FACULTY SENATE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

1120 Ruthven Building
1109 Geddes Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

The University of Michigan
University Senate
Motion #110926-2

MOTION 2:

Call for Best Practices, Accountability, and Transparency in Protecting Victims of Sexual Assault at U-M

Whereas recent events at Cornell University have brought back to nationwide attention the very real and ongoing lack of trust in university administrations to reduce and take on the pathway to the elimination of gender violence;

Whereas our beloved university has repeatedly done wrong by gender violence victims, from four decades of sexual abuse—harming over-2000 victims—by U-M physician Dr. Anderson over four decades, to the appointment of Martin Philbert to Provost despite complaints of sexual misconduct; to the university's quiet resolution of serious complaints of sexual assault against lecturer Bruce Conforth, to the ex-Michigan football coach Sherrone Moore's inappropriate relationship with a staff member, and the September 2026 lawsuit by 16 U-M men's hockey players who allege serious sexualized abuse;

Whereas the list of supportive measures on the ECRT website is simply not comprehensive when compared with the nationally recognized supportive measures known to be effective;

Whereas the U-M Office of Equity, Civil Rights and Title IX (ECRT) is more than two years behind on issuing an annual report on Sexual & Gender-Based Misconduct;

Whereas in a formal ruling in April 2020, a federal judge rebuked U-M's department that oversees Title IX complaints for attacking the victim rather than focusing on the investigation and allegations, writing "The Court is deeply troubled that the University's response to a sexual harassment complaint is to publish a document filled with innuendo and rumor regarding the complainant's sexuality, lifestyle, and personality. The [U-M Title IX Office] has managed to demonstrate a callous disregard for both the privacy of its students and the integrity of its investigation";

Whereas Regent Jordan Acker disclosed the private health information of a female student and defamed the student with baseless allegations of sexual promiscuity within a chat group of men, cruelly preying on a vulnerable woman for the entertainment of his bro culture; even after this behavior was confirmed, President Grasso and the Board of Regents "close[d] this matter without further action," without sanction or censure;

Whereas these actions and the lack of accountability and transparency lead to a lack of trust in the university administration's uneven efforts to deal with matters of gender violence;

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Whereas in November 2024, 80 percent of the voting university faculty supported Motion 4 Resolution on Accountability for the Handling of Gender-Based Violence and Discrimination at the University, which called on the administration to take a series of concrete measures to upgrade practices to the level of those that are nationally recognized best practices and thereby to build trust in the administration's efforts to combat gender violence; and

Whereas to this date, on November 9, 2026, those accountability measures have still not been enacted;

Therefore, be it resolved that we call for a truly independent audit of the Office of ECRT's handling of individual reports of gender violence, that is undertaken by a nonprofit entity with a highly respected reputation instead of a large law firm that serves universities for profit in a number of capacities, that is annual so as to lead to continuous improvement while a student has a chance to see an improvement, that is granular and detailed in examining the totality of reports and complaints and how they are handled from beginning to end, and that will produce a publicly available report;

Be it further resolved that by the end of fall 2026 semester, ECRT must implement all of the supportive measures offered on the National Women's Law Center research-informed supportive measures and publish all of them on the ECRT website so that students and faculty are aware of ECRT's policies;

Be it further resolved that these policies must include such supportive measures for victims of gender violence as "Allowing the complainant a second opportunity to submit work or take an exam," "Allowing the complainant to attend classes online or view recorded lectures," and "Adjusting the complainant's transcript so their grades are not harmed by the harassment," among other best practices;

Be it further resolved that we call on ECRT to require all Title IX personnel to obtain rape crisis counselor certification and to report the attainment of that on the ECRT website;

Be it further resolved that we call upon the university to institute a tuition reimbursement policy by March 2027, so that when victims of sexual assault are unable to remain on campus or need to take one or more semesters off, they do not pay tuition for the lost terms;

Be it further resolved that we call upon ECRT to formally implement, including through publication on their ECRT website, the eight practical policies recommended by U-M survivors of sexual assault to ECRT in April 2025, such as not cold calling survivors and abolishing "last chance agreements" for perpetrators;

Be it further resolved that we call on ECRT to adopt, on its website, national best practices to ensure that complainants are not punished for reporting harassment or discrimination, including

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(but not limited to) by prohibiting reporting students from being disciplined for the following conduct:

- Conduct disclosed as a result of the harassment or discrimination being reported and investigated (e.g., consensual sexual activity, drug or alcohol use, trespassing, reasonable self-defense);
- Conduct that occurs because of the harassment or discrimination (e.g., expressing trauma symptoms, class absences);
- Telling other people about the harassment or discrimination;
- Making a so-called "false" statement based solely on the University's finding that the harassment or discrimination did not occur; or
- Conduct the University knew or should have known was alleged for the purpose of retaliation (e.g., a respondent who has been found responsible and disciplined for sexual assault then files a counter-complaint against their victim alleging the victim was the actual assailant);

Be it further resolved that we call on the University to issue more effective accountability measures for Title IX and other University personnel who engage in, facilitate, or cover up sex-based and other discrimination, including (but not limited to) by prohibiting them from being eligible for a promotion, teaching award, advising position, or other leadership (including executive committee positions) when they are found responsible for quid pro quo sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, or other physical violence, for covering up an incident of alleged harassment or discrimination despite being obligated to do report or address it under University policy or federal, state, or local law, or if they oversee the hiring of a new employee, and (i) they know the new employee has previously been found responsible for harassment at another school, (ii) the new employee has not taken accountability for the previous incident, and (iii) the new employee is found responsible for harassment again at the University;

Be it further resolved that we call upon the Board of Regents and President Grasso to publicly censure Regent Acker and to call for his resignation for his texts; and

Be it further resolved that we call upon the University of Michigan to publish the full final reports from investigations of senior officials of the university, including about presidents, provosts, executive vice presidents, vice presidents, deans, athletic department directors, and head coaches, even if those investigations are undertaken by an independent law firm.

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***Movant: Jordan Siegel**, Professor of Strategy, Stephen M Ross School of Business*

Supporting Members:

***Rebekah Modrak**, Professor, Stamps School of Art and Design*

***Emmanuelle Marquis**, Professor of Materials Science and Engineering, College of Engineering*

***Bruno Giordani**, Professor of Psychiatry, Professor of Neurology, Chief Psychologist, Medical School, Professor of Psychology, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and Adjunct Professor of Nursing, School of Nursing*