

University of Michigan Regents Communication:

September 2026 Faculty Governance Update

Item for Information

Subject: September 2026 Faculty Governance Update

Executive Summary

- 1) Congratulations on a successful Presidential Search, and thank you!
- 2) AI is on faculty minds, with a range of views about it.
- 3) Regent Candidate Forum to be held Sept. 24.
- 4) SACUA starts “Open Questions” panel series to support genuine dialogue at UM.

1. Presidential Search – congratulations, and thank you!

Congratulations on a successful presidential search! SACUA is grateful to the Regents for overseeing the presidential search process and for selecting a leader with an exceptional record, both as an academic and university administrator. We appreciate the significant effort and the many meetings and interviews that were undertaken in a short time over the summer.

SACUA Vice Chair, Kirsten Herold, and I were able to meet Dr. Cybele Raver at the reception following her formal confirmation. We look forward to her arrival and to working with her.

2. AI on Faculty Minds

Just as in the rest of society, AI is on the minds of many faculty members, and it appears to be as polarizing at UM as it is elsewhere. Faculty members variously work on cutting-edge AI technologies; use AI to do research; evaluate AI’s flaws; investigate AI’s impact on users; estimate AI’s economic effects; consider AI’s environmental harms; create art with AI; conduct data analysis with AI; explore human-AI relationships; critique AI’s influence on young minds; and speculate about both bright and dark AI futures. Some faculty are eager for access to the most recent AI models; others want nothing to do with AI.

Speaking as Faculty Senate Chair, and recognizing that we faculty have differing views, I believe that the university should do what it generally does in other contexts – provide support *across* all the ways faculty want to engage or not with AI. As a university, we offer spaces for thundering sports events and spaces for quiet contemplation – and we could do the same with AI. We could provide advanced AI models for those who wish to experiment with it, *and* we could provide AI-free zones for those who want to avoid it. As a university, we should

house the top programs in the development and application of AI, as well as the top programs in the critique and skepticism of AI. UM is large, it should contain multitudes.

Meanwhile, whatever our personal degree of engagement with AI, faculty are deeply concerned about its effect on the teaching mission. According to the [“AI in Education” report](#) commissioned by Provost McCauley and VPIT-CIO Pendse, the vast majority of faculty are concerned about AI’s potential harms to student learning, with 95% of respondents concerned about a negative impact on critical thinking. Whether we use AI in teaching or not, AI presents a major new challenge to pedagogy. It is a challenge that we are up for, and we have already been mobilizing to meet it. At the same time, we welcome support from the university administration to help us meet the challenge, in all the different ways we seek to meet it.

3. Regent Candidate Forum to be held September 24.

As occurred two years ago, the Faculty Senate Office is hosting a [Regent Candidate Forum](#) on Sept. 24 (4-5:30pm, University Hall, Ruthven) to allow the UM community and the general public to meet some of the candidates who will be on the upcoming ballot for UM Regents. All six candidates were invited. So far, we have received confirmations from Regent Paul Brown (D), Candidate Kyle Maas (US Taxpayers), Candidate Amir Makled (D), and Candidate Michael Schostak (R).

4. SACUA starts “Open Questions” panel series to support genuine dialogue at UM.

In order to model and encourage meaningful, engaged dialogue about (moderately) controversial topics for the UM and Washtenaw County communities, SACUA and the Faculty Senate Office are running a new [“Open Questions” panel series](#) this year. Each month, we will feature UM faculty who hold differing views about a specific topic to present their perspectives and answer questions. The goal is an open, genuine exchange of ideas, not debate or argument.

The series will be held monthly during AY2026-27. Our first panel is on September 17, 2026 (4-5:30pm) in Palmer Commons, on the topic of institutional neutrality. (Unfortunately, the event overlaps with the September Board meeting, but we hope some of you may be able to attend a future panel in the series.)

Respectfully submitted: September 4, 2026



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