

University of Michigan - Dearborn
Student Government



June 2020 Regent Report

President Schlissel, members of the Board of Regents, and Executive Officers of the University, it is my honor to submit the following report to you on behalf of the administration of the University of Michigan-Dearborn Student Government (SG). We look forward to updating you on our initiatives and sharing all that we have worked on.

Looking Forward: It is no secret that we are living through unprecedented times and that for the first in many years this phrase is not being used as hyperbole. Yet since these hard times began I have seen the resilience and ingenuity of my fellow students be put to use in making the best of our ongoing situation for themselves and others. My administration has begun compiling a list of projects inspired by our fellow students which we plan to recommend to each committee to take up and begin working on.

Health for Students: One of the first official initiatives I plan to put forward alongside the senate is the formation of a Public Health committee. The committee's objectives will be the advocacy for greater health services both on campus and via remote portals, educate students on the ongoing global health crisis, and relay the response of the university to the ongoing crisis.

Shining the Silver: The Constitution and By-Laws of Student Government are documents by which I am sworn to uphold for the betterment of my University and my fellow students. In order to see that my community receives the best that Student Government has to offer, I intend to see that both documents are thoroughly studied and updated where and as needed.

Thank you,

Mitchell R. Dobson-Green
Student Body President, University of Michigan-Dearborn

June 11, 2020

Received by the Regents
June 25, 2020



Subject: Rackham Student Government (RSG) June Report

President Schlissel, members of the Board of Regents, and Executive Officers of the University, I am honored to submit the following report to you on behalf of the Rackham Student Government (RSG). There are four parts to this June report:

- (I) a call for a **housing, tuition, and student fee freeze**, and the **immediate removal of the international student fee**,
- (II) calling on the University to **support the Black Community**,
- (III) asking for a response to the [Covid Caucus letter detailing](#) asks to **support graduate students that has gone unanswered**, and
- (IV) the need to **engage in open dialogue with graduate researchers, students, and teachers** in order to **support our mental health and wellbeing**.

(I) I want to highlight again our ask for **Housing and Tuition rates to be frozen at their 2019-2020 rates**, as done by many other institutes of higher education in response to this pandemic (e.g., Penn State University, Rutgers University, Michigan State University, and Wayne State University), as also emphasized in RSG's *Resolution in Support of Tuition and Housing Increase Freezes at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor during the COVID-19 Crisis* (May 28th). I also want to highlight the ask from the May update that **all student fees be frozen for the fall term** and that **the \$500 per semester international student fee be ended immediately and refunded to students for the Winter 2020 term**. RSG outlined in the May update how this fee in its very nature goes against the DEI initiatives of this university, and how the international student fee can only serve to harm international students and their enrollment in these tumultuous times.

(II) I want to call on the University of Michigan to **support the Black Community**, as shared in the [joint statement](#) by the [Graduate Employees' Organization \(GEO\)](#), [Graduate Rackham International \(GRIN\)](#), [Rackham Student Government \(RSG\)](#), and [Students of Color \(SCOR\)](#) on June 4th. I want to first thank the administration for having a graduate student liason, Naomi M. Wilson, at last Friday's (June 5th) Town Hall. However, I would like to highlight the following asks that we have not heard a response from, which provide direct means to support the community:



RACKHAM

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

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- **Immediate investment in scholarship and research activity** that addresses racial inequity and systematic inequality in addition to deliberate investments in the professional trajectory and well-being of Black scholars and their work.
- **Re-evaluation of tenure hiring criteria** to more seriously consider diversity service work as this has been shown to be disproportionately placed on racially and ethnically underrepresented scholars.
- Provide **immediate guidelines and training materials** to members of the community. Specifically, for educators to make their classes more inclusive and address issues of racial inequity in the classroom, broaden offerings of **bystander intervention training**, and expand the [Alternatives to Violent Force](#) trainings at UMich-Dearborn to all campuses.
- Begin **immediate disengagement from police forces** known to engage in discriminatory practices at the University of Michigan. This should follow practices laid out in the University of Minnesota [President's statement to students, faculty, and staff](#); and **initiate the demilitarization and disarmament of campus police**.

(III) [This letter from the Covid Caucus](#), sent to administration on May 8th, and **signed by over 1,800 graduate students, faculty, staff, and allies, including GEO, GRIN, and RSG**, remains unanswered. Although we understand that the university is experiencing severe financial hardships, we call on the university to **show its commitment to graduate students**. A broad dismissal of these asks as being *“not financially feasible”* in the [pro-forma reply](#) calls for a need for the university to **(1) open the books** and **(2) engage in conversations with graduate students** to determine how these asks can be met and prioritized in this current climate.

I expect to **learn more on current questions, comments, and concerns** surrounding the **campus ramp-up and current climate** on Tuesday, June 16th, where **GRIN, RSG, and SCOR** will have co-hosted a virtual town hall to once again provide a platform for students to interface with Rackham administration.

(IV) Graduate students' are experiencing an increase of mental health problems, levels of exhaustion, and overall frustration in these past few months. I understand that we are not alone in this, and although we are greatly appreciative of the resources that have been provided in these past weeks to rise to meet these needs, it is essential to call out that **these frustrations and feelings of crisis are being exacerbated as we feel left out and excluded from decisions that**



impact our personal well-being and safety. The university needs to **include a diverse group of graduate researchers, teachers, and students in the administrative decisions that affect us.** This will increase the efficacy of university initiatives as they will have graduate student input from their conception, which in turn can provide some ease of mind as we know **our voices are being heard, respected, and incorporated into the decision making process.** Most importantly though, this will **demonstrate the university's commitment to us.**

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sarah Jane Bork'.

Sarah Jane Bork
President, Rackham Student Government