

Vice Chair's Remarks to Regents March 28, 2019

Regents, President Schlissel, Provost Philbert, Executive Officers, Honored Guests, and members of the public:

It's an honor to give the annual update on the activities of the University of Michigan Faculty Senate and the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs, also known as SACUA. My name is Joy Beatty, and I am an associate professor of management in the College of Business on the Dearborn campus. I serve this year as the vice-chair of SACUA, which is the elected 9-member executive committee of Faculty Senate. The chair, Neil Marsh, is unable to deliver this presentation due to travel.

The Senate Assembly comprises 74 elected members, representing all three University of Michigan campuses. As a body, we represent the entire faculty senate: all the professorial staff, the executive officers and deans, Senior researchers and University Librarians... approximately 4500 members of the university.

Faculty senate is the voice of faculty.

Like you, I am standing here today because I was elected to do so (although I concede with fewer votes than you). I represent the Faculty because faculty governance is an exercise in democracy, a fact that is enshrined in the Regent's own Bylaws in Section 4, outlining the structure, powers and responsibilities of the University Senate.

We are committed stakeholders for the institution, sharing many of the same goals you have for the institution: conducting world class research, delivering high quality and relevant education, and making meaningful contributions to the community.

A brief report of the Senate's activities for the 2018-19 year is included in your preparation materials for today's meeting. I will highlight just a few of these items.

We had two objectives this year. The first was to increase faculty engagement in the governance process for Senate Assembly members, Senate Assembly Committees, and University Senate. We want to draw upon the full range of talent

available in our community, and to this end we have been broadening outreach to the faculty on all three campuses.

Another objective was to promote increased due process in matters of concern to faculty, such as grievance procedures and Office of Institutional Equity investigations. We participated in the external review of the Office of Institutional Equity processes, meeting with a representative of law firm Hogan Marren Babbo & Rose in August 2018. We discussed longstanding faculty concerns about the OIE processes related to lack of due process in informing respondents of the charges against them, the lack of opportunity for faculty appeals, and the long timeline of the process. Separately, we conducted a review of the grievance policies for 18 Ann Arbor units to assess their alignment with the model grievance policy posted on the Provost's website, and preparing suggestions for improvements to be shared with the Provost's office.

We passed two resolutions related to due process matters. One is the Tri-Campus Principles of Due Process, which outlines core principles of due process that should be applied in all circumstances involving the evaluation of a faculty member's conduct. These principles address fair investigations, sanctions, interpretation or modification of governance policy, and cases of dismissal or threat of dismissal. The second is the Resolution on Governance at all Levels, which specifies that faculty should be involved in institutional shared governance at every level of academic responsibility on all U of M campuses, regardless of the naming conventions used on each campus (e.g., units, disciplines, departments, etc.).

And now, I bring a request:

The faculty care about this University, and are able to bring vast experience to bear on issues that affect the community as a whole. Faculty who have voluntarily sought to serve outside of their departments, who have stood for election to the Senate Assembly and who serve, on their own time, on University committees are especially well placed to offer advice on issues of community concern.

To realize the full benefit to the community that stems from consultation with involved faculty, elected faculty representatives need to be included early in decision-making processes, so that there is time to offer constructive and thoughtful feedback. Our work with OIE is a case in point of this sort of positive interaction. If we are consulted after decisions have already been made, or too late in the process for substantive feedback, the administration risks becoming entangled in conversations which miss key points of community concern. Two recent examples

in which more meaningful input would have been helpful are the adoption of SPG 601.22 (Prohibitions regarding sexual, romantic, amorous, and/or dating relationships) and SPG 601.38 (Required disclosure of felony charges and/or felony convictions). In the first case SACUA was asked for input late in the process and made some suggestions which did help smooth passage of this document into the community, though there are some areas where more advanced communication could have led to a stronger document; in the second, we were not consulted at all. You'll be hearing some of the controversy in public remarks on the felony SPG later in this meeting from highly knowledgeable faculty members. I encourage you to consider how their concerns can be addressed, to correct some of the problems they note in the SPG.

Given recent events on campus, we understand the need for urgent action – we want to protect students and employees as much as you do. Both these policies are relevant for faculty concerns, and they are controversial. Being included in more significant ways, earlier in the process, can improve such policies and help avoid some unintended consequences. For example, an easy step to take in this kind of urgent matter is to reach out directly to SACUA to incorporate elected members of faculty governance when working groups are being formed.

In summary, process matters for both substantive and symbolic reasons, to cover your assets. We remind the regents and executive officers to maintain open communication with faculty governance, follow proper processes to allow input, agree to meet with us when we make requests, and consider us as both partners and stakeholders in the administration of our world-class university.

Thank you.