THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
REGENTS COMMUNICATION
ITEM FOR INFORMATION

Subject: Faculty Governance Update

In the past month, SACUA has met with Regent Julia Darlow, President Mary Sue Coleman, Provost Terry Sullivan, as well as MSA President Abhishek Mahanti and MSA Vice President Michael Rorro.

As has been the case with every previous meeting of SACUA with a Regent, the informal meeting in executive session with Regent Darlow proved to be pleasant and productive. SACUA finds these meetings with individual Regents to be an important avenue of communication and confirmation of our respective roles and common ground. As you are aware, SACUA will make an effort to meet with each Regent by the end of the academic year.

With President Coleman, SACUA discussed potential uses of the North Campus Research Center (NCRC), the availability of recreational facilities for staff and faculty that could be a key component in the goal of maintaining a healthy community, retiree health care costs, and the possible discontinuance of Michigan Promise Grants.

During its meeting with Provost Sullivan, SACUA was reminded, with the announcement that research funding has now exceeded $1 billion, of the considerable contribution faculty make to the revenue stream of the university beyond tuition. While the official announcements appear to have focused on the magnitude of the research funding, it should be emphasized that the amount of this funding is not the most significant feature. Much more important is that it enables the faculty to do the high-level research (when they are not otherwise occupied raising money from teaching or proposal writing) that maintains the global reputation of the university. Budget matters were also discussed including the recent SPG changes for travel and hosting expenses. In this regard, it was noted that a more meaningful discussion with faculty governance prior to publishing the SPG might have resulted in slightly less anxiety about the changes among the university community.

The SACUA meeting with the MSA leadership included a discussion about current student concerns of student governance transparency and accessibility, campus safety, the DPS, football Saturday trash fines, on-line student course evaluations, the Michigan Promise Grant cuts, and the formal process review of the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities including the addition of a “Good Samaritan” clause that would allow underage students to call emergency services for an intoxicated friend without fear of repercussion.

In other business, SACUA approved a budget for the SACUA office, held discussions on apportionment of representatives to the Senate Assembly, appointed a sub-committee to provide a response to proposed changes in the grievance procedures, and approved procedural guidelines (advisory only) that a future SACUA might want to follow in the event of an action taken against a faculty member under section 5.09 of Regents' By-Laws.

(Submitted October, 2009)

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.