

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY  
ACADEMIC SENATE  
PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

September 22, 2014

Present: J. Artiss; V. Dallas; R. N. Frank; D. Kessel; C. Parrish; L. Romano; A. Sankar;  
W. Volz; A. Wisniewski

Absent with notice: L. Beale; M. Winters

Guests: Mathew Ouellett, Associate Provost and Director of the Office for Teaching and Learning; John Vander Weg, Associate Provost for Academic Personnel; Laura Woodward, Director, Testing, Evaluation and Research Services

The items marked with an asterisk constitute the Actions of September 22, 2014.

1. Student Evaluation of Teaching Form: Mr. Ouellett, Mr. Vander Weg, and Ms. Woodward attended the meeting to update the Committee on the status of the draft student evaluation of teaching (SET) form and to get approval for the questions and the format of the form. They had met with the Policy Committee in April when the Committee suggested changes in the draft.

The guests reviewed the changes that had been made since the April meeting. A member of PC was concerned that students might be reluctant to express their opinions about a course in the written section, fearing they might face retribution by the instructor in the future. Mr. Ouellett thought that was unlikely in an undergraduate course but that it was possible in a graduate course where there are fewer students. However, he added, graduate students are judicious in completing the evaluations.

The Policy Committee questioned the validity of the data when a class has very few students and when only a few students in a larger class complete the SET form. Less than 50% of students respond. In classes with fewer than five students, the data are reported only to the faculty member, not to the department. The same is true in classes where fewer than five students complete the form. It was suggested that the 2N committee reconsider the number of students that have to complete the form before it is given to the department.

The 2N Committee that revised the SET form will continue to reshape the data that is reported. They are discussing which data is most useful for the instructor and for the department.

Mr. Ouellett acknowledged that if faculty are innovative in their teaching they may receive poor evaluations, but we should encourage the use of new pedagogy. He has been concerned about the lack of a proactive educational campaign directed at undergraduates about the importance of completing the SET form. Ms. Woodward is developing such a program.

Policy Committee members believe that the administration ought to tell departments that the data should not be used as a precise measurement of teaching effectiveness. A Committee member suggested that a better evaluation might be if students dropped out of college or if they changed their majors because of a particular class. Mr. Ouellett will investigate this type of evaluation.

In the promotion and tenure process, the SET is a small part of a holistic view of a faculty member's teaching. Mr. Ouellette said that the peer evaluation of teaching opens the system to think more creatively and innovatively about teaching.

[The guests left the meeting.]

- \*2. Proceedings of the Policy Committee: The Proceedings of the Policy Committee meeting of September 15, 2014, were approved as submitted.
- 3. Course Scheduling Committee: In response to a request, Provost Winters sent to the Policy Committee the charge and the membership of the Course Scheduling Committee. The Committee is "to make a recommendation to the Provost on how Wayne State might simplify and clarify our course scheduling matrix based on best practices. The goal is to make our scheduling matrix less complicated such that we do not have so many overlapping course schedules, thus reducing time to degree completion." Policy Committee thinks this will be important for enrollment and will improve the use of space. Policy Committee will recommend to the Provost that the Course Scheduling Committee also be charged with changing the starting time of classes to begin on the hour with one hour of class time being 50 minutes.
- \*4. Appointment of Non-Senate Member: Policy Committee appointed Sudip Datta, the Hitchman Chair of Finance in the School of Business Administration, to serve as the non-Senate member of the Budget Committee. The Bylaws authorize the Policy Committee to appoint a non-Senate member for a one-year term.
- \*5. October Academic Senate Meeting: The Policy Committee approved the agenda for the October 1 Senate meeting as submitted.
- \*6. General Education Oversight Committee: Another member of the GEOC stepped down. Policy Committee selected a replacement. As required by the Agreement between the University and the AAUP-AFT, Mr. Romano will seek agreement from Provost Winters. After the meeting, Mr. Romano contacted the Provost and she agreed that Jennifer Wareham (Criminal Justice, Liberal Arts and Sciences) would complete the last year of the term.
- 7. Agenda Items for Committees: Policy Committee suggested possible items for the standing committees. Mr. Romano will send them to the Chairs.

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Approved as submitted at the Policy Committee meeting of October 6, 2014