



Faculty Senate Chair Report
Joy Beatty
Regents' Meeting
March 26, 2020

Regents, President Schlissel, Executive Officers, and members of the public:

My name is Joy Beatty, and I am the chair of faculty senate, which represents over 4000 faculty members from all three campuses of the University of Michigan. Once a year, faculty senate is invited to present to the regents, and it is my pleasure to represent faculty senate here today.

We have had a busy and successful year, so I'd like to report some of our key accomplishments. The two main themes of our activities have been ensuring due process for faculty and increasing engagement in faculty governance.

Faculty senate is the voice of faculty, and one of the responsibilities we take very seriously is supporting and advocating for due process. Faculty play an essential role in the granting of tenure, and in the rare cases when it becomes necessary, faculty also have a fundamental role in the removal of tenure. Specifically, when deans initiate the process to fire a tenured faculty member, faculty senate sub-committees function as an independent hearing board to review the charges made against the faculty member.

The past year has been unusual because we have been involved in two tenure removal cases, following the procedures set forth in Regents' Bylaw section 5.09. This is not a decision to be taken lightly, and it is important for the public to know that in cases of removal of tenure, we in faculty senate exercise our judgement independent of the administration.

Faculty senate has also participated in two policy revisions concerning the Sexual Misconduct Umbrella Policy and the Revision of Regents' Bylaw 5.09 regarding the removal of a tenured faculty member. While both efforts were led by the Provost's Office, Academic HR, and the Office of General Counsel, Faculty Senate hosted two town halls to provide a venue for two-way feedback with faculty and also discussed the issues in Senate Assembly meetings. We acknowledge the significant work that has been done on both policy revisions and the careful efforts made to collect faculty input. The 5.09 working group recently completed its recommendations. We were also pleased that the regents invited members of the bylaw revision committee to briefly present at their February meeting so that regents could hear directly from faculty who participated on this committee. The Sexual Misconduct Umbrella Policy is still being developed, and we look forward to seeing it when it becomes available.

For both of these items, we appreciate that the Provost's Office, Administration, and Regents sought faculty participation and input, and that time was allotted for faculty committees to deliberate and discuss these matters. This is an improvement from administrative actions that occurred in the 2018-19 academic year, such as the Felony Disclosure Policy, which happened very quickly with minimal input from the community. No matter how well intentioned such initiatives may be, a process which does not allow for community involvement means that there will be no community buy-in. Seeking faculty input early in the process can facilitate effective implementation down the road. It is our hope that the more open participation of the current year is a positive sign that will continue and grow in coming years.

The second theme for our activities this year has focused on improving our internal structures and increasing engagement and awareness of faculty governance. Faculty senate had 20 standing committees. We have reviewed and updated structures for now current 17 committees, merging or creating new committees to address our changing academic and administrative context. I'll give two examples. We developed the Committee on Oversight of Administrative Action, which will be charged with focusing on policies governing sanctions of faculty. This committee will liaise with the Office of Institutional Equity, to improve mutual understanding between OIE and faculty. We have already met several times with Tami Strickman, the Associate Vice President of OIE, and have been pleased and impressed with her willingness to actively solicit faculty input. Faculty senate has had significant concerns about OIE processes for several years. We are optimistic that significant improvements will happen soon at OIE, characterized by transparency, neutrality, fairness, and due process.

Another is the Committee for Fairness, Equality, and Inclusivity which combines three of our former committees – Committee on Civil Rights and Liberties, Committee for an Inclusive University, and the Tri-Campus Committee, all of which addressed different dimensions of fairness and equality across multiple university constituencies. The new combined committee can have a broader perspective on these matters and will have synergies among the common themes.

Regarding improvements for engagement in faculty governance, we hired a new Faculty Senate Office Director, MaryJo Banasik, who has been making significant improvements in our office systems. We have begun recording our senate assembly meetings, and have recently adopted an e-voting platform to hold electronic votes which was made possible with the support of IT services and Chief Information Officer Ravi Pendse. We are grateful for the excellent support we have received from Information Technology. We've made other changes to our meetings, such as moving our meeting time to accommodate senate assembly members who need to leave campus by 4:30 for childcare responsibilities, and changing our meeting location to a room with round tables which promotes more discussion and exchange between SA members. We are launching a re-designed faculty senate website, which is set to go live in early May.

Lastly, I'd like to offer a few personal remarks as chair. I am completing my 3rd year on SACUA and my 4th year on senate assembly. Faculty senate represents all three campuses of the University of Michigan, and I am a faculty member from the Dearborn campus. It has been a pleasure and privilege to work with committee members engaged in faculty governance, and an honor to lead this group. It's also been a point of pride for many of the faculty members on my branch campus for one of our own members to have a seat at the big table in Ann Arbor. I commend the recent announcement from the last regent's meeting regarding the development of a standing committee to focus on Flint and Dearborn concerns. The regional campuses have outstanding faculty, and we serve the needs of the local community with students who are from Michigan and who are more likely to remain in the state to contribute their intellectual capital. When they succeed, it reflects well on the entire University of Michigan system. We face some environmental challenges that you don't have at the flagship school, and we welcome innovative investments that ensure that all of its campuses are leaders and best.

Thanks to the regents for your thoughtful and responsible leadership of our shared institution.