

Minutes 14 May 2018
Circulated 16 May 2018
Recirculated 21 Aug 2018
Approve 27 Aug 2018

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA)
Monday, May 7, 2018 3:15 pm
Fleming Administration Bldg, Regents' Room

Present: Atzmon, Beatty, Conway, Lippert, Marsh (chair), Malek, Schultz, Spencer, Potter (via BlueJeans), Snyder

Absent: Carlos

Guests: President Schlissel; Erika Hrabec; members of the press

3:17: Call to Order/Approval of Agenda

Chair Marsh called the meeting to order. The agenda was approved as were the minutes for the May 7 meeting.

Chair Marsh had no announcements

Professors Beatty and Schultz discussed the activities of the Tri-Campus Task Force

3:29: President Schlissel joined the meeting and Chair Marsh introduced the new members of SACUA, pointing out that this was the first SACUA on which the female members were in the majority and the first SACUA on which there were elected representatives from both UM-Dearborn and UM-Flint.

Chair Marsh asked President Schlissel about the possibility that the University would change its academic calendar.

President Schlissel said the present, extremely preliminary discussion was driven by the need to look at the University's longer-term future given that there is increasingly heavy demand for a Michigan education both within the state and nationally especially as the Ann Arbor campus is at capacity for the Fall and Winter terms, but less populated in the Spring and Summer terms. The Provost has therefore appointed a working group chaired by Professor LaVaquer-Manty to explore ways in which it might be possible to get better value out of the campus infrastructure, which is currently underutilized for four months of the year, for traditional and non-traditional educational purposes. One advantage of greater flexibility stemming from a 12-month calendar might be that students could take internships or find employment at different points in the year. He also noted that any expansion of the student body would require a proportional expansion of the faculty, and that there is no guarantee that a viable plan for a new calendar will emerge.

Professor Schultz observed that a 12-month academic calendar would change the ebb and flow of work on the part of faculty, noting that the addition of a term in the College of Engineering, which has a rigid curriculum, would require a large number of courses.

President Schlissel replied that the impact of a change in the calendar affect disciplines in different ways (it might be more convenient, for instance, for a faculty member to have the winter term off to do research in a foreign country), and the current calendar is already divided into three four-month blocks. The alternative system he is most familiar with is that at Dartmouth College where all second-year students are in residence for a "sophomore summer"

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(<https://home.dartmouth.edu/education/summer-dartmouth/sophomore-summer>). He said financial aid would have to be available to students whenever they were in session and that some students might find it fiscally advantageous to complete their education on an accelerated three-year schedule.

Professor Lippert asked if the University was better prepared to handle free-speech issues than it had been in the past.

President Schlissel said the University is vastly more experienced in dealing with these issues than it was in the past, and more broadly experienced in dealing with the issue of racism as it affected all the University's campuses. It continues to be difficult to establish a set of community values that allow people to discuss issues about which they disagree. He has been meeting with various student groups on the Ann Arbor campus, seeking to schedule such meetings in the absence of a specific crisis to build an environment in which wide ranging discussion is possible. He also recognizes that the tensions caused by incidents such as the proposed visit by Richard Spencer can have a profound psychological impact on students, which can have a negative impact on their ability to function to their full potential. He is hoping that faculty will continue to engage with students to build greater resilience. As president, he is routinely called upon to issue responses on behalf of the community and then can be told that "words are not enough." Under such circumstances it can be challenging to make universally satisfactory contribution.

President Schlissel is aware that the University is often accused of having a "liberal bias," when it comes to discussion of political ideas and noted that speakers who expressed opinions that diverge from community norms have been shouted down. He regards any effort to censor free speech as unhealthy and, while the case of Mr. Spencer was extreme, he feels members of the University community need to improve their skill in listening to alternative points of view.

President Schlissel addressed a question submitted by SACUA about special initiatives for the coming year, saying he is especially concerned, in light of incidents reported from institutions across the country, about the campus climate connected with sexual misconduct. He hopes that is a strong culture of accountability. Hitherto, the University has focused on student sexual misconduct, and is awaiting new guidelines on the topic from the Office of Civil Rights in the current administration. Going forward there will be a stronger focus on faculty and staff training. The University is presently exploring a Haven on-line training program (<https://www.haven-oakland.org/education-prevention/programs>). New faculty and staff receive training about misconduct; he is exploring the possibility that it should be mandatory for all faculty and staff. He is also concerned that the University has strong whistle-blower protections. There is currently a Request for Proposal for consultants to examine the University's processes and he is happy to take advice from faculty and staff.

President Schlissel concluded his remarks in open session by urging faculty members to share their expertise with the public, which has made a two-hundred year investment in the faculty's intellectual pursuits. He wants faculty to feel that their contributions to a broader public, whether through Op-Ed pieces or providing public testimony, will be valued and he is working with Deans to find appropriate ways to extend this recognition.

3:51: Executive Session
Legal and governance matters

4:09 President Schlissel left the meeting

4:00 Executive Session
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Faculty Awards

4:37 Executive Session

Davis, Markert, Nickerson Academic Freedom Lecture

4:47 Executive Session

Formation of a Faculty Hearing Committee

The Committee will consist of Professor Marsh, Professor Carlos and Dierdre Spencer

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."