

Minutes of 3 November 2008
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MINUTES OF THE SACUA MEETING OF 3 NOVEMBER 2008

Present: Fraser, Frier, Poe, Potter (Chair), Riles, Stark, Thouless; Lehman; Carr, Schneider

Absent: Frost, Navvab

Guests: S. Forrest (VP for Research), Peter Abrams, T. Sullivan (provost), M. J. Frank (U-M News and Information), K. Brown (University Record)

MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED

1. Draft agenda
2. Draft minutes of 27 October 2008
3. Comments on 13 October 2008 minutes from Laurita Thomas
4. [“When it comes to free speech, is a professor just another employee?” Steve Sanders, The Chronicle of Higher Education, August 1, 2008.](#)
5. Electronic mail from Comron Amin to Bob Fraser dated 31 October 2008 regarding “Two Petitions Regarding the Changes in Healthcare Benefits.”
6. List of proposed questions for the 2008 AEC Survey.
7. Draft agenda for Senate Assembly 10 November 2008.
8. [“Hong v Grant, 516 F.Supp.2d 1158, C.D.Cal., 2007](#)
9. [“Renken v Gregory, 541 F.3rd 769, C.A.7 \(Wis\), 2008](#)
10. [Executive Summary of a survey conducted by the VP of Research Steve Forest’s office.](#)
11. Handout from Steve Forest, “Changes to the Research Faculty Tracks”.

Chair Potter convened the meeting at 3:10 P.M. The proposed agenda was approved.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of 27 October were approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The CIC meeting was held last week, and was successful.
2. The annual Regents lunch will occur on (**confirm date**).

VISIT OF VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH

1. Vice president Forrest joined the meeting at 3:15 P.M. The chair invited him to discuss changes in the research faculty tracks. The vice president reviewed the history of the research track with reference to distributed item X. He explained that two tracks exist: research scientist and research professor. The research professor track recognizes a higher degree of independence. Time schedules for formal review have been imposed.
2. The vice president said that a future challenge will be provision of “off contract” time for research faculty so that they can develop independent research programs and write grant proposals.
3. VP Forrest said that final review of research scientist appointments is conducted by OVPR. He said that research professor reviews are handled by the provost, but that the OVPR has substantial input. In response to a question from Professor Frier, the vice president pointed out that problems could arise with respect to LEO if a research scientist is asked to engage in didactic teaching. Research faculty have no didactic teaching responsibilities.
4. The vice president said that postdoctoral scholars suffer from a lack of oversight and guidelines. Rackham has been taking the lead in this area. A little known and rarely enforced provision in the existing rules is that postdoctoral appointments are limited to three years. He said that he would have to investigate and report back to SACUA regarding the source of the rule he cited.
5. Professor Riles remarked that one of his colleagues was told that he had to use a new indirect cost rate in his final NSF budget even though the grant had been reviewed and awarded based on the previous, existing rate. The vice president said that an exception had been made in the case of the individual mentioned by Riles. But, he said, the rates are negotiated and set by the federal government and legally must be applied to all new grants.
6. Professor Stark asked about the relative cost of graduate student support on research grants compared to peer institution. VP Forrest said that U-M costs are competitive, but probably in the top 30 percent.
7. The vice president said that ITAR restrictions on publications were less troublesome than ITAR restrictions on involving foreign students on projects. The university accepts a limited number of projects with ITAR restrictions on publications. Most of the projects with ITAR restrictions are in the physical sciences.
8. The chair asked whether OVPR has a position on the continuous enrollment policy proposed by Rackham. VP Forrest replied that he strongly supports the proposal. He said that the current situation subjects a number of students to abuse and exploitation. Dr. Fraser pointed out that members of GEO visited SACUA and expressed opposition to the policy.

The guest left the meeting at 3:15 P.M.

VISIT OF PROVOST

The provost joined the meeting at 3:15 P.M.

Emergency Communication System

The provost reported that a recent test of the system was successful; all e-mail was distributed within 45 minutes.

Textbook Order Site

The site is functional. The American Society of Publishers has transmitted a letter of criticism.

On-line Course Evaluations

Notices about the new evaluation process are being circulated.

Grievance Committee

Ted St. Antoine will be chair. SACUA should supply 3 members for the committee within three weeks.

Interdisciplinary Assistant Professor Initiatives

Letters of intent have been received. SACUA is invited to nominate 3 members for the committee that will evaluate the proposals. The nominations are needed by Thanksgiving.

Budget Situation

Many peer universities are announcing budget cutbacks. The U-M may experience a mid-year rescission of state funds, but if it occurs it will be manageable within the provost's office in the short term. The rescission level is judged to be about two percent based on available data. This may be a poor year for recruitment of new Ph.D.s.

Court Decisions Regarding Faculty Freedom of Speech

Professor Frier called attention to distributed items **Y** and **Z**. He noted that courts have declared that faculty do not have the right to criticize their administration. He asked how the U-M will respond to this alarming trend, and he suggested that this would be a good time to address it. The provost said that she would take the materials to the General Counsel for discussion.

Diabetes Program

The provost has seen the results of clinical trials involving the experimental program for diabetes treatment whereby the U-M provides supplies and drugs cost-free. There were substantial increases in putative compliance within the experiment group.

The guest left the meeting at 4:55 P.M.

AEC-

Professor Riles pointed out that AEC met last week and developed a draft set of general administration questions.

Capital Projects Committee-

Professor Stark suggested that SACUA schedule a meeting with this committee if it wants to provide feedback before the end of the term.

Government Relations-

Professor Thouless reported that, as requested by SACUA, he had raised the question of whether the university actively promotes the K-12 outreach by the faculty to the State Legislature. Vice-President Wilbanks responded that there is considerable effort made by the university in this regard, with both Dean Ball and individual faculty members speaking to members of the legislature and committees that have specific interests in K-12 education.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The meeting entered executive session at 4:55 P.M. Topics included (1) proposed benefits changes and (2) APC bowl game participation.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

There was no additional business.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

John Lehman
Senate Secretary

University of Michigan Bylaws of the Board of Regents, Sec. 5.02:

Governing Bodies in Schools and Colleges

In each school, college, or degree granting division of the University, including those at the University of Michigan-Dearborn and at the University of Michigan-Flint, the governing faculty shall be in charge of the affairs of the school, college, or division, except as delegated to the executive committee, if any, and except that in the School of Graduate Studies the governing board shall be the executive board, and in the Medical School shall be the executive faculty.
