Approved 09-15-16

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE
MINUTES
THURSDAY 14 APRIL 2016, 3:15 P.M.
HANNAH ADMINISTRATION BUILDING 309

Present: Edward Budeca (ASMSU), Manuel Chavez (CCAS), Greg Fink (COM, for Schwartz), John Gaboury ex officio, Xia Gao (CAL), Lynette Guzman (COGS), Eric Hunter (CCAS), Debra Nails (CAL), Mahesh Nalla (CSS), John Powell ex officio, Robert Vankirk (COGS, for Gulotty), Mark Worden (EGR)
Absent: Stephan Carey (CVM), Rita Edozie (JMC), John Fitzsimmons (CHM), Elle Gulotty (COGS), Janice Schwartz (COM)
Pending (but not expected): four ASMSU representatives

Call to order: 3:15 p.m.
Agenda: approved as amended.
Minutes of the Previous Meeting: approved as distributed.

Chairperson’s Comments: Nails said approval of the ninety-six Bylaws amendments submitted by UCAG were on the 15 April 2016 agenda of the Board of Trustees. Welcoming the newly elected members, introductions went around the table.

Associate Provost for Academic Services and Enrollment Management’s Comments: Gaboury said the Higher Learning Commission’s accreditation visit had been completed in good form with meetings well attended; results are expected in five or six weeks.

BUSINESS OF THE COMMITTEE:

College Bylaws Reviews. The committee discussed a selection of twenty-eight comments that had been sent to the twelve colleges whose bylaws were reviewed in spring 2016. Categories included: conventions recommended for clarity (abbreviations, upper- and lowercase, repetition, et al.); identification of outdated material (e.g., names and acronyms of committees, citations of the Bylaws for Academic Governance (the Bylaws) by number, student issues, exact dates); quotation of articles from the Bylaws with implications for college bylaws, especially recent amendments; vague terminology, and inadequately specific guidelines for action; internal inconsistencies; and suggestions for improved governance practices. The most common problem is a general misunderstanding of the definitions of the faculty and faculty voting rights, particularly with respect to fixed-term faculty.

A staggered rotation schedule for college bylaws revision was proposed, briefly discussed, and corrected (previous UCAG review/s in parentheses). Any actual schedule is the prerogative of
Anticipated Changes in Bylaws for Academic Governance. Nails said that the 2016–17 UCAG will need to write language to address faculty definitions (1.1.1.2 or a new article) and voting rights (1.1.2.1) when the University Committee on Faculty Affairs (UCFA) determines whether and which specialists in the continuing system—hired under several categories, some of which have no teaching or research component—should be included as faculty in the Bylaws. Beyond the language about definitions, each instance of ‘fixed-term’ and ‘specialist’ should be checked in the Bylaws.  

A second anticipated Bylaws amendment will need to be written at 2.1.2 when a decision is reached by John Bell, for UCFA, and Terry Curry, head of HR, acting as an ad hoc committee of The Steering Committee and determining how the line should be drawn between administrators and faculty. Currently, the same person is considered faculty in one context (e.g. on committees requiring the advice of faculty) and as administrators in another (e.g. when denied the right to file a grievance).

Election of Officers for 2016–17. After a brief discussion, the election was postponed until early in the fall semester.

New Business: none.  
Roundtable: none.  
Adjournment sine die: 4:37 p.m.  

Respectfully submitted,  
Debra Nails
Chairperson