UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
REGENTS' COMMUNICATION
Item for Information

Subject: Faculty Governance Update – SACUA's Academic Year 2011-12 Priorities

On June 6, 2011, SACUA held its annual planning retreat to identify its Academic Year 2011-12 priorities.

The overall objective is to refresh, redefine and reemphasize the responsibilities and extent of faculty governance at the University of Michigan, to reestablish lines of communication among the faculty, the senate assembly, the faculty senate, the administration and the Regents. We believe that especially in this difficult funding climate, maintaining this outstanding multifaceted University is more important than at any time in the University's almost 200-year history.

The clear first priority of SACUA for the upcoming year is to increase Senate Assembly (and the full University Senate) involvement in central faculty governance issues so that SACUA is acting in full partnership with both SA and the Faculty Senate. SACUA Chair Kate Barald is in the process of sending individual welcoming messages to each of this year's Senate Assembly members as a means of encouraging each member's participation and in order to initiate a dialogue about faculty governance and the faculty's concerns and priorities.

SACUA also would like to reestablish communication between the Regents and SACUA by reinstituting individual private meetings with each of the Regents during the coming year. Arrangements have already been made with Regent Maynard for a September meeting. It is the impression of SACUA that these meetings have been enjoyable and informative for the Regents and that a great deal of mutual understanding can usually be generated in a very short period of time. In the past, an average of six of the eight Regents attended such meetings in any given year and SACUA greatly appreciates the commitment of the Regents to hear all the voices of the University including SACUA.

In September, SACUA will also meet with Vice President for Global Communications and Strategic Initiatives Lisa Rudgers to discuss SAUCA's role in promoting the image of the University including the role, scope and perception of faculty governance by the Administration. Communications is the key issue that SACUA would like to emphasize this year.

Furthermore, SACUA has created a new website that is intended to be more user friendly and equipped to handle opinion polls of all faculty including the University Senate on significant issues in a timely way. It is hoped that this new website function will revolutionize SACUA's

ability to assess faculty opinion as issues arise. Ideally, eventually this resource will allow for online voting by faculty on important issues.

While there were equally important substantive and academic issues also identified at the Retreat, as you can tell from this Update, the over-arching consensus feeling was that SACUA should reach out more to all the University (and public) constituencies, that re-establishing and revitalizing previous contacts is essential, and that a broader mix of faculty involved in central faculty governance is necessary for continuing and increasing the impact of faculty governance on University affairs.

Submitted: July 2011



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