

Minutes 8 April 2019
Circulated 17 April 2019
Approved 29 April 2019

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA)
Monday, April 8, 2019 3:15 pm
4006 Fleming Administration Building
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1340

Present: Atzmon, Beatty, Conway, Malek, Marsh (chair), Schultz, Spencer, Potter, Ahbel-Rappe, Gallo, Schneider

Absent: Carlos, Lippert

Guests: Professors Michele Hannoosh and Robert Ortega, ombuds, Members of the Press

3:18: Call to Order/Approval of Agenda

The Agenda was approved. Chair Marsh announced that Professor Henry Reichman, Professor of History emeritus at Cal State East Bay, author of *The Future of Academic Freedom* (<https://jhupbooks.press.jhu.edu/title/future-academic-freedom>), will deliver the Davis, Markert Nickerson lecture in 2019.

3:20: Open Letter on Carbon Neutrality

Chair Marsh introduced the letter on Carbon Neutrality for consideration (see appendix). He feels it is a matter of general interest to the faculty and is appropriate for SACUA and Senate Assembly consideration. He asked SACUA to endorse the letter with a view towards presenting it for discussion to Senate Assembly.

Professor Atzmon said he would prefer to have a vote of general support for the letter, as that would not imply agreement with every point in the letter. He noted that we do not have the expertise to fact check the claims made in the letter. He also expressed concern about the arrest of students who occupied President Schlissel's office.

Professor Beatty introduced the following proposal:
SACUA supports the efforts of the faculty who wrote the letter on Climate Change Action and urges other faculty to support the letter as well.
The motion passed unanimously

3:30: Professors Hannoosh and Ortega

Chair Marsh introduced Professors Hannoosh and Ortega. He said that SACUA plays an important role in appointing the ombuds and that the ombuds are to report to SACUA each year.

Professor Ortega said that he and Professor Hannoosh were appreciative of SACUA's interest in their role. He said that they operate on four principles:

1. Everything they talk about is confidential;
2. They are independent;
3. They are informal;
4. They maintain a position of neutrality.

Professor Hannoosh added that she and Professor Ortega see themselves as faculty ombuds, who are resources for faculty and serve as a liaison between faculty with the administration. She noted the university has an army of lawyers while most faculty members have no idea where to go if they have a problem. One of the tasks of the ombuds is to help faculty find the people who can help them.

Professor Hannoosh said people find the ombuds, whose office is in Palmer Commons, through the website (<https://facultyombuds.umich.edu>). When contacted the ombuds, ask for phone numbers so they can maintain the confidentiality of communication. In the course of discussions, they seek to have a faculty member clarify the ideal solution to her/his issue(s) and to explain the role of the ombuds in facilitating the outcome. They think about whether the faculty member should be directed towards other offices (e.g. Faculty and Staff Counselling and Consultation Office FASCCO <https://hr.umich.edu/benefits-wellness/health-well-being/mental-health-counseling-consultation-services/faculty-staff-counseling-consultation-office-fascco>),¹ Human Resources or the Office for Institutional Equity). They often try to have the faculty define whether a specific policy has been violated within their unit (e.g. departmental practice in handling promotion cases). If the faculty member is unaware of departmental or school rules, the ombuds will try to discover these.

Based on their meeting with a faculty member, the ombuds try to come up with a plan, often one that involves setting up a meeting with a supervisor, usually asking the faculty member to arrange that meeting, and offering to accompany the faculty member. With the permission of the faculty member they will also engage in “shuttle diplomacy” between the faculty member and others. So long as the faculty member is happy with the arrangement, the ombuds will work together, discuss the visitor’s issues, and/or meet together with the visitor. One of the ombuds will often play the “devil’s advocate” to help get at an issue. This helps them to fill out a picture prior to going into future meetings.

Professor Ortega said that when they arrived in the summer of 2018, the facilities for the ombuds were nebulous. They spent their first months making the facilities functional, and they have developed the website and a pamphlet. They also liaised with unit ombuds, but find that their visitors are often unwilling to talk to unit ombuds whose appointments come about in different ways from school to school. In some schools they are elected, in others they are appointed by the dean. There is no requirement that faculty members visit unit ombuds before meeting with the campus ombuds.

Professor Malek noted that there are currently advertisements in the Medical School seeking multiple ombuds. He wondered if this selection process could have a negative impact on the trust faculty members might have in the impartiality of the Medical School ombuds. Professors Hannoosh and Ortega replied that they cannot dictate the way units appoint.

Professor Malek, who wondered about the proportionality of cases across units, asked if Professors Hannoosh and Ortega keep records of the identity and number of visitors. Professors Hannoosh and Ortega said they do not keep formal records. Professor Manera said she has only just learned about their office, and wondered whether the existence of the office could be included at new faculty orientation. Professors Hannoosh and Ortega said that had attended the new faculty orientation for the 2018/19 academic year this last year.

Professor Schultz asked how the ombuds were trained. Professor Ortega said he attended a 3-day workshop, and has 30 years social work practice. Professor Hannoosh added that the ombuds association (<https://www.ombudsassociation.org>) provided the training session for Professor Ortega. She had been ombuds for the College of Literature Science and the Arts, and, in that role, she had spoken with the University ombuds, Professor Giordani, who provided her

¹ Formerly FASAP: <https://www.record.umich.edu/articles/fasap-now-faculty-and-staff-counseling-and-consultation-office>.

with a day of training. She said the Provost's office, along with herself and Professor Ortega, provided a day of training session for unit ombuds. Professor Schultz said that he was concerned about the absence of an element of training with SACUA given the asymmetry between the administration and faculty members. Professor Hannoosh said faculty benefit from the fact that ombuds are not advocates, and that impartiality guarantees access to certain kinds of information, which is important for getting to a good result. The involvement of the faculty ombuds often makes a great deal of difference, as the presence of a person who is independent and impartial gives people the impression that someone is watching. She added that the appointment of a staff ombuds, Dr. Jacqueline Bowman, with whom they work closely, is a very important, (<https://record.umich.edu/articles/jacqueline-bowman-named-u-ms-first-ombudsperson-staff>).

Professor Beatty about training for ombuds at UM-Flint and UM-Dearborn. Professor Hannoosh said they have met with both, and that other universities considering the development of ombuds positions have been in touch with them. They have decided to have walk-in office hours where one of them will be in the office.

Professor Hannoosh said that a priority is to meet with the three ombuds for the Medical School, who, for various reasons, did not attend their training session, to ensure lines of communication are open. She also said that the fact no administrative person was assigned to them was becoming an issue, adding it would be helpful to have someone who can answer calls and keep their calendar.

Professor Hannoosh said that she and Professor Ortega are meant to write a summary report including information about the number of cases and areas of concern. Given that the role of the ombuds is to resolve problems before they reach crisis stage, an important aspect of their job is to think about university procedures and policies that are not working well and make recommendations for institutional change. Their report will not reveal anything confidential, but they feel they can make useful points.

Professor Beatty asked if the ombuds could identify a specific unit that is causing concern without violating confidentiality. Professor Hannoosh said that their work on this subject is a work in progress. If they see a lot of problems coming from a specific unit they will draw attention to the unit and seek ways to alleviate the difficulties. Professor Ortega said they have some idea of issues of general significance and of others that apply more specifically to particular units. They are planning to meet with the Provost in late May to review areas of concern.

4:00: Executive Session

[Continuing ombuds discussion]

4:40: Approval of April 15, 2019 Senate Assembly Agenda

- 3:15: Call to Order Approval of Agenda and Minutes
- 3:20: Guest Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs Runge
- 4:00: Open letter on Carbon Neutrality
- 4:15: Outgoing Chair's Closing remarks
- 4:25: Matters Arising
- 4:30: Photographs
- 4:45: Adjournment

The agenda was approved.

4:44: Executive Session

[5:09 Briefing]

5:05: Adjournment

Appendix Letter on Carbon Neutrality

Dear President Schlissel,

As a group that includes the most distinguished faculty at the University of Michigan, we are writing for several reasons. First, we thank you for establishing the [President's Commission on Carbon Neutrality](#) to plan the University's path towards carbon neutrality. As is clear from the [2018 IPCC special report](#), the goal of achieving carbon neutrality is critical for the resilience of society and we are happy to see this manifestation of U-M leadership.

Second, we urge you to reconsider the scope of the Commission by incorporating consideration of 1) the [planned expansion](#) of the Central Power Plant and 2) [divestment of holdings in fossil-fuel](#) securities from our U-M investment portfolio. While the expansion and upgrade of the Central Power Plant may result in a reduction of direct emissions (scopes 1 and 2), the current calculations from the University do not incorporate the latest science on fugitive methane leaks ([Alvarez et al. 2018](#), [Howarth 2014](#)), which may mean that the greenhouse gas savings are actually negligible. The expansion would thus commit the University to years of fossil fuel use without either saving money or reducing emissions. A genuinely sustainable movement toward carbon neutrality requires a commitment to renewable energy sources and not simply less harmful fossil fuels. Divesting of fossil fuel stocks from our endowment portfolio is necessary for a full accounting of carbon emissions. Offsetting the emissions impacts of these investments by diminishing our on-site emissions would be difficult, if not impossible to achieve. Divestment is also likely to be financially responsible in the long term, given the need to vastly reduce global fossil fuel use. Ethically, including fossil-fuel stocks in our endowment portfolio makes us complicit in supporting an industrial sector that is [driving our world into a climate crisis](#).

Third, we urge you to establish a timeline for carbon neutrality now as so many of our peer institutions have already done (e.g., see the [Climate Leadership Network](#)). It is clear that the technology exists or is being developed to achieve ambitious goals within the next 10 to 15 years; the gap is the political will. It has, frankly, been embarrassing that our distinguished institution has lagged so far behind our peers in this arena, especially given the immense intellectual resources of our faculty and students to contribute to solutions, both locally and globally. We think it is most appropriate for the University leadership to set the goals and then have the Commission formulate plans to implement them.

Finally, and most immediately, we urge you to engage directly with the University community in discussion of these and related issues. We understand that a town hall with you is being arranged; we hope you will take this opportunity to respond directly to students' questions without prescreening. We also ask that you reconsider the arrest of students on trespassing charges that occurred during the March 15th climate strike sit-in. As educators, we are proud that our students are seriously and thoughtfully addressing climate change as the "defining scientific, social, and environmental problem of our age" and hope that you will engage with them with the same level of seriousness and thoughtfulness.

Sincerely,

Deborah Goldberg
Margaret B. Davis Distinguished University Professor, Arthur Thurnau Professor
Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, LSA

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."