THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
REGENTS COMMUNICATION

ITEM FOR INFORMATION

FACULTY GOVERNANCE UPDATE

To a great extent, central faculty governance (as comprised of the University Senate, Senate Assembly, its eighteen committees and its executive committee, the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs or SACUA) plays an advisory role to the University's President and Vice Presidents on nearly all matters of University-wide concern leaving matters of unit only concern to that unit's executive committee, which is the other form of faculty governance at the University.

In the role of advisor of faculty opinion, the many components of central faculty governance can only be effective if that advice is well-received and appreciated. In other words, faculty governance must obtain and deserve credibility. This year, central faculty governance will look closely at its own structures in a quest to discover greater efficiencies but, more importantly, to deserve the respect of our administrator advisees through insight and thoughtful opinions that add value to the discussion.

For example, while filling committee vacancies this summer, SACUA will look for University faculty who are the world-class experts in specific areas to populate the committees dealing with those issues rather than relying almost exclusively on volunteers. The goal will be to obtain subject-matter expertise without discouraging volunteerism. Also, central faculty governance's administrative evaluation process will need to be reviewed by faculty subject-matter experts and input from those being evaluated will need to be obtained to know what information would be helpful.

It is expected that many times faculty advice will originate from a very different point of reference yet, we also expect, that those diverse opinions will be welcomed by the administration. Clearly, the whole basis for Regental Bylaws creating the central faculty governance system is to foster diverse opinions for more informed administrative decision-making. Too often, members of the university community, whether administrators or not, are so separated from each other that they function in a "stove pipe" relationship with their superiors and subordinates but not the rest of the University. In the University environment, all participants must by open-minded to allow the strength-building effects of diversity to flourish at all levels.

As it was stated to the Deans at the Academic Program Group (APG) in May, central faculty governance sees itself as a partner with the administration with the same goals and values but with different functioning roles. Faculty members of the University community only gain when other members of the community are seen to gain too. Without losing sight of their important current roles, faculty should be considered for "new" and greater uses including an increased

faculty role in admissions, matriculation, development, and faculty and student recruitment. In general, faculty should be viewed as potential consultants for almost any venue.

Faculty should be viewed in this new light because University faculty desire to have a permanent relationship with the University at all stages of their careers. In search of some permanence, University policies should be "family friendly" and the efforts of M-Healthy should continue and be expanded. It seems to be universally agreed that regular exercise reduces the cost of health care and, for that reason, great improvements need to occur with the recreational sports facilities at the University.

As part of a permanent, life-long relationship with the University, faculty need greater flexibility with the type and extent of their contributions at various stages throughout their careers. The University would benefit just as well as faculty with such flexibility. Just as one example, faculty near retirement age, but with no particular desire to retire, should be viewed for their achieved strengths and should be asked to emphasize those strengths to a larger degree than when they were more junior faculty and asked to do nearly everything for the sake of broadening their perspectives. Some of those goals of broadening perspective are no longer as relevant to some senior faculty but those faculty members still have a great deal to offer. In some respects and in some areas, these faculty have more to offer now than ever before. The University should create flexible policies that allow faculty to remain connected and involved in the academic enterprise even if it means a reduction in pay, benefits and office space but continues to provide the all-important feeling of valued membership in the community. What this suggests is another type of diversity, a generational diversity.

At its June retreat, SACUA developed the following issues to be addressed in the 2010-11 academic year:

1. Creation of a standing fringe benefits committee.
2. Specific scholarships or Michigan Education Trust (MET) contributions for children of faculty and staff.
3. Financial aid for students with low-income family backgrounds.
4. Recruitment and retention of students and faculty from diverse backgrounds.
5. Faculty involvement in the next development campaign.
6. A culture of committed rather than compliant faculty and staff.
7. Life-long faculty engagement.
8. Creation of a fair review tribunal of Department of Public Safety (DPS) use of trespass orders without restricting DPS practice when useful and necessary.

(Submitted July 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.