

November 2011 Regents' Report

Michigan Student Assembly

Received by the Regents
November 17, 2011



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DeAndree R. M. Watson
President

President Coleman, members of the Board of Regents, and Executive Officers of the University, it is my privilege and honor to submit the following report to you on behalf of the Michigan Student Assembly. Below is a brief update of our activities and operations, as we continue to serve the students of this University.

Exams on Election Day

In an effort to promote uninhibited civic engagement for the students of the University, the Assembly recently passed a resolution calling for a University policy against exams on national election days. Citing U.S. Census data that shows that the 18-24 age group has the lowest voter turnout of any age demographic, the resolution states that exams on election days have been a significant barrier to students voting in the past. We believe that it is consistent with the University's mission statement to encourage students to participate in their government through engaging in national elections, and that removing all impediments to do so is essential. This is a joint effort between the MSA Academic Affairs Commission and the MSA Voice Your Vote Commission. We look forward to working with members of the University's faculty and administration in the near future to establish such a policy.

Fair Trade Week

During the week of November 10 the MSA Peace and Justice Commission, in collaboration with the College Democrats at the University of Michigan, will host a Fair Trade Week on campus in an effort to encourage more socially conscious consumerism and to increase fair trade options on campus. The week will include several events including an art exhibition, a taste fest, and an educational panel, which will culminate on Thursday with a rally to support fair trade and increase fair trade options on our campus.

Know Your Housing Rights

As students begin to consider off-campus housing for the next academic year, we believe that it is extremely important for each student to fully grasp and understand all of their rights as tenants, in addition to the laws and regulations surrounding lease agreements and rental property in Ann Arbor and the State of Michigan. This is why the MSA Student Rights Commission has joined forces with the U-M Undergraduate Chapter of the ACLU and Student Legal Services to host a series of workshops for students considering moving off-campus. Each workshop will include a

Q&A session with an attorney from Student Legal Services, and Tenants Rights informational pamphlets. The first workshop is scheduled for Monday November 7th in the Michigan Union.

November All-Campus Election

On November 16th and 17th students will have the opportunity to select their student representatives for the Michigan Student Assembly, the LSA Student Government, and the University of Michigan Engineering Council. This year, in an effort to increase voter turnout, the MSA Election Director has formed partnerships with local businesses to provide incentives for students to vote in the election, and plans to establish polling sites across campus to allow students to vote while traveling to class. The incentives include discounts to local restaurants, and are redeemable via a voter confirmation sticker that will be available after a student votes at a polling site. Although the MSA November election is only to fill vacant seats on the Assembly and the DPS Oversight Committee, we already have several candidacy applications filed for the various vacancies and expect more before the filing deadline.

Student Association of Michigan U-M Conference

The Student Association of Michigan is an organization that represents all fifteen public universities in the State of Michigan. Each month, during the academic year, the body meets to discuss issues affecting college students in the State. The University of Michigan has the honor of hosting the next conference, which is scheduled to take place during the weekend of December 2nd. Recently the association voted in favor of Senate Bill 45, which is a bill to establish anti-bullying procedures in K-12 education, and against House Bill 4980 which addressed tuition rates for Wayne State University and Michigan State University.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

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DeAndree R. M. Watson
President