

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
REGENTS COMMUNICATION
ITEM FOR INFORMATION

**University of Michigan Senate Assembly Committee on University Values
Statement for the Regents Regarding the Imminent Presidential Search
(April 29, 2013)**

As members of the University of Michigan (UM) faculty from many different schools and colleges,¹ we would like to offer the Regents our collective advice, based upon broad experience in teaching, scholarship and research, as part of a continuing dialog about the upcoming presidential search. This search comes at a critical time for UM, the State of Michigan, US research universities and higher education.

The University of Michigan, now approaching its bicentennial, is recognized as a world leader in scholarship and research innovation, both crucial to fulfilling its role in training the next generations of scholars, teachers, artists, researchers, and professionals as well as civic, government and business leaders. This institution has maintained those strengths while engaging in principled defense of diversity and inclusivity against serious external threats to those values. Despite these successes, Michigan's institutional values and academic leadership will continue to face serious challenges arising from both a complex volatile environment and the costs associated with higher education. Given this, it is vitally important that UM engage in a presidential selection process appropriate to the university's institutional dedication to the public good, and consistent with its international prominence, mission and values.

The University of Michigan was founded in 1817 as one of the first US public universities. Although in its initial years one of the professors served as president, the Organic Act of March 8, 1837 created the modern UM, governed by a Board of Regents. The new state Constitution in 1850 created the Office of the President and required that, "the Regents of the university shall...elect a president of the university". Shortly thereafter, in 1852, Henry Philip Tappan, became UM's first officially recognized president. The Regents Bylaws clearly establish faculty governance, namely the Senate Assembly (SA), as the representative central body of the faculty with direct advisory roles to the administration and Regents. It is in that spirit that this document is tendered to you.

From the faculty's viewpoint, the last presidential search was excellent. The Regents charged the University's faculty from all three campuses to participate in the search from its inception. We believe our wholehearted engagement from the initial drafting of search criteria to recommending candidates for the Regents' consideration contributed to the search's success. The faculty's involvement also greatly helped smooth President Coleman's entry into the campus community.

As you begin the search for the next president, we hope that you will charge us with similar advisory tasks as in 2002, requiring and expecting us to draw upon our expertise, wide-ranging experience and active engagement in the UM's mission to assist you in your decision. We believe good use of our collective experience will strengthen the university. We believe that a distinguished faculty member would be the best choice to chair the search advisory committee, as was the case in President Coleman's search. Similarly, the broadest possible number of constituencies should be represented.

A broad-based process of selecting a new president can help the university community craft a comprehensive vision enabling it to maintain its international standing as a center for extraordinary teaching and research, and to continue to fulfill its role as an incubator for social, cultural, artistic, and economic innovation.

As members of the Committee on University Values, we believe that there are several **core values** fundamental for guiding such a search, namely:

1) **Representative consultation**: This implies broad participation by faculty in all phases of the advisory search process. All faculty may contribute thoughts about the University's system, mission, and strategic goals in pre-interview open forums concerning the desirable candidate's experience, interests, and character. In addition, the decision makers, namely the Regents, should draw upon the experience of a search advisory committee that includes a diverse faculty. This should include significant numbers of faculty whose primary responsibilities are in research and teaching.

2) **Inclusivity:** Striving to create a diverse representation of university faculty, staff, and student representatives in the search process is vital. Given that diversity/inclusivity is one of the university's core values, it is important to ground the composition of the search advisory committee, the job description and the selection guidelines in this value. Fostering the enhancement of diversity must be among the key values that the new president should endeavor to advance.

3) **Respect:** Mechanisms must be put in place to ensure that the varying viewpoints of UM's community are given due consideration. In an academic community as vast as UM's there will be many, often contradictory perspectives. That is what it means to be a diverse community, and it is through respecting difference that we strengthen our learning and research environment. Ours is also a university that serves very different groups within the state, and we need to acknowledge the very different contributions of our three campuses to their respective constituencies. This should be strongly mirrored in the presidential hiring process itself.

4) **Transparency and confidentiality:** Clarity should be present from the beginning concerning the process to be followed in the search. While recognizing that confidentiality is imperative to finding the best candidates, it is essential that the process include a broad, open conversation with the university community. This widely transparent communication is best accomplished during the pre-interview phase, when the desirable traits for a successful candidate are being determined. For example, open forums focused on the issues facing UM and the most desirable traits for the new president, could be held with various stakeholders. Strong faculty representation on the search advisory committee will maintain openness to these representatives of the faculty as in 2002, while preserving candidate privacy.

Enacting these values through all phases of the presidential search process is essential, and the implications of each of these university values on the search are captured in the following recommendations.

Recommendations:

1. Include faculty representatives on a search advisory committee, as in 2002. This respected faculty group should consist of diverse research and teaching faculty members. Consideration should be given to selecting at a minimum some members from a list provided by faculty governance, consistent with the concept of shared governance outlined in the Regents' Bylaws.
2. Consult in a transparent manner with the University's three campuses in developing a clear statement of desired presidential qualities. These qualities should support the University's core values and reflect a clear vision for the University's future. The decision by the Regents should include consideration of the input received during pre-interview discussions.
3. Respect the confidentiality of the candidates and providers of feedback.

Conclusion:

We believe that together, the Regents, the faculty and the other members of the university community can take the University of Michigan into its third century under leadership well prepared to face, overcome and provide new solutions to the considerable challenges the university faces. With such leadership, we can succeed in maintaining UM among the world's great universities, so that it can continue to serve the state, the nation, and the world with dedication and distinction, as it has for the past two centuries.

¹ Current members are: Camron Amin (CASL, Dearborn), Sugato Bhattacharyya (Business), John Carson (LS&A-History), Maria Cotera (LS&A-American Culture), Kim Kearfott (Chair, Engineering), Anne Mondro (Art & Design), David Potter (LS&A-Classics), Ed Rothman (LS&A-Statistics), Bill Schultz (Engineering), Karen Staller (Social Work), David Tucker (Social Work), Robin Wilson (Music, Theatre & Dance), and Tom Wrobel (Psychology, Flint).

² Steneck, Nicholas H. (1991). *Faculty Governance at the University of Michigan Principles, History, and Practice: A Report for the University Community*. SACUA, Ann Arbor, MI.

³ Michigan Constitution, 1850 Art. 13 Sec. 8.

⁴ Bylaws of the Board of Regents Sections 4.01, 4.06 and 4.08.



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Submitted on behalf of SACUA