THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
REGENTS COMMUNICATION

ITEM FOR INFORMATION

Subject: Faculty Governance Update

Shared governance between administrators and faculty is a foundation for successful operation of any university. The University of Michigan Regents Bylaws provide mechanisms for such co-operation. Indeed, at the university-wide level, Bylaw 4.01 declares that "*The 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*". At the unit level, Bylaw 5.06 states that "*The executive committee in addition to assisting with administrative functions shall be charged with the duties of investigating and formulating educational and instructional policies for consideration by the faculty and shall act for the faculty in matters of budgets, promotions, and appointments*."

Unfortunately, the university faculty often takes less than full advantage of these opportunities. Indeed, the provision of Bylaw 4.01 has not been exercised in the recent past. Executive committees of many units, contrary to Bylaw 5.06, are not involved in issues of budget and academic administrative appointments.

To alleviate these deficiencies, in fall of 2005, SACUA created two ad-hoc committees to address the issues of shared governance at both university-wide and unit levels. This communication is intended to report to the Regents on the activities of these groups.

1. The main outcomes of one of these groups, the Unit Shared Governance Task Force, are a Report and subsequent Resolution of the Senate Assembly of February 20, 2006 concerning the election of unit executive committee members and the functions of those committees. These documents can be found at http://www.umich.edu/~sacua/SenAssb/UnitSharedGovernanceTaskForceReport.pdf and http://www.umich.edu/~sacua/SenAssb/ExecComResolution-Feb2006.pdf, respectively. According to the Resolution, "*The name of the eligible candidate with the largest number of votes is to be submitted to the Provost for subsequent Regental approval*." This provision modifies the earlier practice in which a runner-up could be appointed to the executive committee instead

   In addition, the Resolution calls for executive committees to participate in shared governance by giving their "*consent for all academic administrative appointments in the unit, composition of search committees leading to these appointments, and to chair professorship nominations*" as well as "*to provide oversight of the budget*".

It is expected that these recommendations, after approval by the units, will be implemented during fall of 2006.

2. The second group, the University Shared Governance Task Force, is currently in the process of developing its recommendations. The general direction of these recommendations is that SACUA should be advised and consulted on existing or on new policies, which affect faculty life and satisfy certain criteria. These criteria are currently under discussions with the Provost. It is expected that these recommendations will be finalized and put in place by the end of 2006.

SACUA believes that the above described actions will substantially improve mutually productive co-operation between the faculty and the administration for the benefit of the University as a whole.

Submitted: September 2006

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.