THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
REGENTS COMMUNICATION
ITEM FOR INFORMATION

Subject: Principles of Faculty Governance

The Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA) and the Provost have, we hope, come near to agreement on the text of an updated document, "Principles of Faculty Involvement in Institutional and Academic Unit Governance at the University of Michigan". This document is intended to serve as the second edition of a pamphlet issued jointly in 1997 by Provost Bernard Machen and the Senate Assembly (original document available at http://www.umich.edu/~sacua/AcadAff/aaacdoc.html). Two years ago SACUA charged a task force led by Prof. Louis D'Alecy to propose revisions to the Principles document. These revisions were to incorporate ideas of "criteria-based faculty governance", as requested by the Senate Assembly in a formal resolution on April 18, 2005. The criteria were meant to define areas where faculty responsibility, as spelled out in Regental Bylaws, warranted early faculty involvement in university-level or unit-level planning and decision-making – or where the interests of faculty were sufficiently affected to warrant such involvement.

Members of the Task Force felt strongly that new initiatives calling upon major university resources, whether academic or financial, should include early and extensive faculty consultation. During the Task Force's early deliberations in spring 2006, this feeling was strengthened when the President proposed to the Regents that the University carry out major renovations of the U-M football stadium. Some members of the Task Force and many in the university community felt there had been inadequate consultation of the faculty on this project. (This view was recently endorsed on October 22, 2007, by a Senate Assembly resolution, not presented by SACUA but moved by one of its members, calling upon the President and Regents to "reconsider the Stadium Renovation project." (http://www.umich.edu/~sacua/SenAssb/sa-res/sa-resolutions.html))

The process of revising the Principles document has been slowed by the change in Provosts; understandably, the new Provost wished to gain experience with the existing shared governance system before codifying it or changing it. The Task Force provided SACUA with a draft revision in spring 2007, at which point negotiations began between SACUA and the Provost. Much progress was made during the summer, leading to what is now a nearly final agreement.

The primary changes to the document's previous sections spell out explicitly that the described principles must be consistent with Regental Bylaws (changes requested by the Provost). A more important change to the document, however, is a new section on "Institutional Level Governance Principles", which describes the structure of central faculty governance (Senate, Senate Assembly, and SACUA) and the roles of each entity. Specifically, criteria are listed for which the involvement of central faculty governance, as opposed to college/school faculty governance, is appropriate. These criteria apply both to actions by the faculties and to consultation of faculty by university administrators. For example, any proposed changes by the university administration to institutional-wide policies affecting more than one college or school would merit consultation with SACUA or with the Senate Assembly. SACUA believes these

additions codify and strengthen the role of central faculty governance, and SACUA supports them.

One issue remains unresolved. The draft suitably deals with matters that are primarily matters of faculty concern, such as grading policies. But SACUA believes that it is important also to provide that on other matters that, while not of primary faculty concern, are nevertheless of significant faculty concern, faculty representatives will be informed in a way that will allow meaningful consultation before any final decision is made. The administration understandably is wary of agreeing to language that will unduly hamper flexibility when rapid and confidential action is necessary to protect the University's interests. SACUA has presented the Provost with a draft that it believes appropriately deals with these concerns. Because the matters addressed by this document now extend beyond the usual jurisdiction of the Provost, she is consulting with other administrators. SACUA is hopeful that these negotiations with the Provost, conducted in good faith, will soon resolve this outstanding issue and so result in a completed document that will act as a useful framework for determining the role of the faculty in significant future decisions.

(Submitted November, 2007)

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.