THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
REGENTS' COMMUNICATION

ITEM FOR INFORMATION

MOTION
SECOND
ACTION APPROVED BY THE REGENTS
NOTED NOV 17 2005

Subject: Faculty Governance Update

ANNUAL PRESENTATION TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN BOARD OF REGENTS B Y THE CHAIR OF SACUA

Bruno Giordani, Ph.D.

November 17, 2005

As Chair of the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA) and the Senate Assembly, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to present our annual report. Shared Governance, our model, here, at Michigan, implies interdependence and assumes faculty members and administrators are peers who share common academic values. The traditional model of shared governance is at the heart of a great university, as it reflects a general commitment on the part of the faculty, staff, and administration to work together to strengthen and enhance the University through communication and appropriately shared responsibility.

Through shared governance, the faculty, president, and governing board share decision-making with greater weight in specific decisions accorded to one or another of the participants based on their respective authority, responsibility, or vested interest, though all groups must work together in a joint, open, and effective consultation and communication process. Faculty, for example, have unique responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process. Other University functions still should involve participation of the faculty including budgeting, strategic planning, facilities planning, hiring of academic administrators, regulating intercollegiate athletics, and a voice regarding institutional relationships with outside entities.

Central to any effective university governance structure is a representative body through which faculty members can carry out their responsibilities in the process of shared decision making. At the University of Michigan, under the Regents' Bylaws, that body is the Senate Assembly. It is made up of 72 elected representatives from the various units and colleges, representing all of the members of the Faculty Senate. Although responsibility for decision making often becomes dispersed across various components of our academic institution, the Senate Assembly represents a central voice to link those units. From the founding of the University, the Regents recognized the significance of that link. Some of the earliest University records affirm that for the success of its academic mission, the University values the advice and guidance of the faculty and that the authority to make decisions involving educational endeavors rests properly with the faculty.

As you know, Regents' Bylaw Section 4.08 states that SACUA, representing the Faculty Senate and Assembly, shall advise and consult with the President of the University on matters of University policy. Pursuant to this charge, both the President and Provost have met individually with SACUA in open and informative discussions, responding to specific questions posed by SACUA members and bringing their own issues of concern to SACUA. The President also recently delivered her annual address to the Senate Assembly, outlining the University's accomplishments over the past year and the challenges that lay ahead. The Senate Assembly appreciated that she made this meeting her venue for such an important presentation, as well as appreciating her willingness to remain after her speech and take questions from the faculty. Provost Gramlich will be the Senate's guest at the November meeting.

Recently, resolution of two issues has demonstrated the close working relationship between faculty members and the administration. Given concerns expressed by SACUA, a recent SPG and a recent Bylaw change were delayed to allow for additional discussion and faculty comment. SACUA appreciates the President and provost's willingness to slow the process and discuss issues further that are of clear interest to the faculty. The first such issue was the recently presented Conflict of Interest/Conflict of Commitment plan for faculty and staff from the President. Although not all issues were resolved and the final discussions will continue at the unit level, the SPG contains significantly more faculty input and oversight than originally envisioned. The second item was the Regents' Bylaw change related to the Academic Performance Committee associated with the Advisory Board on Intercollegiate Athletics. The final proposed Bylaw change to be presented to the Regents represents a series of frank and open communications between members of the APC, SACUA, and the administration, with the final product reflecting both the APC's relationship to the Provost's office, as well as affirming the APC's rights and responsibilities related to academic issues with athletes.

The most important issue in which there is ongoing dialogue between the faculty and administration at this time is the report from the Provost's Committee on Flexible Tenure. Several Senate Assembly committees are preparing reviews of these materials for SACUA, and we have dedicated portions of two upcoming Senate Assembly meetings for discussions of the specific recommendations from the report. At our December meeting, we will have a guest speaker co-sponsored by both the AAUP and SACUA, Professor Robert O'Neil, the former president of the universities of Virginia and Wisconsin, who will discus the issue of extending the tenure process. The discussions on this topic have been frank, though somewhat hurried, as we are currently under a requested deadline of the end of December for comments from the faculty. For such a critically important issue to the University, this seems a short time to clearly gain the input from unit and central faculty governance, but we will continue as requested. All faculty concerned certainly expect that their viewpoint will be solicited, as appropriate, before any final decisions are made related to changes in the tenure process. This is truly an issue that transcends units and requires frank and open discussion with all faculties. Input from both unit and central faculty governance levels are critical for the acceptance of any final changes to faculty status.

By Regents' bylaws, the University Senate, and hence the Senate Assembly as its representative body, is authorized to consider any subject pertaining to the interests of the University, and to

make recommendations to the Board of Regents. As part of this process, there is an extensive system of Senate Assembly advisory committees considering issues of importance to the University. The majority of these committees is advisory to the Executive Officers of the University and represents the faculty's direct input to these individuals. The second type of Senate Assembly committee is advisory on special issues of concern to the faculty, such as budget issues and tenure issues. These committees all include SACUA liaisons who attend these meetings regularly, in order to ensure a close working relationship with SACUA.

Senate Assembly Committees advisory to the Executive Officers have been studying and speaking to a range of important issues to the University, in addition to those brought to them for consideration by their respective Executive Officers. The Academic Affairs Advisory Committee (AAAC), advisory to the provost, has been studying the newly issued Flexible Tenure Report, procedures for expanding the Senate Assembly to include representation from clinical faculty and some of the research faculty and librarians who are not currently represented, and the Student Course Evaluation process whereby teaching faculty are evaluated by their students. This long-standing process has not had a significant review of its question content, mechanisms, or uses for some time, and AAAC and the Student Relations Advisory Committee will both be looking at this process carefully. The Medical Affairs Advisory Committee also will be cooperating with AAAC in its review of the procedures for expansion of the Senate Assembly.

The Development Advisory Committee always has had a close working relationship with the Development Vice President. The committee has been important in the development of the ongoing Michigan campaign and in developing roles for faculty participation as donors. As the campaign progresses, we expect that this committee will play a further role as work of the campaign turns increasingly to academic and faculty-related requests. Among its topics this year, the Financial Affairs Advisory Committee will be reviewing the role of Merit Based Scholarships and budget issues associated with building development within our University.

The Research Policies Committee has played an important role in reviewing and preparing for the recent Senate Assembly discussion on COI/COC and also has just completed a preliminary review of the status of Institutional Review Board mechanisms and policies at the University and their work will continue on this topic. The General Counsel Advisory Committee, no doubt, will play an increasingly important role over this coming year as SACUA and Senate Assembly develop a review of the Faculty Grievance Procedure. The Secretary of the University Advisory Committee will continue to advise Vice President Sally Churchill and hopefully work to increase and strengthen the relationship between SACUA and the Regents. Other advisory committees also will continue their work, including the Government Relations Advisory Committee and the Communications Advisory Committee.

Among the Key Issues Committees, the Administration Evaluation Committee (AEC) has just begun the second annual faculty administration evaluation questionnaire, with hopes to significantly increase faculty participation. The Budget Study Committee continues its review of Faculty Benefit changes and will continue to work closely with the Committee on the Economic Status of the Faculty (CESF) in such matters, in particular with consideration to the concern of retirees about possible benefit changes. The Committee for a Multicultural University will

continue to review such important issues as faculty recruitment and retention. The Rules Committee will continue its review of possible University Senate expansion procedures, in concert with the AAAC, as well as reviewing recommendations for other changes in the Senate Assembly procedures. The Tenure Committee will continue its review of Senate Expansion, as well as assembling its comments on the Flexible Tenure Report. The Faculty Perspectives Page Editorial Advisory Board plays a significant role in the selection and review of materials to be included in that important avenue allowing faculty to voice their concerns to the University community.

This year, SACUA also has charged several task forces to look into issues of significance for the faculty. One is the Shared Governance Task Force that has been charged to further develop the principles of criteria-based shared governance approved last year by the Senate Assembly. It is hoped that this Task Force will facilitate an understanding among the Provost, the President, and SACUA on governance responsibilities that can be worked into the Principles of Faculty Involvement in Institutional & Academic Unit Governance at the University of Michigan ("Blue Book"). SACUA also charged the formation of the Unit Governance (Executive Committees) Task Force. This task force is assessing the status of faculty governance at the unit level, including the authority and selection of Executive Committees and procedures for changing unit bylaws, with a hope towards greater cooperation and communication between unit and central faculty governance. Senate task forces have played a role in many important issues within this University, including the recent SACUA Child Care Task Force that brought together voices from across the faculty, administration, and child care centers. The Senate Assembly greatly appreciates the President's current emphasis on child care issues for both faculty and staff. Other areas under consideration for Senate Assembly study include support for junior faculty, non-tenure track faculty issues, and academic and non-academic support programs for students. In addition to these basic committee and task forces, SACUA also plays a role in membership selection for University advisory committees, such as intercollegiate athletics and residency appeals.

I would also like to report on an important new component of governance and administration has been added to the University model. This is the Faculty Ombuds position, currently held by Professor Bonnie Metzger. This position was created last year to facilitate resolution of problems with respect to faculty interactions, policy issues, and administration by working with local unit ombuds and through direct contact with individual faculty seeking assistance. Professor Metzger's office represents a critically important step in conflict resolution for faculty before moving to the grievance process. SACUA feels that the grievance policies within the University are in need of careful review and a comprehensive comparison of our policies to those enacted by other universities. With the recommendation from University administration that units use the grievance procedures to appeal conflict of interest and conflict of commitment questions outside the unit, there is a clear need to streamline the grievance process. Also, the apparent very significant reduction in the use of the formal grievance procedures by the faculty over the past several years, suggests that faculty may not understand or value this important method of grievance resolution.

Finally, I would like to reflect briefly on the difficulties of effective communication in governance. If the faculty is not involved early enough in planning and decision making and

feels that important issues are simply brought for ratification, rather than discussion, a lack of interest or incentive to participate will follow and effective change will break down. Requests and communications that do not come early enough to faculty can easily lead to misunderstandings or resentment, especially if accompanied by a request for rapid turn-around without reasonable time for deliberation. To balance this, however, faculty must understand that in the current climate of cut-backs and change, reasonable speed of response if often a necessity. Communications also must be open and early on all sides. Shared governance must not come to be viewed by administrators as an obstacle which must be overcome or circumvented and administrators should not be made to feel reluctant to meet with faculty for fear they are entering a hostile environment. Finally, faculty, as well as administrators, must understand the importance of cross-unit communication and appeal. Idiosyncrasies in decision making, goal setting, or procedural rules within particular units are important issues for central faculty governance communication and deliberation. Such concerns will be especially important as we face development of unit COI/COC and tenure procedures. In conclusion, I continue to appeal to you and to the administration in the University to recognize the value of a central faculty voice in the issues at hand. Shared faculty governance is one of the qualities that makes this university the unique and special institution that it is.

Submitted: November 2005