigan Press, to achieve an understanding of the publishing industry). He recommended that SACUA advocate for professional oversight of current bookselling and publishing practices, and make contact with the Library Council, which has SACUA appointees, but has not reported in SACUA in many years (<http://www.regents.umich.edu/bylaws/bylaws12.html#2>).

Chair Ortega observed that faculty are moving forward in their courses, while students are still trying to get the readings, and that library reserves, with, for instance, one copy of a book for twenty students, were not a solution.

Professor Wright noted that, as a private company, Ulrich's can decide how it sells books. Professor Schultz added that the University did not create entities that compete with private vendors. Professor Szymanski suggested inviting a representative from the Library to meet with SACUA about book supply issues.

Faculty Undergraduate Scholarship Selection Committee

Chair Ortega said he had reviewed the applications with Professors Wright and Atzmon. The committee recommended splitting the award between the two top candidates. There was no objection to awarding \$1500 to each candidate. Professor Wright suggested expanding the award corpus through a fundraising campaign. Professor Carlos noted that additional monies really should supplement rather than substitute for existing financial aid.

3:55 Executive Session: Communications from LSA Student Government on publicizing Grades and on renaming the C.C. Little Building

4:00 Executive Session: Meeting with Secretary of the University and Vice President Sally Churchill

Framework for her advisory committee

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Communication with the Regents  
Definition of Faculty

5:15 Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,  
David S. Potter  
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."

Appendix: Letter from Professor Janko

28 Sept. 2017

*The crisis in the provision of books for humanities teaching  
at the University of Michigan*

In 2008, in an effort to circumvent the overpricing of science textbooks, the then Provost implemented a decision that strongly encouraged students to buy their books on line. This decision was to have faculty enter their books for future courses into Wolverine Access, to which 'participating bookstores' would have access. This is still the current system.

On June 30, 2009, the Shaman Drum bookstore on S. State St., which had thrived by selling books in the humanities to our students, closed:

<http://annarborchronicle.com/2009/06/09/shaman-drum-bookshop-to-close-june-30/>

That the change in University policy was the reason for the closure was explicitly stated by its then owner, Karl Pohrt, in the Ann Arbor Chronicle on Feb. 17, 2009:

<http://annarborchronicle.com/2009/02/17/column-open-letter-from-a-distressed-bookseller/index.html>

Mr. Pohrt also stated that, in his view, the conventional book is still the best vehicle by which students learn. Many humanities faculty have learned to agree with Mr. Pohrt's judgement, and feel acutely the loss a bookstore that takes seriously the provision of books for our students.

The Shaman Drum had handled orders from faculty for books for classes of all sorts of sizes and of every kind. They had the expertise to order books published in Europe and other continents by presses that had no office in North America. Faculty worked closely with them to ensure that books arrived on

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time for the start of classes. Enough books were ordered relative to enrolments. Even unusual texts in the many languages that the University of Michigan has long prided itself on teaching could be made available to our students.

Fast forward to the present. The only two 'participating bookstores' are (a) a branch of **Barnes and Noble**, which has an arrangement by which it occupies spaces in the basement of the Union and Pierpoint Commons; (b) **Ulrichs'**, which had until 2017 occupied a space on S. University.

These two operations purported to take over the function of the Shaman Drum. However, both have utterly failed to deliver, in rather different ways.

(a) **Barnes and Noble** has allocated to the provision of books only a very small part of its space. They usually order only one copy of the book for a class of twenty or so. Even though they claim to be a bookstore, most of their space is given over to other goods. They hardly try to cater to the faculty's wishes, even if one speaks personally to the manager. This Fall they did not order a book for a class of 215 students, putting up a notice 'book out of print: Professor has been informed', when the book was not out of print and the professor was never informed. Even when they were told about the problems at Ulrichs (see below), and were told that those problems offered them a real business opportunity, they did not change their ordering habits, because 'in the past they had only sold one copy of the textbook for classes of under twenty', so they REFUSED to order extra copies.

(b) Between 2009 and 2017 Ulrichs' did its best to accommodate faculty wishes. Although lacking the expertise of a professional bookseller like Mr. Pohrt, it tried to obtain books from publishers in other continents. One had to go to the store ahead of the start of classes and eyeball what was there for oneself, to check on the progress of the orders, but books generally arrived in time for the start of classes.

This Fall, however, there was from the point of view of humanities faculty a complete and wholly unacceptable failure to support the University's basic instructional needs. The week before classes started I went to Ulrichs to check on the books for my classes. I found their store closed up, with no sign telling me where to go. Three undergraduates whom I did not know showed up at the same time, anxious to buy their books. By researching on their cellphones they found out where Ulrichs had gone. We went to the new location, which had two signs up, one saying that Ulrichs would be moving in, the other that the area was HARD HATS ONLY. Inside there were no books, only builders and fitters. The students were perplexed, and I became deeply alarmed about the supply of books for my classes.

Later that day my wife learned where Ulrichs actually was. They had a temporary facility on Church Street, which had books inside. Nobody could see these books, but one could order them from the street and the books would be brought out. Ulrichs explained that, because of delay in the works to S. University, their new facility was not yet ready. However, they also explained that faculty need not ask about books for classes of under twenty students, because without telling the faculty they had not ordered any such books, WITHOUT TELLING THE FACULTY THEY HAD NOT ORDERED ANY SUCH BOOKS, after promising the faculty that they would order them. Faculty learned about this by word of mouth just days before classes began; nothing was ever posted on Ulrichs' website.

The effects of this varied for different classes, but were invariably bad. In a class for majors and graduate students, I had written to those enrolled in June telling them what the required book was, and since the students were all committed to the course they all obtained the text ahead of the first day of classes. However, in an upper-division class that enrolls non-majors, and in which students shop around and try classes out, nobody had ordered the books or had them. The effect on such a class is very bad, since not only is there nowhere on campus for students to buy books without the lengthy delays or failures that Amazon causes, but there is nowhere for them to resell books if they decide to switch classes. Rather than risk investing in books, they will take classes that do not use books.

Other colleagues have different horror-stories. One has given up relying on these stores or the internet and brings multiple copies of books back from Greece in a suitcase, selling them on to the students at cost. Another's students found that, as Amazon had only one copy of it, a book that sold for \$30 was priced at \$500. Probably illegally, she posted a scan of the entire book on Canvas. Another, teaching a class of 215 students, found out on the first day of classes that Ulrichs had failed to order the main textbook for the class, and had to spend her time scanning it; it does not of course work properly in

a scanned format, as it has a Table of Contents, Maps, Timelines, Indexes etc., which simply do not work when a student has to scroll through them. Another colleague, three weeks into teaching a class on the novel, even now finds that the students still have no books. Amazon says the books are coming, but then tells the students that they must be shipped from Europe and will take weeks to arrive, when most of the course is over.

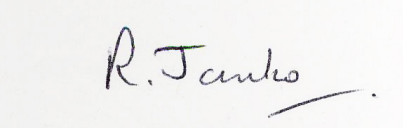
Something must be done, as this year's fiasco added enormous pressure at a time, the beginning of the academic year, which is always very stressful for faculty.

(a) If Barnes and Noble will not provide the service that is needed, their concession of space should be reviewed, as should their status as a 'participating bookstore'.

(b) Ulrichs' action in annulling the faculty's book-orders for classes with fewer than twenty students must be investigated. If it is found that they acted inappropriately, the University should review their status as a 'participating bookstore'.

The University cannot and must not continue to leave it to random outside players to provide a proper facility near central campus where students can reliably obtain books for classes. It must take a proactive approach to ensure that faculty can continue to teach students in the ways they judge most academically appropriate and effective. Many of us ban laptops from our classes, knowing how easily students are distracted. The University must institute a proper system for the provision of books that are required for classes. Internet suppliers are not reliable, as many students and faculty have found this semester. As a matter of urgency, a faculty working group should be appointed to find solutions.

Respectfully submitted by



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