THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
REGENTS COMMUNICATION
ITEM FOR INFORMATION

Subject: Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) Faculty Governance Conference

The Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs is pleased to be hosting the Faculty Governance Conference for the CIC. The CIC is the consortium of Big Ten Universities and the University of Chicago that was founded in 1956 to promote collaborative intellectual activities between the great research institutions of the Mid-West. Over the years the CIC Universities have promoted programs to pool resources in such areas as biometeorology (the study of the effects of weather on humans), the study of Asian languages, and graduate education. We reprise the theme of shared resources and challenges by dedicating this year's conference of Faculty Senate leaders to the impact of funding problems on major research Universities.

As state support has dwindled, and as grant funding has become more difficult to secure, Universities have had to look to a variety of sources to make up the shortfall; in the case of public institutions this has increased dependence upon development, and the stewardship of the endowment, and the leveraging faculty creativity to bring new products to market. It has also meant greater reliance upon tuition revenue (though these increases can be offset to some degree by increasing the amount of money that is available for financial aid). Should this be seen as something new, the "privatization" of the public university, or should it be seen as a reconfiguration of traditional patterns of public and private support? What changes might we look to in the future? How will Universities be able, for instance, to guarantee excellent and affordable health care? Will Universities be able to continue to support the pension plans that they now support? These are priorities not only on the Michigan campus, but across higher education.

Universities need to be able to retain the best faculty. Aside from offering compensation and benefits packages that match those of peer institutions, an important factor in retention is campus climate. Do faculty feel that their voices are heard in decision-making for the community, and that their contributions are valued? Are tenure track faculty being replaced by "contingent faculty" at the core of the undergraduate program, and are universities engaging in a type of bait and switch to attract applicants by advertising distinguished faculty who seldom teach undergraduates, and as a result providing an inadequate educational experience to students? To address this last question, we are pleased to have Professor Edie Goldenberg discuss the research that she has recently completed with John Cross (a former faculty member and administrator at Michigan) for their forthcoming book, *Off Track Profs* on which they look at hiring patterns at a number of universities (including several in the CIC) showing how they have resisted pressures on the traditional tenure system, and how this can to improve undergraduate education, support campus collegiality, trust in academic governance, and preserve America's leadership in higher education.

Finally, the long-term on-campus communities—faculty, staff and administration—are under ever increasing pressure from a wide variety of other communities, be they alumni, state legislators or simply the general public. All these groups will often have different priorities for the University, and as Universities depend on these groups for their funding, off-campus groups are ever willing to assert their

priorities. These can be in the area of research, where Universities must be ever vigilant in the defense of Academic Freedom in the face of intense criticism, usually directed at individual faculty members whose professional lives have led them to take up positions that are unpopular with one group or another. Similarly Academic Freedom can be threatened in the courts and legislatures as judges and legislators have, in some cases, sought to restrict, not only access to Universities, but even the material taught in classrooms. We will be welcoming Rebecca Alperts from the Department of Religious Studies and Robert O'Neil from the University of Virginia to share their thoughts on recent cases around the country.

We hope that all members of the University community who find that these topics resonate with their own experiences, either at Michigan or elsewhere will feel free to join us on October 31.

(Submitted October, 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.