

Minutes of 28 October 2013 SACUA
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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA)
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Present: Holland, Koopmann, Larsen, Masten, Mondro, Oey, Olsen, Staller (chair), Ziff; Lehman; Schneider, Snyder

Absent: none

Guests: M.S. Coleman (president), L. Barry (office of the president), J. Holloway (office of the provost), J. Hilton (library and office of provost), *Daily* reporter, *Record* reporter.

MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED

1. Draft agenda.
2. Draft minutes of 7 October 2013 SACUA.
3. Resolution to increase deadline for committee draft due December 2013, dated 28 October 2013.
4. Discussion: Committee on Retirement Savings Plan and Retiree Health Benefits, Senate Assembly 21 October 2013.
5. Public letter from many diversity groups to the Regents & presidential search advisory committee to be offered for publication to The Record and the Michigan Daily, dated 25 October 2013.
6. SPG 201.65-1: Conflicts of interest and conflicts of commitment.

Chair Staller convened the meeting at 3:15. The proposed agenda was approved.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Consideration of the draft minutes of 30 September 2013 was again postponed. The draft minutes of 7 October 2013 were approved.

Announcements-

1. Thanks to Professor Holland for introducing the AFL speaker.
2. J Frumkin and A. Wellsby will attend the next meeting for a discussion of the office of institutional equity.
3. Robin Snyder and Nick Swider have joined the Senate Office.

4. Professor Holland attended the Committee for Institutional Cooperation (CIC) faculty governance meeting at Bloomington, Indiana. Discussion topics included university finances, and minority representation within student and faculty populations.
5. The provost will meet with SACUA on 25 November.

IT RATIONALIZATION

Professor Oey reported on the visit of Chief Information Officer (CIO) Laura Patterson and 3 associates to the Astronomy Department, pursuant to the discussion in the Sept 30 SACUA meeting with the Provost. The purpose of IT rationalization is to consolidate the currently decentralized support for commercial software support across campus. In anticipation of the program, LSA has already begun consolidation. Resulting effects in LSA have been contrary to stated intentions of the CIO, which were meant to free IT support personnel for research support to the faculty. Two reasons for this have emerged: first, LSA appears to be capitalizing on the initiative to reduce total IT support, including research support. Second, there seems to be a misunderstanding that research support corresponds only to high-end computing rather than specialized software running on desktop computers that is discipline-specific. Therefore, regular desk-top IT support for faculty has not been planned for. Professor Larsen commented that this point was made at an RPC meeting one year ago. The computing representatives said they would follow up, but nothing ever happened. In the Astronomy Department meeting, it was clear that responsibility for faculty research support has fallen through the cracks between the CIO's Office and the College. This still needs to be addressed.

Professor Oey suggested that the same dynamic is likely to occur with Shared Services, for which the roll-out is imminent. The CIO and associates want to engage with additional units; so far they have met only with Astronomy and AOSS. She suggested to the CIO that IT rationalization merits attention from the Senate Assembly, and the CIO expressed interest in meeting with the group.

VISIT OF PRESIDENT

The president and L. Barry arrived at 3:30 P.M.

Sequestration-

The president attended a recent AAU presidents' meeting at which the ongoing federal sequester was a feature topic. She said that the government shutdown overshadowed it, but the presidents believe sequestration is the bigger threat. Fellowships and grants were affected by the 5% cut already enacted. Another 10% cut is slated for early 2014, and serial repetition of the cuts could affect an entire generation of scientists because about 50% of grant support goes to students. She said it is already affecting the age when NIH researchers attain independent research capability in the form of R01 grants. She said urgent action is needed in the next 6 to 8 weeks. She encouraged faculty to contact Congress through their professional associations with messages to lift the sequester or to permit flexibility within the sequester. She noted that whereas other nations are increasing research support, the U.S. is declining.

Immigration reform-

There is an increased appetite for discussion about immigration reform, particularly within the business community.

Academic Freedom issues

Concerns have been expressed about treatment of an untenured professor at Peking University. President Coleman stated that academic freedom is a core principle, but that there is also a cultural context. She said that she thinks there has been movement within China on the subject from 20 years ago, but more is needed. She then introduced James Holloway from the provost's office who said that Chinese university leaders say they value the concept and are working to strengthen it, but that they operate in the context of a one party state. Their vision of academic freedom is different from ours, but they aspire to it. The president then related an anecdote about a Regents Meeting at which public comments included critical remarks about Chinese academics while Chinese university officials were in attendance, saying that the Chinese accepted the comments in good form. Professor Holloway said that the UM administration has not experienced any push back on freedom of inquiry by their Chinese partners. He said that engagement with the partners is based on dialog.

Safety of minors on campus-

The administration regularly audits sports camps and has changed policy to use a national database rather than a state database for background checks. A task force is presently working on policies for minors on campus that will likely involve additions to the Standard Practice Guide.

Digital billboard on Stadium Blvd-

Although some may claim the large display near the Stadium is a driving distraction, the president declared that the driver is responsible for not being distracted. Asked for her own opinion of the billboard, the president replied that her opinion is irrelevant. She said she likes letting people know about athletics. Members cited news reports stating that a City ordinance prohibits billboards of that kind, but that the UM asserts constitutional autonomy and is not subject to municipal authority. The president said she did not know about such an ordinance and that her administration works with City all the time but sometimes they don't agree. Professor Koopmann pointed out that numerous alumni have told him that they do not appreciate the display. The president ascribed that to differences of opinion.

The guests left the meeting at 4:02 P.M.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The meeting entered executive session at 4:03 P.M. to discuss comparison data about benefits and to develop nominations for a conflict of interest/commitment committee. The meeting resumed open session at 4:30 P.M.

Professor Koopmann moved a revised version of distributed item 3 (Larsen seconded):

Whereas, given the deadline of December 2013 imposed on the Committee on Retirement Savings Plan and Retiree Health Benefits for their draft recommendations;

Whereas, given the high response of 8,500 over a relatively short open period to respond to the Human Resources survey on the committee's work;

Whereas, given the lively debate at the Senate Assembly and SACUA meetings on this subject;

Whereas, analyzing the complex tradeoffs of the different options for achieving the required savings is complex and time-consuming but essential;

Whereas, preliminary evaluation suggests strongly that the accuracy of the comparison information upon which decision-making will be based warrants further scrutiny and review;

Whereas, the work of the committee would be enhanced by increased dialogue and communication with the University community; and

Whereas, in the spirit of the September 23, 2013 Senate Assembly unanimously approved action below:

Attracting and retaining the best faculty and staff, essential to maintaining the University of Michigan's reputation and status as a top public university, requires that the University remain competitive in salary and benefits. In its review and modification of faculty and staff benefits, the University has, in recent years, tended to examine components of total benefits in isolation and often under conditions of secrecy. In the interests of comprehensiveness and greater transparency, Senate Assembly urges that the University and the relevant HR committees consider benefit packages in their entirety and involve faculty in a more open and meaningful process.

Therefore, be it resolved, that SACUA opposes the artificial deadline of December 2013 and requests an extension of time for the committee to submit its draft recommendations and thoroughly consider all available options that take advantage of favorable tax treatments, etc.

Professor Masten moved that consideration of the motion be postponed to the following Monday (Mondro seconded).

Professor Masten said that he and Chair Staller were scheduled to meet with the provost on Friday, at which the benefits review would be discussed, and that the Provost's Advisory Committee on Budgetary Affairs (PACBA) would discuss the matter the following Monday morning. He said those meetings could help further inform the active motion.

SACUA members approved the motion to postpone to a time definite by unanimous vote.

DIVERSITY LETTER

Chair Staller called attention to distributed item 5. Professor Mondro described efforts to achieve agreement for the specific existing language from multiple committees that were not involved in drafting the document.

Professor Oey moved that SACUA take no action on the document (Masten seconded).

The motion was approved by vote with no dissent and one abstention of record.

COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS

SRAC-

Professor Olsen provided a written report stating that the Student Relations Advisory Committee (SRAC) met on Friday, October 11, 2013, chaired by Prof. David Potter. The main item of business was a discussion of the new process for football ticketing and student seating at home football games. Representatives from the Athletic Program (Hunter Lochmann, Senior Associate Athletic Director & Chief Marketing Officer), Central Student Government (Michael Proppe, President; Bobby Dishell, Vice-President; Jeremy Keeney, Student General Counsel) and LSA Student Government (Sagar Lathia, President; Correy Walsh, Counsel) were guests. Mr. Lochmann first assured us that the offensive music that had been played at recent football games would “never be played” at our athletic events again. He then explained the history and rationale for the current process of student seating and ticket sales for home football games. The students had also prepared a presentation in which they explained their concerns and issues with this process. They had recently conducted an online survey about this, to which about 8000 students had responded. Preliminary results from the survey were presented. Extensive discussion of the issues followed. The discussion was very collegial and productive, though no conclusions were reached. This is clearly an ongoing process with no quick or easy solution. The committee and all guests present agreed that it is important to support continued engagement between the athletic program and students/faculty. The next meeting of SRAC will be on Friday, November 15, 2013.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

John T. Lehman
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."

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