

The University of Michigan Regents Communication

Request for Action

Subject: Report of Faculty Retirement

Action Requested: Adoption of Retirement Memoir

Aline J. Cotel, Ph.D., Arthur F. Thurnau Professor, associate professor of civil and environmental engineering, College of Engineering, and associate professor of Program in the Environment, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and School for Environment and Sustainability, retired from active faculty status on December 31, 2026.

Professor Cotel received her diplome d'ingénieur in aerospace engineering from École Polytechnique Féminine in France in 1991. She earned her M.Sc. in 1992 and her Ph.D. in 1995, both in aeronautics and astronautics, from the University of Washington. She then served as a postdoctoral fellow at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory until 1996, when she accepted an assistant professor position in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Manitoba in Canada. Professor Cotel joined the University of Michigan faculty in 1999 as an assistant professor in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and was promoted to associate professor in 2007.

Professor Cotel is among the university's most distinguished and dedicated teachers. In recognition of her exceptional contributions to undergraduate education, she was named an Arthur F. Thurnau Professor in 2016. She also received the University Undergraduate Teaching Award in 2012 and the James M. Robbins Excellence in Teaching Award from the Great Lakes District of Chi Epsilon in 2001.

A deeply interdisciplinary scholar, Professor Cotel has made scientific contributions in geophysical fluid dynamics and biological fluid dynamics. Across these areas, her work advanced understanding of fundamental physical processes driven by turbulence and vorticity dynamics and applied those insights to a wide range of scientific and engineering problems. Her research has been highly collaborative, engaging faculty across and beyond engineering, including biology, ecology, geology, atmospheric and space sciences, and architecture.

Beyond her teaching and research, Professor Cotel has had a lasting impact on the development of international opportunities for University of Michigan students. For the past six years, she has served as the faculty advisor for International Programs in Engineering.

Following her Fulbright Scholar appointment at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa in 2017, she received an honorary faculty appointment from that institution.

Professor Cotel has also been a tireless advocate for women in engineering. More than a decade ago, she founded the Women in Fluids network, which has since become an integral

part of the annual meeting of the Division of Fluid Dynamics of the American Physical Society. She has also co-founded the Water-Water nexus under the umbrella of the Environmental and Water Resources Institute (EWRI), creating opportunities for women faculty and researchers from low-resource countries to gain visibility and participate in professional meetings.

In addition, Professor Cotel served as the faculty advisor for GradSWE (Graduate student chapter for Society of Women Engineers) for many years and played an essential role in creating a summer leadership camp for women engineering students in Liberia, Western Africa. This work contributed to the establishment of the first student chapter of the Society of Women Engineers on the African continent. Her efforts were recognized by the 2015 Willie Hobbs Moore Mentoring Award and the 2014 Global Engagement Recognition Award.

Professor Cotel's contributions to the University of Michigan have been broad, meaningful, and enduring. Through her excellence in teaching, her interdisciplinary scholarship, her commitment to international engagement, and her advocacy for women in engineering, she has made a profound impact on students, colleagues, and communities around the world.

The Regents now salute this distinguished faculty member by naming **Aline J. Cotel, Arthur F. Thurnau Professor Emerita, associate professor emerita of civil and environmental engineering, and associate professor emerita of Program in the Environment.**

Respectfully submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Kinsey', with a stylized, flowing script.

Jon Kinsey

Vice President and Secretary of the University

October 2026