Approval of Agenda

The Michigan State University Faculty Senate held a special meeting on Thursday, October 26, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. via Zoom with Chairperson Jack Lipton presiding. The agenda was approved as presented.

Remarks

Chairperson Jack Lipton gave remarks.[[1]](#footnote-2)

Resolution on Board of Trustees Chairperson

Senator Jamie Alan introduced a resolution that—after amendment—read:

*Whereas,* Board of Trustees Chairperson Rema Vassar allegedly:[[2]](#footnote-3)

* inappropriately interfered with matters delegated to the administration;
* appeared in an advertisement for the private wealth management firm founded and managed by a former trustee;
* traveled on a donor’s private jet and dismissed suggestions that her conduct was not consistent with the university’s standards; and

*Whereas*, MSU is accredited through the Higher Learning Commission and must comply with its Criteria for Accreditation policy, which states, in relevant part, “**2.C.4.** The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties” and “**2.C.5.** The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution’s administration and expects the institution’s faculty to oversee academic matters”[[3]](#footnote-4); and

*Whereas*, In a statement,[[4]](#footnote-5) Chairperson Vassar acknowledged flying on a donor’s private plane to sit courtside at an MSU basketball game and failed to address the allegation that she effectively endorsed an external party’s wealth management firm by appearing in an advertisement in her capacity as chairperson; and

*Whereas*, Chairperson Vassar’s statement did not address the allegation that she, “without the knowledge or participation of the interim president,” met “with Lansing officials to pitch moving university colleges and students to a Lansing site”[[5]](#footnote-6); therefore be it

*Resolved*, Chairperson Rema Vassar’s admitted and uncontested actions violate the standards of quality by which the Higher Learning Commission determines whether an institution merits accreditation, and, as a consequence, the Faculty Senate calls on her to resign from the Board of Trustees; and be it further

*Resolved*, That, if Chairperson Vassar does not resign, the Faculty Senate calls on the Board of Trustees to remove her as chairperson and calls on the governor to begin the process of removing Chairperson Vassar from the Board of Trustees per [MCL 168.293](https://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(hgsgq2iqnb5xl2clxkj4aq5i))/mileg.aspx?page=GetObject&objectname=mcl-168-293#:~:text=The%20governor%20shall%20have%20the,corrupt%20conduct%20in%20office%2C%20or); and be it further

*Resolved*, The Faculty Senate will file an official complaint with the Higher Learning Commission regarding Chairperson Vassar’s actions and requests that the HLC will provide the trustees with the professional development for which the Faculty Senate has previously called.[[6]](#footnote-7)

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

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Tyler Silvestri  
Secretary for Academic Governance  
**Approved: November 21, 2023**

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| --- | --- |
| **Attendance** | |
| **Present** | 66 |
| **Absent** | 15 |
| **Total** | 81 |
| **Quorum** | 42 |

| **Constituency/Title** | **Name** | **Attendance** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Academic Specialist Advisory Committee | Kelly Hodges | Present |
| Agriculture and Natural Resources | Satish Joshi | Present |
| Agriculture and Natural Resources | Matt Raven | Present |
| Agriculture and Natural Resources | Jeff Swada | Present |
| Agriculture and Natural Resources | Lorraine Weatherspoon | Present |
| Agriculture and Natural Resources | Cimberly Weir | Present |
| Arts and Letters | Brahim Chakrani | Present |
| Arts and Letters | Danielle DeVoss | Present |
| Arts and Letters | Zach Kaiser | Present |
| Arts and Letters | Kristen Mapes | Present |
| Arts and Letters | Kate Birdsall | Substituted: Victor Rodriguez-Pereira |
| ASMSU | Alissa Hakim | Present |
| At Large, Chairperson | Jack Lipton | Present |
| At Large, Vice Chairperson | Rebecca Malouin | Present |
| At Large | Justin St. Charles | Present |
| At Large | Angela Wilson | Present |
| At Large | d'Ann de Simone | Present |
| Business | Quan Zhang | Absent |
| Business | John Spink | Present |
| Business | Ayalla Ruvio | Substituted: Forrest Morgeson |
| Communication Arts and Sciences | Alexandrea Thrubis Stanley | Absent |
| Communication Arts and Sciences | Dan Hiaeshutter-Rice | Present |
| Communication Arts and Sciences | Rabindra "Robby" Ratan | Present |
| Council of Graduate Students | Hannah Jeffery | Present |
| Education | Emre Umucu | Absent |
| Education | Amelia Gotwals | Present |
| Education | Matthew Pontifex | Present |
| Emeriti Faculty | Gary Stone | Absent |
| Engineering | Chengcheng Fang | Absent |
| Engineering | Andrew Mason | Present |
| Engineering | Mark Worden | Present |
| Engineering | Neil Wright | Present |
| Executive Vice President for Health Sciences | Norman Beauchamp | Present |
| Faculty Grievance Official | Francisco Villarruel | Absent |
| FRIB | Chris Wrede | Present |
| Human Medicine | Cristian Meghea | Absent |
| Human Medicine | Scott Counts | Present |
| Human Medicine | Claire Margerison | Present |
| Human Medicine | Michael Williams | Present |
| Human Medicine | Hua Xiao | Present |
| Interim President | Teresa Woodruff | Absent |
| Interim Provost | Thomas Jeitschko | Absent |
| James Madison | Daniel Ahlquist | Present |
| James Madison | Russell Lucas | Present |
| Law | David Favre | Absent |
| Law | Noga Morag-Levine | Present |
| Libraries | Tad Boehmer | Present |
| Libraries | Kathleen Weessies | Present |
| Lyman Briggs | Stef Shuster | Absent |
| Lyman Briggs | Samantha Cass | Present |
| Lyman Briggs | Peter White | Present |
| Music | Jane Bunnell | Present |
| Music | Cara Stroud | Present |
| Music | Guy Yehuda | Present |
| Natural Science | Gustavo de los Campos | Absent |
| Natural Science | Francois Greer | Absent |
| Natural Science | Brian Gulbransen | Present |
| Natural Science | Min-Hao Kuo | Present |
| Natural Science | Aaron Odom | Present |
| Nursing | Gayle Lourens | Present |
| Nursing | Chastity Warren | Present |
| Osteopathic Medicine | Jason Bazil | Present |
| Osteopathic Medicine | Janice Schwartz | Present |
| RCAH | John Aerni-Flessner | Present |
| RCAH | Tama Hamilton-Wray | Present |
| Social Science | Guo Chen | Absent |
| Social Science | Laurie Bulock | Present |
| Social Science | Raymond Jussaume | Present |
| Social Science | Zeenat Kotval-Karamchandani | Present |
| Social Science | James Dulebohn | Substituted: Patricia Machemer |
| UCAG | Dean Rehberger | Present |
| UCC | Valeta Wensloff | Present |
| UCFA | Jamie Alan | Present |
| UCFT | Sue Barman | Present |
| UCGS | Trixie Smith | Present |
| UCSLE | Jeffrey Tsang | Present |
| UCUE | Antoinette Tesmmer | Present |
| Veterinary Medicine | Stephan Carey | Present |
| Veterinary Medicine | Sean Crosson | Substituted: Vilma Yuzbasiyan-Gurkan |
| Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of Undergraduate Studies | Mark Largent | Present |

1. A video of his remarks (and the rest of the meeting) can be found at <https://mediaspace.msu.edu/media/Faculty+Senate+%7C+October+26%2C+2023/1_nu108qmu>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. [Footnote in resolution] *See* Trustee Brianna Scott, *Letter to Board of Trustees* (dated October 20, 2023; sent October 22, 2023), <https://acadgov.msu.edu/-/media/assets/academicgovernance/docs/faculty-senate/fs-2023-2024/fs-2023-10-26/2023-10-20-trustee-scott-letter-to-board-re-chair.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. [Footnote in resolution] *See* Higher Learning Commission, Policy CRRT.B.10.010, <https://www.hlcommission.org/Policies/criteria-and-core-components.html>. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. [Footnote in resolution] *See* Trustee Rema Vassar, *Setting the Record Straight* (October 23, 2023), <https://twitter.com/kennyjacoby/status/1716643542242840929>. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. [Footnote in resolution] *See* Scott, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. [Footnote in resolution] *See* Faculty Senate Resolution FS2223R02 (September 13, 2022), <https://acadgov.msu.edu/-/media/assets/academicgovernance/docs/faculty-senate/fs-2022-2023/fsresolutions/fs2223r02.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)