THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
REGENTS COMMUNICATION
ITEM FOR INFORMATION

Subject: Faculty Governance during the Past Two Years – Charles B. Smith, SACUA Chair

SACUA has asked me, at the end of a two-year term as its chair and as a new SACUA is about to convene, to comment on the considerable progress toward the management of concerns, the resolution of problems, and the achievement of shared goals that have been made by the Senate Assembly and SACUA, its executive arm, during the past two years. Despite considerable differences of interests and views as to how to approach the handling of issues among SACUA members, as a group they have demonstrated remarkable resolve and devotion to promoting the well-being of the faculty and to strengthening faculty governance. During the same time period the Senate Assembly has given thoughtful deliberation and usually strong endorsement to resolutions and motions brought to it by SACUA. Never once has the Senate Assembly failed to have in attendance a quorum of its membership at its monthly meetings.

Some of the actions taken by the Senate Assembly and/or its committees are the following:

- Unanimous endorsement of a plan for the revision of faculty grievance procedures which was developed by a SACUA taskforce that worked with the Provost.

- Completion of the third and fourth annual evaluations of University administrators (http://aec.umich.edu).

- Academic Affairs Advisory Committee (AAAC) proposed changes in registration brackets. These changes are now being implemented.

- Endorsement of a resolution that encourages all faculty to inform their students that support systems exist to accommodate students with disabilities.

- Reaffirmation of the faculty's commitment to the value of diversity and the recommendation that all members of the University work together to develop new approaches to maintain diversity as a critical component of student education, research and service at the University of Michigan.

- Provision of feed-back and advice requested by President Coleman and Provost Sullivan on the President's proposal to hire 100 new assistant professors involved in interdisciplinary research.

- Establishment of a faculty-sponsored and administered need-based scholarship program for undergraduate students on our three campuses.

- Sixteenth Annual Senate Lecture on Academic and Intellectual Freedom at which New York Times Executive Editor Bill Keller delivered an address entitled ***"Editors in Chains: Secrets, Security and the Press."***

- Seventeenth Annual Senate Lecture on Academic and Intellectual Freedom at which ACLU President Nadine Strossen delivered an address entitled "***Defending Freedom even for the Thoughts We Hate***."

- Endorsement of the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA) Proposal on Reforms in Intercollegiate Athletics.

- Endorsement of the "Addendum to Publication Agreements for CIC Authors" and the University Library's additional efforts on behalf of University authors' rights in the Library's negotiations with publishers.

There are still many critical issues that the Senate Assembly and SACUA need to resolve in concert with the University administration. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A final revision of faculty grievance procedures that is endorsed by the schools, colleges and other academic units of the University;

- Increased participation of elected faculty in the design and redesign of health, retirement and other important benefit programs;

- Improved evaluation by the Committee on the Economic Status of the Faculty of faculty salary and benefits.

- Development of an achievable plan to increase the representation of diverse groups, such as American Indians, Native Alaskans, African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans within the ranks of the faculty

Perhaps, the most important accomplishment these past two years has been the growth of a more open and trusting relationship among our faculty, administrators and regents. During the current academic year five regents met with SACUA and engaged in frank discussions of major issues of concern to the faculty. SACUA members were impressed by the interest of these regents in faculty governance and were unanimous in their praise of these sessions. SACUA sought to keep the Regents and the academic community informed by preparing this monthly Regents Update, which is also published in ***The University Record***. In addition, both the University President and the Provost, with unprecedented openness, saw that those involved in central faculty governance were informed with respect to major actions that were taken by the University administration. This relationship was codified this past month when Provost Sullivan signed a Senate Assembly endorsed document which had taken years to develop, ***Principles of Faculty Involvement in Institution and Academic Unit Governance at the University of Michigan, 2nd ed***. I know that SACUA looks forward to further progress in the development of this positive relationship in future years.

(Submitted April, 2008)

Regents' Bylaw 4.04. The Senate Assembly shall serve as the legislative arm of the senate…The assembly shall have power to consider and advise regarding all matters within the jurisdiction of the University Senate which affect the functioning of the University as an institution of higher learning, which concern its obligations to the state and to the community at large, and which relate to its internal organization insofar as such matters of internal organization involve general questions of educational policy.