

# University Council

Transcript  
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MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY

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TA Silvestri

Tyler Silvestri  
Secretary for Academic Governance



**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** The meeting is called to order. The first order of business is approval of the agenda for September 28, 2021. Could we have a motion to approve the agenda?

**Senator Mick Fulton (UCFA)** So moved.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Let me do it a different way. Is there any objection to approving the agenda as written? Okay. Hearing none, the agenda is approved. Thank you.

Next is approval of the draft minutes from May 25, 2021. Is there any objection to approval of the draft minutes for May 25, 2021? Alright. Then those are approved as well.

So, we'll move over to my remarks, and I want to begin by welcoming everybody to the first University Council meeting in a very new academic year. And I'm very much looking forward to working with all of you in academic governance this year. And I want to give the special thanks to all members of the Steering Committee last year for your very hard work and a special thanks to Jennifer Johnson for her leadership during these extraordinarily challenging times. To all of those you who have turned out, it was an honor to work with each and every one of you and I really appreciate your service to the university. And for those continuing on, I also appreciate your service to the university.

I'll give a brief MSU update today, but I want to start by acknowledging the tragic loss of the faculty member over the weekend. John Sougstad, a longtime Spartan and a faculty member in the school of social work, is the victim of the devastating tragedy. Provost Woodruff will have more to say, but I want to offer my condolences to those who knew him. And then I wanted to remind everyone that we are offering counseling and support through the Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS) or the Employee Assistance Program.

I want to turn now to the start of our academic year, and I think we're off to a solid start. MSU's preliminary enrollment count was 49,800+ of undergraduate, graduate, and graduate-professional students, which is a little higher than last year. As I've mentioned previously, we have more than 9,000 students in the entering class and it also is one of our most diverse with more than 2,300 students of color. And it was great. And I hope you had the chance to join in-person fall welcome events we did and to greet students during fall move in and events such as the [Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi American] mixer that I was at at the Union last week.

The enthusiasm for students coming back is remarkable. As we've mentioned before, of course, we really have two classes coming to campus for the first time.



**President Stanley, cont.** And that adds, I think, to the energy and excitement but also for the work and for the number of people who are learning for the first time what a wonderful campus this is, but also what a complex place Michigan State is. So again, I appreciate all the work that's going on from all of you to help all of these new students feel at home at Michigan State University's campus.

It was also wonderful to see the graduates and families at the commencement ceremony, which we held this month, for our 2020 and some of the 2021 graduates. And as I think I mentioned to the Faculty Senate, I was particularly impressed by an inspiring message from Jennifer and Dan Gilbert for the baccalaureate ceremonies. Their message of determination, resilience, and hope to our graduates and the importance of Michigan State University in their life was timely and so very well delivered.

The other thing that's adding a lot to the excitement this new academic year are two new buildings. We opened our new STEM Teaching and Learning Facility earlier this month. The renovated and expanded Shaw Lane Power Plant site is going to be an inspiring focal point for MSU STEM instruction and innovations in the years ahead. It's a very, very amazing place and I strongly encourage you to take an opportunity to tour it and see exactly what it's like.

And Friday, we publicly opened the new Billman Music Pavilion for the College of Music. Music, the arts, and humanities are crucial parts of the university experience and help bring our community together. And the Billman Pavilion is a great place for students to learn and for performance to showcase their talent. It's remarkable. I have the privilege of living right next door to it, so I get to appreciate it almost every day for at least some of the wonderful sounds that are emerging from it—generally wonderful sounds that emerge from it.

And I want to note that the Board of Trustees this month approved the start of planning for another new building, a campus multicultural center. We completed an inclusive Spartan community-wide feasibility study for the facility earlier this year. This is something students, employees, and alumni have been seeking for years and I'm happy that we can start detailed planning for it.

As we look out over the next decade, I want Michigan State University to be fully recognized as a premier research university that expands opportunity, advances equity, and elevates our excellence in ways that attract world-class talent and support a vibrant and caring community. Our new strategic plan gives us a framework to focus on our priorities, align our assets, and build on our strengths the days and years ahead. The plan that you can read now online has a strong focus on people, centering on student, faculty, and staff success, diversity, equity and inclusion, health, sustainability, and our world-class researching scholarship. The plan is a product of nearly two years in inclusive segment of all segments of the MSU community. I want to thank Vennie Gore



**President Stanley, cont.** and Joe Salem for leading the Steering Committee as well as everyone. I know it's many people in the Zoom call right here who contributed to the plan. We continue this drive for greater excellence and impact with the momentum.

We have new external validation recently in the US News and World Report Rankings, which put five MSU undergraduate programs in the top 10 nationally and eight in the top 15. And that included our supply chain management program, which is number one for the eleventh straight year. Special kudos to the College of Business, we had a number of programs within the top 15. Meanwhile, the New Times Higher Education and World University rankings places MSU in the top 6% of global universities and in the top 35 of public universities in the US. As the strategic plan spells out, our people are the source of our excellence, and I'm grateful for the faculty and academic staff who help us achieve such wonderful recognition.

I hope many of you saw, we sent the financial update to employees yesterday. There were three bits of good news. First, it looks as though we will have a budget for higher education appropriations that would take place October 1. This will provide for a 1% increase to our base and about \$11.9 million in one-time funds as part of federal maintenance of effort requirements.

Second, we've also realized a small increase in tuition revenue for this year compared to last year. But the loss of international students in last year and this year's class means our tuition revenue remains lower than two years ago and this shortfall will linger for the next few years. Still, primarily from domestic enrollment, we do have a small increase, as I mentioned, in revenue compared to last year and little above what we predicted.

A third bit of good news is that our endowment earnings are significantly higher than last year, as is the case with many of our peer universities. While most of these gains are unrealized and in donor restricted accounts, we still will see a higher one-time payout than usual, which will help us generate more one-time funds. Given this unexpected one-time money, we're comfortable accelerating the timing for returning the extra 5% benefit match, and the 10% match from the university for our faculty and academic staff, who dedicate 5% normally towards retirement. That change was going to be built in next year's budget but now we'll be starting early, January 1, 2022 instead of July 1, 2022. We still have some sturdy measures continuing. As for the second year in a row, as everyone knows, units across campus continue to operate under 3% incremental budget cut. We'll continue to monitor that situation very closely.

On the COVID-19 front, we recently updated our online COVID dashboard and added clarity and detail. The dashboard provides the vaccination rates of students, faculty, and staff as well as data from the university's Early Detection Program, residential and hospitality services, quarantine, and isolation



**President Stanley, cont.** housing. The dashboard also reflects the number of COVID-19 cases reported by the Ingham County Health Department as well as the university's physician office. And I want to say a number of cases are headed in the right direction. Cases reported by the university health department and university physician's office have dropped steadily to 73 last week from a high 143, 146 rather in the week of September 6. And positivity rates in the Early Detection Program also continued to decline with cases falling from 93 to 53. We now have only 21 students out of nearly 15,000 that we have on campus in isolation. I think we can thank two things. One is obviously our masking policy—and I'll talk about that in a second—but the other is our vaccination levels.

The dashboard today reports a student, faculty, and staff full vaccination rate—in other words, both doses received—of about 87.6%. And again, about 6% of individuals have had one dose and we're waiting for them to catch up and eventually hope to reach a goal, as I said, of 93% to 94% of vaccination of those at that COVID vaccination. Our indoor masking requirement, as I said, is a key component of our effort. And I want to thank you, students and faculty and staff, for all of your strong commitment to the safety measure. It really makes a huge difference. We know masking is effective not only in stopping COVID transmission, but stopping transmission of influenza, which we're starting the flu season soon or even now. So I encourage everyone who has not had a flu vaccine to get a flu vaccine. And again, I encourage everyone to continue to maintain a very strict masking requirement indoors.

We're doing COVID testing for our Early Detection Program and contact tracing. We've done work to improve the air filtering and facility cleaning in our teaching buildings and now all of our buildings essentially. And last year, we assessed ventilation systems across 84 campuses and more than 1,100 classrooms using CDC, OSHA, and industry COVID safety guidelines and made improvements to a number of those.

So, I'm going to wrap up by saying, as I've said many times, it's been a challenging 19 or so months. I'm really proud of our students, faculty, and staff who have all stepped up to keep us moving forward as a university. I'm going to stop there. But please continue to advance our mission in all that you do and hope everyone has an opportunity to enjoy homecoming week, which is this week of course. So now, I'm going to turn to Provost Woodruff for her remarks.

**Provost Teresa K. Woodruff** Thank you, President Stanley. I do want to also express my sorrow regarding the deeply tragic event that took place on Friday night in Ingham County. Dr. Sougstad earned his PhD in the College of Education in 2010 and had multiple degrees here before that beginning with his bachelor's degree in 1985. He helped lead our Master of Social Work program and was connected with a number of K-12 programs in his local community. I



**Provost Woodruff, cont.** know this loss is deeply felt by our faculty and the College of Social Science and in the College of Education and across our campus community. We all mourn this loss of our fellow Spartan.

I would like to also welcome Chairperson Kelly-Blake to her new role this year and to welcome both new and returning members participating in academic governance. I also want to thank Dr. Jennifer Johnson for your leadership and partnership over the last year. I thank all of you for your commitment to engage in academic governance processes and for taking the time to support your colleagues and peers by way of your representation.

To everyone, faculty, staff, and students, I want to express my heartfelt personal thanks for all the hard work you've done to successfully launch this fall academic season. I'd like to share a few updates with you regarding some recent and upcoming changes in the office of the provost. First of which is that Dr. Thomas Jeitschko was appointed for the position of senior associate provost at the Board of Trustees' September meeting. In his new senior associate provost role, Dr. Jeitschko serves as a member of the provost leadership team and leads discussions on the administrative continuity of the Office of the Provost ensuring smooth functions of the office, good communication, coordination, and the incident management leadership. I'm very grateful to Dr. Jeitschko for his collaborative leadership and advancing all of these areas and initiatives and for taking on this additional set of responsibilities. He does currently serve as the associate provost for graduate and postdoctoral studies and dean of the graduate school and will retain that title through January 1, 2022.

A search for a new dean of the graduate school was initiated according to university bylaws through our Steering Committee meeting and faculty senator and through the faculty senators' vote. And a search committee slate is being developed by the committee on graduate affairs in collaboration with my office. In addition, in March, after a rigorous and wide-ranging search, I appointed Dr. Dave Weatherspoon, professor of agriculture, food and resource economics and associate dean in the office of the associate provost for undergraduate education, as assistant provost for academic strategy and planning. He's been working very closely with the Office of Planning and Budgets, has included a number of groups in institutional research and has facilitated a summit with our deans around the academic strategic plan and the implementation efforts that we began back in July. He is also working now on a summit that will gather together our associate and assistant provosts and associate deans and other unit leaders from the Office of the Provost.

Dr. John Gaboury, associate provost for academic services, enrollment management, and academic initiatives, will return to the faculty in our MSU Libraries on October 1. I very much appreciate Dr. Gaboury's leadership as



**Provost Woodruff, cont.** associate provost and wish him well in this new chapter at MSU. So, beginning October 1, we will be asking Dave Weatherspoon to lead and expand his portfolio of work. So, in addition to university strategic planning implementation, will also provide collaborative leadership in the expanded portfolio of enrollment services, our Office of Financial Aid, our Office of the Registrar, and our Office of Admissions. So, with these added roles, I have elevated the position from assistant to associate provost for enrollment and academic strategy and planning. I hope you join me in welcoming and thanking Dave for his commitment to Michigan State University and for his leadership role in this expanded portfolio.

I have two name changes to announce for within the Office of the Provost. The first is to better reflect the nature and scope of the work of the Office of the Associate Provost and Associate Vice President for Academic Human Resources, which has been known at MSU as "Academic Human Resources," I have approved a request for a name change to the "Office of the Associate Provost and Associate Vice President for Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs." So, commonly it will be called "Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs." This name change aligns with the vast majority of our peer institutions in the Big 10 Academic Alliance, as well as most other places in higher education. The rationale behind this change is really to decrease confusion that currently exists between having both a central human resources and what is called academic human resources to really clarify the roles of each office. Additionally, in past discussion over the years with the University Committee on Faculty Affairs, it became clear that faculty and academic staff may not recognize that the associate provost for academic human resources is the point person for those faculty related questions.

So, I believe this new title will naturally lead to that level of understanding and recognition. And again, it's in alignment with the rest of higher education. The name of the Academic Advancement Network will be changed to the "Office of Faculty and Academic Staff Development." This change also aligns with the majority of peer institutions across the Big 10 and elsewhere in higher education. And as many of you know, our Office for Faculty and Academic Staff Development has two major responsibilities. The first is academic leadership development and the second is academic and educator career development. These are domains that actually are well-regarded from the work that has happened within the Academic Advancement Network, a formal grant that was received by Michigan State. But I think now has morphed into this more traditional faculty and academic staff development role. So that was a bit of a mouthful, but I hope all of you are hearing that these are cleaning up the nomenclature. So, our structure really is aligning with our function.

I also want to acknowledge the recent higher ed rankings and in particular the US News and the Times Higher Education world ranking. MSU is ranked



**Provost Woodruff, cont.** number 93 among 1,662 institutions ranked across 99 countries. That's really impressive. It is an improvement of 12 places in 2021 and places us ahead of several competitive peers, including one in the Ivy league. And so I really want to thank everyone within academic governance and the entire institution. I think the innovative research and teaching at MSU catalyzes excellence across the university while elevating our reputation and prestige. So, it's really gratifying I know for all of us to see our globally outstanding research and tremendous international faculty and our teaching to be recognized so prominently within these rankings.

I also just wanted to touch on the MSU strategic plan 2030. It was very exciting a week ago to read the email from President Stanley and to have been a part of this process during the time I've been here to see it really emblazoned in empowering excellence, advancing equity, and expanding impact. This did receive a unanimous endorsement by our MSU Board of Trustees during its September meeting. And so, the Office of the Provost has been working on academic strategic planning really in anticipation of that endorsement and the university-wide dissemination. So the deans and I met in late July for a summit during which we really began to think about the ways in which this product would be lived out in the ways that we continue to lead within each of the colleges and at an institutional level. We began to identify enabling and pragmatic mechanisms that will be necessary for both the colleges and the Office of the Provost as we move forward. And just this morning we developed an associate provost and unit leaders of the provost office together with the associate and assistant deans within the colleges for the first-ever group meeting to begin to develop those kinds of provostial partnerships that are going to allow us to live out key themes as we move this plan from plan to product.

And it's a very exciting time I think for this institution. It also should not be lost that, in fact, the strategic plan was developed really during a COVID context. That university strategic plan to have come out of an unprecedented time in our global health history really suggests the strength and the resilience of our faculty and academic staff. And I really am grateful for all the exceptional work that has gone into this plan. I'm also grateful for all of you during this past 19 months for continuing to affirm our shared goal of creating exemplary instructional environments. I know that the circumstances of your work can feel labored and fragile to exhilarating and rewarding and sometimes all within a single day. So, while our teaching has changed and there are real concerns about the ways in which the pandemic continues to interrupt our normal home and work lives, please know that this generation of students who are pursuing their goals under these extraordinary circumstances really thank every single one of you, as do I.



**Provost Woodruff, cont.** I wanted to note that about a month ago on Friday, August 27, after spending nearly two weeks working with partners around the globe, MSU was able to evacuate safely 75 Afghan staff, scholars, and family members from Kabul to Albania. These MSU members of our community really were facilitated by Kurt Richter and our College of [Agriculture] and Natural Resources, Steve Hanson, Kathy Wilbur, Doug Gage, and Congresswoman Slotkin. The 75 evacuees who are all Afghan nationals are all connected to our MSU grain research and innovation project, which was a five-year USAID program to bolster Afghanistan's wheat sector to provide a sustainable food source for rebuilding the nation. This was part of Michigan State University's Global Center for Food Systems Innovation led by Kurt Richter. Currently all of our refugees are in Albania and they're under the care of Spirit for America. Over the last four weeks this NGO has cared for their needs ranging from paying for room and board to hygiene kits to laundry supplies to baby formula. Kurt Richter flew over to meet with our members of this team and was able to bring to them the greetings of the president and all of us as an MSU community. So, if anybody's interested in helping with these individuals currently as they wait for visas to move from Albania to other points around the world and hopefully here to East Lansing, Spirit of America is an NGO that will accept any direct support from any of us. And I'm happy to put that link in the chat later.

I'm also excited about all the new buildings that were mentioned, the STEM Teaching and Learning Facility that was opened on September 10 and the Billman Pavilion. I also enjoyed a tour of the recently redesigned Wonders Hall that provides additional space and support for our growth in engineering student enrollment. And this is really space that's going to help the programs remain competitive as we're really bringing in topflight students and faculty. I got to sit in on one of the classes and I could not only see learning take place, I was able to learn from the students that I know many faculty have said that bi-directionality has really been amplified within this current setting. That building was set for opening in January 2020. But this semester is really the opening and I hope that many of you can join us for a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate this new space later in the semester.

And then finally, I was also pleased to join the September 17 and the [September] 19 commencement ceremonies for our 2020 graduates who were not able to participate in an in-person commencement ceremonies because of the restrictions associated with the pandemic. It was great to see so many graduates in person and to share in the who who's with their family members. It was truly celebratory. I was pleased to march behind Chairperson Kelly-Blake, who was our mace-bearer and who was processing behind President Stanley leading our university leaders through the academic processional. And it was just a joy to be able to see and meet so many of our faculty member who



**Provost Woodruff, cont.** attended and lauded our students. And to our academic staff who mobilized in support of these special and extraordinary September ceremonies, I give all of you my gratitude and thanks. So, with that, President Stanley I turn it back to you.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Thank you very much, Provost Woodruff. We will now hear from Executive Vice President for the Health Sciences Norman Beauchamp. Norm.

**Executive Vice President for Health Sciences Norman J. Beauchamp Jr.** Yeah. Thank you, President Stanley, and greetings, dear colleagues. I want to begin by recognizing the efforts of Jennifer Johnson and welcome Chairperson Kelly-Blake. I remember conversations with Jennifer back when I was dean of the College of Human Medicine. I think we were standing in front of the beautiful Bott Building and it was clear Jennifer wanted to contribute to the great work of the university. And clearly the work she took up as chair was exactly that. It was impactful and I think it really advanced the sense of partnership. And I think that's actually key to our success, shared governance, better together. So, thank you, Jennifer. So much of the work all of you are doing on top of duties as assigned is remarkable. So, thank you.

I want to thank all of our colleagues that have worked so hard to keep the environment safe, to test, to vaccinate, and to respond to questions. It's just been an extraordinary university effort. I want to acknowledge the great efforts to bring students back and provide healthcare during times of great need. We've expanded our reach, recognizing that for so many people in our community state they don't have access to health, hope, and healing. And importantly, I'm so excited that this will be a core of our path forward, really mobilizing the university because health is actually not a health sciences thing but it's a university effort. And thanks to the partnership with the provost, one meeting a month I'll have the chance to meet with the deans and work with the house sustainability pillar as we seek to advance health.

I want to give a shout out to the College of Osteopathic Medicine. Ensuring our students get our very best is a dedicated community effort and effectively communicating this to an accreditation body requires great work on top of all the responsibilities that every day presents. And they recently underwent review, and I just want to shout out to the dean and his team that they did a remarkable job and really instilled confidence. We haven't heard back yet, but I can tell you that it was really inspirational to read and see that work. So, with that, I'll turn it back to you, President Stanley.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Thank you so much, Dr. Beauchamp. So now, it's my pleasure to welcome in her new role as chairperson of Faculty Senate and ask her to give her remarks, Chairperson Karen Kelly-Blake.



**Faculty Senate Chairperson Karen Kelly-Blake** Thank you, President Stanley. My remarks are very brief. So, the University Council will use the same title reference practices that we use in the Faculty Senate. So, if you have not changed your name to reflect your title, I'd ask that you do so now.

Also, the secretary has made an offer to a highly qualified candidate for the deputy secretary position and the candidate starts on October 11. So, we're very excited about that. And thank you so much secretary. And thank you.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** That may set a record for the briefest. And congratulations. I'm very impressed. So, thank you. So, we now move to new business. The first order of business is the Academic Calendar Task Force report. The University Committee on Undergraduate Education Chairperson, Gina Leininger, to present—Senator Gina Leininger, I guess—to present.

**Senator Gina Leininger (UCUE)** Thank you, President Stanley. I hope everyone can hear me okay. I have the privilege of telling you about these task force recommendations. And this is informational, please let me know along the way if you have questions. The Academic Task Force was formed by University Council in 2020 based on inquiries and concerns from ASMSU, namely at that point to consider implementing a fall break. The task force did have to pivot after being formed to consider emergent COVID-related issues, which we did and provided recommendations on that. And then were able to turn back to the requests of ASMSU, as well as some additional academic calendar issues that had arisen over that time. What we primarily considered was a request from ASMSU to permanently implement a fall break into the academic year and also to permanently cancel classes on the November election day. Additionally, we considered equalizing the number of instructional weeks between the fall and spring semesters, which those of you who teach in both semesters will know have been notoriously uneven.

Additionally, we considered addressing chronic issues of travel pressures on students who want to celebrate Thanksgiving holiday at home and consideration of canceling classes on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving week. And to do all of these things while providing the utmost educational experience that MSU is fond to be known for but impacting the fewest number of faculty and students.

So, I will review to you upon the consideration of this committee what was made up of joint members from ASMSU, the Council of Graduate Students, the University Committee on Graduate Studies, and the University Committee on Undergraduate Education. Together we examined these issues and propose the following recommendations. That the fall and spring semesters should be both set at 14 weeks of instruction with one week for final exams. And in doing so that we would equalize the number of instructional days between the semesters



**Senator Leininger, cont.** and to the extent possible preserve the same number of Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursdays, and Fridays in semester. So that no one class might be disrupted by where it falls throughout the week.

The task force also recommended establishing a permanent two day fall break in the fall semester that would occur as close as possible to the middle of the semester after midterm and including a weekend. This was very important as we examined the data indicating that many of our peer institutions have a fall break but it's very important for student mental health. And I can tell you, at least from the ground, that students and faculty are very pleased to see that the fall break has been implemented into our current calendar year. The task force also recommended maintaining a full spring break as a full week with no classes that would occur just at or after midterm. And they also recommended that there be at least one free day from any academic activity between the last day of classes and the first day of a final exam week in any fall or spring semester. The idea being that it is important for students to have a study time and a break to adequately prepare for their final examinations. The task force also recommended that the summer semester be continued to be scheduled as it has traditionally been done.

These were the main recommendations of the task force and that, if possible, to implement these, the task force also recommended the following others in that priority. They do recommend canceling classes on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, which is election day. And this is to encourage students, faculty, and staff to be able to participate in voting, a very important civic duty in our country. They additionally recommended canceling classes on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. Again, to promote student health and well-being as this time—and faculty— as a time for everyone to spend with their families during this holiday and also recognizing that this is deep into the semester a difficult time for mental health. Having that day is important to help students, faculty, and staff. Additionally, many of our peer institutions do not have class on that Wednesday before Thanksgiving. So, that summarizes the recommendations that the Academic [Calendar] Task Force made. I'd be happy to answer any questions if you have them.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** So is this an action item or is it—No. So the University Council isn't required to approve it? They do not. Okay, great. Thank you. Any comments or questions?

**Representative Shaurya Pandya (ASMSU)** I did have one. There's something I have been talking about for a while, but I was wondering if there's any additional recommendation that could be made, or a way for me to go about requesting this recommendation, of also making it so that two days after the fall break or essentially within two days of the fall break, the Monday and



**Representative Pandya, cont.** Tuesday following that weekend, no major test or assignment should be due. Two days after the fall break. Essentially meaning that the students should be able to use the fall break to recover, use the weekend to catch up on any assignment, and then submit it later in the week.

**Senator Gina Leininger (UCUE)** Well, thank you, Representative--

**Representative Shaurya Pandya (ASMSU)** I wanted to know where I would be able to go to make a request for that.

**Senator Gina Leininger (UCUE)** So I think I would refer that to Tyler. The Academic [Calendar] Task Force had concluded their duties with this report. If this is an additional concern, it can be looked at as well. It should probably first be referred back to UCUE, and we can consider that from there.

**Representative Shaurya Pandya (ASMSU)** Thank you.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Yeah. So Tyler, do you have any comment that they could—? This is just a comment basically. I think we have to take it as a comment about the recommendation as such. And I'll just remind folks to give the chair a chance to recognize it before you speak.

**Secretary for Academic Governance Tyler Silvestri** Yeah, it's certainly a comment. If there's a motion—I guess the Academic Calendar Task Force was created by University Council—so if there's a motion to have them consider something else I guess they could do it. Their work, as I understand it, is that they're not planning on meeting anymore. So there might be some logistical issues. But in the absence of a motion, yes, it's a comment.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Senator Juzwik. You're muted.

**Senator Mary Juzwik (EDUC)** Sorry. Okay. My question is about, is there--I may have missed this and if I did, I apologize. Is the proposal on the table simply to take away the days? Or is there a proposal to start the semester earlier or extend it longer or something like that? Thanks.

**Senator Gina Leininger (UCUE)** So I can answer that as well as I can. I know that Steve Shablin is here as well and he is the expert on this. But the proposal as such would be to make the spring semester somewhat shorter, a few days shorter. So that it is the same length as the fall semester. The exact means of doing that has been debated to some extent but it would mean, I believe, moving about three instructional days. In terms of the timing of when things would start due to the placement of the summer semester, it's actually nearly



**Senator Leininger, cont.** infeasible, at least as we conclude to start the fall semester any earlier than it currently starts or any later. If it started any later, it would really be difficult coming up against several holidays. So the fall semester is somewhat, as I understand, locked in. The spring semester, we talked about the timing. I don't think that the start of the semester would be much different than what it has been before. Just that some days at the end might come off. But as current these are recommendations and they have not been implemented.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Okay, thank you.

**Senator Denise Hershey (UCGS)** Yeah, I was just--I'm sorry, but Gina, I was on the task force with you and I think we talked about that we were only going to make recommendations and let the powers that would—the registrar's office, et cetera—figure out how to operationalize them.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Thank you for that clarification. And I think again, that's my understanding is that there will be--this is a recommendation that would go to the provost essentially in the office as well. So Senator Gasteyer.

**Senator Stephen Gasteyer (SSC)** Thank you for recognizing me President Stanley and thank you so much to the commission for their hard work. I can only imagine the, for lack of a better term, horse-trading that you had to do in terms of thinking about which days to take out and where you were going to get those back. It sounds like a nightmare to me, but I do feel obligated to raise some concerns that my colleagues in the Department of Social Science have brought to me.

As the calendar is currently implemented, there are prerequisite courses or required courses that faculty are teaching right now where they feel like their semester has been cut from 15 to 13 weeks effectively because of the way the Mondays and Wednesdays fall out. And so, they're finding themselves, for instance, teaching a sociological methods class and trying to figure out what do I cut out because actually that's all supposed to be a prerequisite for when we push our students into statistics class in the spring. Right. And so, I guess the following up on Senator Juzwik's point, I'm wondering how fixed are we at this point? Do we still have the ability to think about how to amend this calendar to make it so that it matches with curricular that we now feel obligated to give to our students?

**Senator Gina Leininger (UCUE)** Thank you, Senator Gasteyer. And if I can speak to that, the task force agree that it would not be fair to be cutting any particular days of instruction that would make it inequitable between let's say



**Senator Leininger, cont.** Monday, Wednesday, Friday courses versus Tuesday, Thursdays. There is an implicit recommendation or explicit recommendation that there be an equal number of those instructional days so that no single class is disrupted currently. The logistics of doing that again as the other senator pointed out, we did not prescribe that at this point. Our recommendation, however, was that classes should have equal numbers of days. So implementing that is another matter. But we recognize your point and we agree with you. That is a very important point.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Thank you. Representative Pandya. You're muted.

**Representative Shaurya Pandya (ASMSU)** One of my colleagues just mentioned that the ability to raise a motion, to request that the Academic Task Force could investigate one of the requests being made. Is it possible that I could raise a motion to request the Academic Task Force to investigate the effects of potentially having a Monday of the Monday and Tuesday following fall break, a day where no test, project, or essay shall be due.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** So there's a motion on the floor. I guess I'll ask if there's a second.

**Representative Shaurya Pandya (ASMSU)** I was just wondering how that would work. I wasn't asking whether or not I could raise one right now.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** I see, I see. Do you want--I think it would work the way we just said that if you wanted to make a motion, you could make a motion and then you would require a second. And then this would purely be, I believe, advisory to the committee since the committee is advisory to the provost. The board secretary has pointed out the committee is planning essentially to complete its work with this so that we'd require, I guess, an agreement on their part to continue.

**Representative Shaurya Pandya (ASMSU)** Okay. Well, I guess I'll raise the motion if anyone wants to second it, although I understand that this is very sudden so if I need to pray greater reasoning for the next meeting.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** I think, one thing I'll say just in comment, if I can, is that when this occurred, when we put in the fall break last time, there was messages, I think that went out, am I correct provost from the provost office that really did encourage faculty to not schedule exams or major assignments during this time. And I think that's probably, given the control of the curriculum, that's a pretty strong recommendation that was coming out to say that we were recommending that. So, I think people are sensitive to this



**President Stanley, cont.** issue and I think you probably would need-- I believe that many people would recognize this and understand it would be counter to the original intent of this to schedule these kinds of things and basically would make it like a finals prep time instead of being a time when students can relax their mental health. So, I'll ask after you at least think about it that way in terms of this was thinking about what to do next.

**Representative Shaurya Pandya (ASMSU)** Okay. Well I'll probably think about it. This is a very new question to me so I'll probably talk to someone else, figure out more of the logistics behind it before I raise much.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Thank you so much. You can be certain that your voice has been heard. Whatever you decide to do, the people recognize the need. So thank you.

**Representative Shaurya Pandya (ASMSU)** Thank you.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Associate Provost and Dean Largent.

**Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education Mark Largent** Thank you. Good afternoon. To raise a couple of the issues that I think have already come up. The Calendar Task Force when they began their work, I think the registrar evaluated our peers and there is no institution in the Big 10 that has a longer semester than MSU does. So, understanding that there are some that are as much as two and a half weeks, each semester, shorter than MSU, led them to believe that balancing the calendar by reducing the number of days in the spring a little bit rather than extending the number of days in the fall was a preferable reaction to it, that is making us longer than anybody else seemed problematic to them and that seemed reasonable to me. The problem is balancing fall and spring because we're already short fall relative to spring and then we're adding to fall break days. So it exacerbated that. And then the other problem is the way in which the days are sort of sprinkled across the days of the week.

Because we start on a Wednesday, which we call a Monday, which is incredibly confusing to students. And then we have a Monday off for Labor Day. And then we have a Monday, Tuesday off now for fall break. And then we have a Thursday, Friday off. It ends up with this problematic situation where depending upon what day of the week your class is, you may find that you have far less than 14, one or two days a week classes to offer to students. So the hope in their balance, and I think they struck a really balanced approach, was figuring out how to make them both even across the Monday through Fridays as well as even fall to spring. The one spot that we have some wiggle room, and



**Associate Provost Largent, cont.** it's one that we need to think about as an institution, is starting on a Wednesday, which is odd.

And the reason that we started on a Wednesday is two-fold. One is because it used to be in Michigan, that the state legislature did not allow K-12s to start until after Labor Day. That has been largely lifted in practice and K-12s are now starting before Labor Day. The other reason is that we had in previous years, a very problematic week leading up to the start of classes called welcome week. And for those of you who weren't here before 2007, welcome week was problematic, not because of how our students experienced it but because it tended to draw young people from across the state in the East Lansing. And so if you look at the arrests and the hospitalizations during that week, they were disproportionately not our students. They were young people that were coming to East Lansing to party. And so previous administrations moved it to a Wednesday start so that we could do move in on Saturday, Sunday which they believe was more equitable for the families of students.

And then students would have Monday, Tuesday to prepare for the start of classes with orientations and convocation and college orientations and then we started on Wednesday. So it's a bit of a sprint because we cram it in there. This year and the year before and the year before that, we've been eating into that previous week but move-in and pushing move-in, now is back all the way to the previous Tuesday. And so we have not seen a return of the welcome week. We could design this in such a way that we do a lot of the activities of orienting and moving in students during the week prior to the start of classes and then start on a Monday. So we get that full week before you'd have one day off. This would be something that we've asked the registrar to model out for us to look at what days fall when, fall and spring, for a number of years going forward and we should have something that we can present to UCUE and UCGS to evaluate based on actual real dates.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Thank you. [Senator] Ashley Maloff.

**Senator Ashley Maloff (ASAC)** Hi there. I am the representative for [the Academic Specialists Advisory Committee]. Thank you to the committee for your hard work. I just have a couple of questions. When the committee was working on this and coming up with the days off for voting and for the recommendation for the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, was that for faculty and staff as well? I just wanted clarification on that or is that just for students?

**Senator Gina Leininger (UCUE)** If I can answer. Thus far, we were asked to weigh on the Academic Calendar, so that would predominantly apply to students. However, one can presume that if one does not operate their class on a Wednesday before Thanksgiving, they may not have the same degree of duties to fulfill on the campus that day.



**Senator Ashley Maloff (ASAC)** Okay. Thank you.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Senator Prouty.

**Senator Ken Prouty (MUS)** Thank you. First, I wanted to just comment a little bit on Associate Provost Largent's remarks about starting on Wednesday. This is something I've been thinking about for a long time and just--I understand the rationale and its concerns for welcome week but one of the things that I feel like that missed is that the bars are open on Monday and Tuesday as well. So I'm not really sure what impact that has. The other comment I wanted to make is circling back to the suggestion to limit exams and so forth in the days immediately following a proposed fall break. And while I certainly understand the rationale for that, I would just like to mention, and I feel like this is something that I faced in the past, that if you're losing an instructional day for a fall break and then you're also potentially losing the opportunity to give an exam or something on the days immediately following that.

If we're looking at slating fall break around the middle of the semester for classes in which there are midterm exams, we're starting to limit the options for when faculty can give those exams. And I would be concerned about a situation where a whole bunch of classes need to all hold midterms at the same time right before a fall break in order to get those exams in at the middle of the semester. So, like I said, while I certainly understand the idea-- of you don't want to have to come right back from fall break and take an exam. I also think we need to consider that faculty need to have some flexibility about when they can schedule things, particularly if we're taking away a potential several days right out of the middle of the semester when normally we might be looking at giving midterms during that time. So I just wanted to throw that out there.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Thank you. Representative Iturralde.

**Representative Aaron Iturralde (ASMSU)** Hi everyone. So I just want to first thank the Academic Calendar Planning Committee for the task force for their dedications this past year. My predecessor, [ex-ASMSU Vice President for Academic Affairs Bri] Aiello, served on the committee and she briefed me fully about the Academic Calendar Task Force. I just want to state that ASMSU right now doesn't have any proposals beyond what has been proposed in the academic calendar as of right now. So we're just going to stick with implementing a permanent fall break and hoping to get those other cancellations for the Tuesday of election day November, as well as the Wednesday before Thanksgiving as well as balancing the calendar to make sure instruction is the same for both semesters. And with that, I yield back to the chair.



**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Thank you so much. I don't see any other hands up at this point in time. Is there anybody else who wanted to comment on this? Representative Sunday.

**Representative Kobi Sunday (ASMSU)** Hi, sorry. I just had a really quick question. I was wondering when the difference would be between fall break and--Nevermind. I read it wrong. Sorry. Ignore me.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** It's quite alright. Thank you. Okay. Any other comments? I think this has been a fulsome discussion Provost, you and your team have had a chance to hear this and I'm sure there'll be more discussions to follow. But I want to thank the committee for their work on this incredibly important, very difficult, very complex, and we promised to pick up the baton and working together with shared governance, reach something that I think hopefully will benefit our students, faculty, and staff as we continue this critical education mission. But thank you again for your work and for your sensitivity to the issues the students raised.

Okay. The next order of business then is the proposed Ad Hoc Committee on the Structure of the Office of Academic Governance and large members. Senator Stephanie Anthony.

**Senator Stephanie Anthony (At Large)** Good afternoon, everyone. Alright. Historically, the secretary for academic governance has reported to the chair of the Steering Committee and Faculty Senate. Well, there have been some concerns expressed by a variety of people involved in the process that this is not the most effective structure for reporting within academic governance. I would like to move, to adopt the proposed resolution regarding the reporting format and structure of the Office of Academic Governance. It reads as, "Be it resolved that the University Council establishes the Ad Hoc Committee on the Structure of the Office of Academic Governance." And "that the committee"—which we recommend a committee be established—"that the committee be charged with evaluating and recommending to the University Council whether the secretary for academic governance should report to the Faculty Senate/Steering Committee chairperson, the associate provost and associate vice president for academic human resources, or someone else; and" also, "that the committee be charged with extending interview invitations to 1) the members of the 2019-2020 Ad Hoc Committee on Restructuring the Office of Academic Governance, 2) Secretary for Academic Governance Tyler Silvestri, 3) Associate Provost and Associate Vice President for Academic Human Resources Suzanne Lang, 4) Faculty Senate/Steering Committee Chairperson Karen Kelly-Blake, and 5) any other person the committee deems appropriate to help inform its decision."



**Senator Anthony, cont.** And I lost it. Well, I will allow you to read the rest, but that is our recommendation that we adopt an ad hoc committee.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** And the board secretary has placed the resolution in chat.

**Senator Stephanie Anthony (At Large)** Thank you.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** So we have a motion. Do I have a second?

**Senator Mick Fulton (UCFA)** Second.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Thank you, Mick Fulton has seconded. Discussion.

**Secretary for Academic Governance Tyler Silvestri** Sorry, I can't raise my hand on the participant list because I'm the host, but if you don't mind.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** I hereby say that the consensus of everybody nodding their heads is that we'll give you a voice. So please, go ahead.

**Secretary for Academic Governance Tyler Silvestri** So for one thing, I got a little alarmed when I was called board secretary. So please don't wish that role on me. I'm good, thank you.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Oh yes, sorry. Sorry.

**Secretary for Academic Governance Tyler Silvestri** No, you're fine. You're fine. I just wanted to quickly-- a small correction to something Senator Anthony said. This last year was the first year that my job has reported to the Faculty Senate chair. Historically, it reported to the associate provost and associate vice president for academic human resources. We changed-- A committee-- This 2019-2020 committee that's referenced here changed it. And so there's been one year under the new model. And the question is essentially, should we stick with that new model? Should we do a different way? Should return to old one? Something else?

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Thank you. So we have a motion and the second. Is there any other discussion? Hearing none or seeing none, I'd like to move that to a vote. Do we have a ballot available? Let's go ahead and put the ballot up. It's up in front of you. Everybody who's eligible, please vote.



**Secretary for Academic Governance Tyler Silvestri** Give it five more seconds.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Okay. The motion carries. So we'll establish that and under the terms that were put by the resolution. So next order of business is "venue for spring semester meetings." Who is responsible for bringing that up?

**Secretary for Academic Governance Tyler Silvestri** I guess I am. Really the question is just whether to have-- Basically if folks know right now that they don't want to hold the University Council meetings in person for the spring semester, I'd appreciate knowing that if people aren't. If people want to try to do it, obviously, situation pending, I just need to know so I can book the rooms. So, that's essentially all it is. And I recall shortly after folks discussed just saying commit to doing it now remotely or tell me to book the rooms so we can try to have it in person.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** I think I'll comment just from my perspective that I think the remotely has worked during these times and I think I would not want to bet that the pandemic has resolved to a spot, a point where we feel completely comfortable meeting in this foreign body. I know everybody would be masked but I think when remotely seemed to have worked very well. And I think it's, in some sense, I think people feel more opportunity to have voice in this kind of setting than they do otherwise. So my feeling would be we should just continue for the immediate future and see where we are as we start the next fall, which seems a long ways away but we'll come upon it before we know it. And that's just one person's opinion, obviously. Anybody else who want to comment? So do you want to have a pole then? So Representative Pandya.

**Representative Shaurya Pandya (ASMSU)** Yeah, I do want to say, I think I definitely understand where people might feel that doing this online might be the best way to go, but I did want to point out there is also nothing stopping us from potentially doing a hybrid option where people could attend in person if they wanted to, like ASMSU does. Whereas if other people are not able to or they feel more comfortable being able to voice themselves offline. That could also work out. So when I point to the fact that some people might also be more attentive and probably more action organizing in person that they have the opportunity to go in person versus if they're dealing with maybe remote multitasking. Again, I also understood the discomfort of given that current situation, but I just want to point out that we could potentially try to do it. We could potentially still move in person and have that hybrid option. But again, I can see why people would be both hesitant and wanted to go. Personally, I think



**Representative Pandya cont.** I would want to vote in favor just because I think that having the hybrid option can still be there but that's just what I think.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Thank you. Other comments? Okay. So, let's move to a poll then.

**Secretary for Academic Governance Tyler Silvestri** We say five more seconds. Sorry. And I see a question. There's no hybrid option, though I have a hard time thinking that there would be, maybe forever, an in-person option that doesn't include some hybrid element.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Alright. We're committing to hold spring semester meetings remotely. So, that closes that item. So, we're now going to-- I'm sorry, was there a comment? Senator Bunnell? We're reading comments from the floor. Did you want to make a comment from the floor?

**Senator Jane Bunnell (MUS)** Yeah, I totally agree with Zoom. What I miss is the personal connection and I wonder if we might find some way to at least have an event where the Faculty Senate could get together to just chat, just some place where at one point during the semester, maybe even outside in the spring, we could meet in person.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** I think "outside" is the magic word, but yes. So that suggestion is there. Thank you. Yes, Representative Pandya.

**Representative Shaurya Pandya (ASMSU)** Yes. I just wanted to ask. So, if enough faculty felt like they're more comfortable going offline later on, would we be able to reverse this commitment, or is this not reversible?

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** I think the will of the body as I can see is to say that this coming spring, we'll be continuing to do remote meetings. That's my interpretation.

**Representative Shaurya Pandya (ASMSU)** Thank you.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Thank you. Okay. So now, comments from the floor. Are there any comments from the floor? Seeing none, I--

**Secretary for Academic Governance Tyler Silvestri** Sorry. I know that the faculty grievance official indicated that he might want to share a report on behalf of his office. I guess is that not happening now.



**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** It's not in my agenda. When did that become an urgent issue?

**Secretary for Academic Governance Tyler Silvestri** Sorry. He had indicated that he would do it during this time.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** I see.

**Secretary for Academic Governance Tyler Silvestri** I guess I'm not hearing anything, so nevermind.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Okay. Senator Fulton.

**Senator Mick Fulton (UCFA)** Yes. Thank you for recognizing me, President Stanley. I just wanted to thank Dave Byelich for his efforts with the University Committee on Faculty Affairs. He is retiring and he has done an exceptional job working with us and helping us and guiding us. He said that he learned from us, but we also learned from him. And I just want to thank him and wish him all the best in his retirement.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Thank you so much Senator Fulton. Yes, Dave has been an extraordinary contributor in this year, so thank you for that acknowledge. Much appreciated. Any other comments? Questions for the floor? Seeing none, I'm going to indicate a motion to adjourn.

**Senator Mick Fulton (UCFA)** So moved.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** Thank you. Can I have a second?

**Various** Second.

**President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.** I just should have said no to any objection, my bad, but second note, we're going to all vote and we all agree to adjourn. No discussion. Thank you. Okay. Thank you everybody. Enjoy homecoming week and stay safe please. Thank you.