

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
REGENTS COMMUNICATION
Items for information

SUBJECT: Early November 2025 Faculty Governance update

1. Faculty Senate Vote Breaks Records

On Monday, 3 November the Faculty Senate convened for the first time this year. Under consideration were nine motions, each of which was put forward by members of the faculty. In the ensuing election 3,638 colleagues cast ballots, or 46.6 percent of the total Faculty Senate. It is by far the biggest number of voters in the history of the University of Michigan.

All of the nine resolutions passed with over 80 percent of the total vote, and a few resolutions passed with well over 90 percent of the vote. The tabulated results of the election [can be found here](#); here is [a Daily report](#) on the election; and here is [a Record report](#). Based on this resounding vote, it is clear that the faculty of the University of Michigan feel as follows:

* Faculty really do want UM Medicine to provide gender-affirming care to trans youth. The vote for [Motion 2](#) comes in at over 80 percent.

* Faculty regard President Trump's 'Compact for Excellence in Higher Education' as a bad deal for American academia and as a threat to the work we do. Fully 93 percent of the faculty voted for [Motion 3](#).

* Faculty think that the University's new travel policy ought to be pulled back and reworked. Some 96 percent of faculty voted for [Motion 1](#).

* We need to figure out what AI is doing to our students' ability to think and learn for themselves. 86 percent of faculty [would like there to be a comprehensive policy](#).

* 88 percent of faculty voted for [Motion 7](#), which calls on upper administration and the Regents to respect the faculty role in the student discipline process.

* 88 percent of faculty voted for [Motion 9](#), which asks that—going forward—faculty government have a representative on executive level searches. Faculty are not happy about the manner in which the presidential search committee was constituted.

In the days to come I will work with the appropriate executive officers whose areas of responsibility overlap with the motions we've adopted.

2. DMN Lecture Centers on Authoritarianism

Faculty government organized the 35th annual Davis, Markert and Nickerson Lecture on Academic and Intellectual Freedom on 6 November. An audience of around 500 heard the historian Ruth Ben-Ghiat speak about ‘Intellectual Freedom in an Authoritarian Age’. The lecture honors Professors Davis, Markert and Nickerson, who were drummed out of University service in the 1950s, when the McCarthy-era Congress was investigating the threat of Communism on U.S. college campuses. In her lecture Dr. Ben-Ghiat argued that today—as in the 1950s—an authoritarian state is taking shape in the United States. She universities ‘frontline targets in the struggle over democracy’ and urged faculty and students to resist the placid temptations of quiescence in the face of repression. A full report on the lecture can be [found in the *University Record*](#).

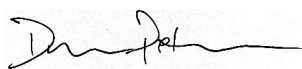
3. SACUA Visit to U-M Flint

On 24 October several members of SACUA made a formal visit to UM Flint. We had occasion to meet with Flint faculty chair Gabriela Hristova and other members of faculty government; with the leadership of the American Federation of Teachers chapter in Flint; and with Chancellor Laurence Alexander, who graciously spent time with us. We were particularly impressed with the AFT-AAUP Agreement of April 2025, which gives Flint faculty notable advantages—in compensation, benefits, and in security of employment.

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

In the past weeks faculty government has convened several events that are designed to foster respectful and vigorous engagement across campus. On Tuesday 21 October we convened the second of four scheduled events titled ‘Political Speech and the Public Square’. This first event brought together several students, faculty and staff to the Diag a noon to discuss the question ‘Artificial Intelligence: Is It a Good Thing?’. A report on the event [can be found here](#). On 22 and 23 October we convened the latest in our ongoing series of work retreats, which are meant to offer faculty a space for concentrated work and also for fellowship with colleagues and co-workers. These work retreats have been very fully subscribed, and we look forward to more of them in the coming weeks.

Submitted: 10 November 2025



Derek R. Peterson
Chair of the Faculty Senate
Ali Mazrui Professor of History and African Studies