

Faculty Senate

Minutes

October 26, 2023



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

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

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

- 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; and

Whereas, In a statement,⁴ 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

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.

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>.

³ [Footnote in resolution] See Higher Learning Commission, Policy CRRT.B.10.010, <https://www.hlcommission.org/Policies/criteria-and-core-components.html>.

⁴ [Footnote in resolution] See Trustee Rema Vassar, *Setting the Record Straight* (October 23, 2023), <https://twitter.com/kennyjacoby/status/1716643542242840929>.

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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; 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](#); 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

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

Tyler Silvestri
Secretary for Academic Governance

Approved: November 21, 2023

⁵ [Footnote in resolution] See Scott, 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>.

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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

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Constituency/Title	Name	Attendance
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

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Constituency/Title	Name	Attendance
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 Bullock	Present
Social Science	Raymond Jussaume	Present
Social Science	Zeenat Kotval-Karamchandani	Present
Social Science	James Dulebohn	Substituted: Patricia Machermer
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