THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
REGENTS COMMUNICATION

ITEM FOR INFORMATION

RE: Summary of faculty governance activities for 2009-2010

This month marks the beginning of an annual transition in SACUA. At the end of the month, the terms of Bob Fraser (Dearborn), Wayne Stark (Engineering) and Michael Thouless (Engineering) will end, and three new members will replace them: Kate Barald (Medicine), Rachel Goldman (Engineering) and Kim Kearfott (Engineering). This is also the final month of office for the current SACUA Chair and vice-Chair; the elections to replace them will take place between when this report is written and when it is read. Finally, another three-year term for the current Senate Secretary will end. The election for a new Secretary will take place at the Senate meeting scheduled for the last Monday in April.

Key components of shared governance at UM are the many committees for which SACUA has at least some responsibility for overseeing faculty representation. Broad representation on these committees helps diversify faculty governance, shares the work-load, and introduces faculty to the importance of faculty governance at a central level. An audit of all these committees was conducted at the beginning of the year; this revealed that several of them had been neglected, that terms of office were not balanced, or that the official appointment process was not always being followed rigorously (this appeared to include some that required Regental approval). This year, every committee that SACUA is responsible for has been filled following the appropriate procedures. In particular, one result of the audit was a recognition that faculty governance had failed to organize elections for the legally-required DPS Oversight Committee for about a decade! It was, however, apparent that this neglect had been caused by rather cumbersome procedures (and the lack of specified terms of office). Therefore, with the support of SACUA, the procedures were re-written, and faculty representatives were elected last month. SACUA has also begun the process of trying to understand the roles of the appointed faculty committees within the vice-Presidential areas. Even the apparently simple act of collecting details of these committees was an informative exercise!

Other procedures that SACUA has actively been involved in developing this year was a set of guide-lines that the Assembly Tenure Committee should follow in the event of any 5.09 process coming before it. These included a clarification of the evidence standard that the committee should follow in such a case. On behalf of the Senate, SACUA has also been working with the Provost's office to bring the multi-year process of revising the grievance procedures to closure. SACUA has now approved a final version of these procedures co-

authored by the Provost's office, and they will be brought to the Assembly for final faculty ratification at the end of April.

A major development for faculty governance this year was the development and adoption of a statement on Academic Freedom. This was done in response to recent court cases that appeared to have the potential to weaken a traditional understanding of academic freedom. A committee was formed by SACUA last summer and produced a statement that was formally adopted by the Assembly on behalf of the Senate in January. The statement is now in the Ann Arbor Faculty Handbook. SACUA was pleased to learn recently that another local university has already adopted the statement for its own use.

At the beginning of the year, SACUA invited MSA officials to a meeting to learn about student government concerns and to help MSA understand faculty governance. It is hoped that this dialogue will continue and strengthen during future years. SACUA has also been exploring its role in faculty governance on the Dearborn and Flint campuses, since the interdependent and independent relationship between the campuses is not straightforward. For the first time, SACUA invited the leadership of faculty governance on both campuses to start a dialogue on this question, and was very pleased that the Chancellors of Dearborn and Flint came to a SACUA meeting to talk about their perspective of the issues on their campuses.

Overall, this year has been one of an increase in the involvement of SACUA in decision making by the administration. But, the culture of shared governance still needs to be nurtured before it becomes fully embedded within UM. While, SACUA was particularly pleased by the meaningful involvement in the selection of the new Provost, they were disappointed by the fact recommendations to the Regents for vice-Provost appointments and re-appointments are still being made with no input from SACUA. Faculty administrators at the vice-president and associate vice-president level tend to have significant responsibilities for issues that directly affect the faculty, so a culture of shared governance in which elected faculty representatives have input into these appointments would be very desirable.
(Submitted April, 2010)

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.