

# Faculty Senate

Minutes

November 16, 2021



MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY

**Present:** J. Alan, S. Anthony, E. Aronoff, S. Barman, J. Bazil, J. Beck, J. Bunnell, S. Carey, D. Carnahan, B. Chakrani, J. Popovich (for J. Cholewicki), A. Contreras, L. Davenport, d. de Simone, D. DeVoss, M. Donahue, K. Dontje, D. Ewoldsen, P. Fan, B. O'Brien (for J. Francis), M. Fulton, S. Gasteyer, M. Ghamami, N. Gisholt, M. Brodhead (for D. Gould), J. Guzzetta, B. Halbritter, T. Hamann, A. Hauser, A. Heard-Booth, B. Van Dyke (for D. Hershey), P. Horner, S. Joshi, R. Jussaume, M. Juzwik, K. Kelly-Blake, A. Kepsel, D. Kirk, S. Konstantopoulos, R. LaDuca, K.S. Lee, G. Leininger, T. Li, J. Lipton, L. Lorenzo, M. Mazei-Robison, M. Mechtel, C. Meghea, S. Mollaoglu, S. Moore, A. Odom, A. Pegler-Gordon, I. Plough, G. Pregent, K. Prouty, L. Robinson, B. Roth, A. Ruvio, R. Sanders, R. Scrivens, T. Silvestri, W. Singel, E. Shapiro, M. Smania, J. Spink, P.N. Tan, B. Teppen, M. Williams, W. Wong T. Woodruff, M. Worden, C. Wrede

**Absent:** S. Logan, S. Stanley, H. Xiao

The Michigan State University Faculty Senate held a regular meeting on Tuesday, November 16, 2021 at 3:15 p.m. via Zoom with Chairperson Karen Kelly-Blake presiding. The agenda was approved following amendments. The draft minutes of the October 12, 2021 meeting were approved as presented.

Provost Teresa K. Woodruff, Executive Vice President for Health Sciences Norman J. Beauchamp Jr., and the chairperson gave remarks.<sup>1</sup>

Senator Megan Donahue moved to adopt a **resolution** reading:

*Whereas,* The University predicted pandemic-associated budget shortfalls in state funding of \$43M and tuition of \$63M resulted in non-union academic managers, faculty, and academic staff being subjected to 10 months of 1-8% salary reductions, 18 months of halved retirement matches, and a planned 3-year gap between merit raises; and,

*Whereas,* The University's actual shortfall in state funding was \$0 and tuition income was \$7M higher than expected; and,

*Whereas,* The University received Federal COVID non-student-aid relief of over \$86M through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund; and,

*Whereas,* The University's investments saw a 42% return over the past year; and,

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<sup>1</sup> A transcript of their remarks and the rest of the meeting is available at <https://acadgov.msu.edu/sites/default/files/content/Faculty-Senate/2021-2022/2021-10-12/Faculty%20Senate%202021-10-12%20Transcript.docx>.

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- Whereas,* The University’s reductions in salary and retirement contributions are the most severe and longest lasting within the Big 10; be it
- Resolved,* That Faculty Senate endorse a prompt retroactive restoration of all pandemic associated salary reductions and retirement matches, and a reinstatement of the FY22 merit raise to non-union academic managers, faculty, and academic staff; and be it further
- Resolved,* That such a retroactive restoration include former non-union academic managers, faculty, and academic staff subjected to pandemic pay and benefit reductions who were employed between July 1, 2020 and December 31, 2021.

The resolution was adopted following debate<sup>2</sup>.

University Committee on Curriculum Chairperson Marci Mechtel gave a report on behalf of UCC.

University Committee on Faculty Tenure Chairperson Susan Barman gave an update on the Discipline Process and Sanction Review Taskforce.

Senator Anna Pegler-Gordon moved to adopt a resolution calling on the university to hire an employee to support undocumented students. The resolution was adopted following debate.

Senator Pegler-Gordon led a discussion regarding the state of academic freedom in relation to teaching about race and racism. Senator Pegler-Gordon moved to adopt a resolution reading:

*Whereas,* State legislative proposals have been introduced across the United States to suppress teaching and learning about race and racism in schools, colleges, and universities. These measures have been signed into law in Idaho, Iowa, Tennessee, Oklahoma, and Texas; and,

*Whereas,* In Michigan, a Senate measure was introduced in May 2021 and debated in October barring K-12 school districts and schools from teaching critical race theory, any part of the New York Times’ 1619 Project, or other “anti-American and racist theories” with a 5% penalty funding cut for schools that defy the order. In

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<sup>2</sup> A copy of the presentation given by Senator Jack Lipton during the resolution’s debate is available at <https://acadgov.msu.edu/faculty-senate/minutes/november-16-2021>.

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November 2021, a different measure passed the Michigan House of Representatives; and,

*Whereas,* The Faculty Senate is pleased to see robust public opposition to these laws from MSU faculty and MSU Trustee Rema Vassar; and,

*Whereas,* Nonetheless, the Faculty Senate remains concerned that such bills pose a threat to the right of faculty to teach and students to learn about race and racism in the United States; create a chilling effect on K-12 teachers in addressing race and racism in their classroom; substitute political mandates for the professional judgement of K-12 educators, informed by academic scholarship on these topics; and will lead to students being less well-prepared for discussions of race and racism at the college level; therefore be it,

*Resolved,* That the Faculty Senate affirms the Joint Statement on Efforts to Restrict Education about Racism authored by the AAUP, PEN America, the American Historical Association, and the Association of American Colleges & Universities, endorsed by over seventy organizations, and issued on June 16, 2021.

The resolution was adopted following debate.

Senator David Ewoldsen moved to adopt a resolution reading:

*Whereas,* Classes are cancelled during Thanksgiving and the Friday after Thanksgiving and,

*Whereas,* The Thanksgiving holiday is one of the busiest travel days of the year; and,

*Whereas,* Students may take advantage of travelling back home during the Thanksgiving holiday the Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving, and,

*Whereas,* Classes are not cancelled the Wednesday prior to the Thanksgiving holiday which may cause difficulty for students to travel back home; and,

*Whereas,* Instruction should still continue on Wednesday as it is designated as an instruction day on the Academic Calendar; therefore be it,

*Resolved,* That Faculty Senate endorse the recommendations to accommodate undergraduate students for the Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving:

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- Survey undergraduate student plans for the Thanksgiving holiday;
- Continue normal instruction and excusing undergraduate student absences to have no effect on their grade the Wednesday prior to the Thanksgiving holiday;
- Change the modality of instruction to a synchronous virtual format on the Wednesday prior to the Thanksgiving holiday; and/or,
- Change the modality of instruction to an asynchronous virtual format on the Wednesday prior to the Thanksgiving holiday.

*Resolved,* That these recommendations are to be determined by individual faculty members and are not a mandate or change in University policy.

The resolution was defeated following debate.

The meeting adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tyler Silvestri".

Tyler Silvestri  
Secretary for Academic Governance

**Approved:** December 14, 2021