

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
REGENTS COMMUNICATION
Items for information

SUBJECT: Early October 2025 Faculty Governance update

1. Free Speech on Campus

In the days following the murder of the activist Charlie Kirk several members of the Michigan faculty who expressed critical views of the late Kirk's politics were subject to unwelcome and aggressive attacks. In some cases the addresses of Kirk's critics were published on social media, and one of our colleagues has been obliged to move out of state, as they feel that their family is not safe in Ann Arbor. Another member of the faculty has had police visiting their house on a regular schedule to ensure their welfare. The Chair of the Senate was subjected to misleading and derogatory reports in conservative media.

We are aware that the University was under intense pressure to chastise and discipline members of the faculty. We are glad that President Grasso and members of the Board stood fast against these concerted efforts to limit what faculty can say in public life. The viciousness of these attacks is a premonition of the pressures that lie ahead, and for that reason faculty government has recently formed a Protections for Faculty working group to review the supports currently offered by the University to faculty members facing harassment and doxing.

2. Presidential Search Committee resolution

At its meeting on 22 September the Faculty Senate Assembly—a representative body of 77 members—[adopted a Statement Concerning the Presidential Search Committee](#). The statement highlights the exclusion of members of elected faculty government from the Presidential Search Committee, laments the fact that the search process has been detached from a broader discussion around the concerns of faculty government, and calls on the institution's leaders to ensure that, as a matter of principle, all search committees for executive officers of the University should have representatives of faculty government among their members. The resolution will now be put before the whole of the Faculty Senate—7,800 faculty—for a vote on 3 November.

It is worth remembering that, as recently as 1987, the President Search Committee was selected entirely by SACUA. It worked with the Regents to identify and screen suitable candidates, collect the insights and ideas of students, faculty and staff, and define the

vision that the new president would pursue. This is the search that eventually netted President James Duderstadt, one of the most consequential and forward-looking UM presidents of the 20th century.

3. H1B visa resolution

At its meeting on 22 September the Senate Assembly [adopted a resolution concerning the federal government's new rules concerning H1B visas](#). The resolution highlights the critically important role that H1B visa-holders play in Michigan Medicine, the College of Engineering, and in the teaching of foreign languages. It articulates the faculty's disapproval of the new rules guiding the H1B visa process, asks our legislators to work to reverse these iniquitous new policies, and calls on the University to offer all possible support for international faculty, students and staff who are dealing with this policy.

4. ECRT reporting obligation stirs anxiety

Faculty government has re-examined [the documentation regarding the University's 2024 Resolution Agreement with the Office of Civil Rights](#). In light of recent developments in Washington, we are concerned that the University has evidently agreed to share—on a regular schedule—all complaints filed with the ECRT office under the new mandatory reporting guidelines with the federal government. The prospect here is that a flood of unverified, partisan reports produced by people inside and outside the University will now be conveyed wholesale to Washington, where they can be used to target, criticize, caricature, and intimidate members of our teaching faculty. This will have a profoundly deleterious effect on free speech and free learning on campus.

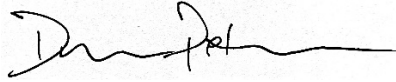
We are discussing these matters with ECRT director Tami Strickman and others involved in implementing this new policy. We trust that, in meeting its reporting obligations under this agreement, the privacy and protection of faculty, staff and students will be the University's paramount concern.

5. Work Retreats and Political Speech in the Public Square events

In the past two weeks faculty government has convened several events that are designed to foster respectful and vigorous engagement across campus. On Tuesday 23 September we convened the first of four scheduled events titled 'Political Speech and the Public Square'. This first event brought together seven students, faculty and staff to discuss the question

‘What Do We Want in a New UM President?’ [A report on the event was published here](#). On Wednesday and Thursday, 24 and 25 September, we held the first of several faculty work retreats in the Hatcher Library. Some 50 faculty spent the morning working on research and writing alongside each other, then convened for conversation and fellowship over lunch. We thank the Library’s Dean, Lisa Carter, for hosting us for these events.

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