

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY  
ACADEMIC SENATE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE  
July 19, 2021

Present: L. Beale; P. Beavers; J. Fitzgibbon; r. hoogland; M. Kornbluh; C. Parrish; N. Rossi; B. Roth; N. Simon; R. Villarosa; Prasad Nangre; Amanda Powe

1. Approval of June 21<sup>th</sup> Proceedings.

Proceedings were approved by the committee.

2. Report from the Chair.

- a. Introduction. Provost Kornbluh greeted the members of the Policy Committee and noted his pleasure in being at Wayne as chief academic officer. His goal is for the Office of the Provost to work more as a team and communicate more effectively. He considers it important that the office be closely attuned to faculty and academic staff concerns. In this respect, he thanked the group for the restart announcement feedback.

Kornbluh noted that the university's budget is a complicated issue, but he is reviewing it and the background information related to the current budget to assist him moving forward. Clearly, the 2013 collective bargaining agreement with the faculty/academic staff union included a university commitment to paying employees better over time, and in that Wayne State is exceptional compared to many other universities. The commitment was a good decision that has helped the university retain good employees. The contract was also an expensive decision that has been part of the cause of multiple budget cuts. Kornbluh hopes to increase revenue in order to continue paying employees well. That will require a renewed focus on enrollment management, especially regarding undergraduate recruitment. He was surprised to learn that 92% of Wayne's undergraduates are recruited within 30 miles and 98% within 100 miles. International student recruitment can also increase enrollment and diversity for the university. The colleges need to take a greater role in the recruitment process. Other revenue areas will also need to be investigated, such as adult education.

Enrollment management changes will not start immediately. For the next month, the focus will be on bringing students back and getting admitted students to come to Wayne. In the future, he noted that he will want to visit a few other urban research universities that have done better than Wayne State at garnering enrollments, to try to learn from their example. (He thinks this is more efficient than paying considerable amounts for consultants to provide us the same answers that they provide everyone else.) His team will identify which universities to visit based on comparative data.

Another area is understanding our students' costs. Discounted rates will need to be calculated precisely, but financial aid and understanding the process and amounts is very important. Kornbluh expects to bring some ideas on this to the Senate as they are developed.

Given southeast Michigan's large immigrant communities, the university should be focused on first-and second-generation immigrants in addition to African American students as a way of diversifying our student body and recruiting more broadly. Diversifying the faculty is a priority that will allow students to see themselves in the

faculty. Kornbluh hopes to attract philanthropic resources that will ultimately support hiring more people of color into positions.

The relationship between faculty governance and the administration is another focus. Faculty consultation is important, even though it will not always yield agreement. Kornbluh stressed that he is open to changing his mind through the consultative process.

Lower academic standards and poor retention and graduation rates have been issues for years. Parrish commented that the university has achieved better retention rates with athletes through appropriate focus and mentoring, but this needs to be expanded to other undergraduate students. Kornbluh agreed that support is necessary, suggesting that better partnering with K-12 schools, especially in the Detroit metropolitan area, and introducing more diverse faculty members can help. These are deeply rooted problems, so programs can be only one of the solutions. Engaging current students with local schools to prepare them for college is a strong consideration. This will benefit our students as well as the K-12 students. President Wilson is working to bridge the success gap. More information will be shared when available.

Noreen Rossi noted that there are current programs that are successful. She suggested the need for a conversation with successful programs. This will aid in deciding what approaches have worked. Kornbluh acknowledged that he has heard of some of these programs and will use them as models.

### 3. Report from the President.

- a. Endowment. The Foundation was informed that the Wayne endowment has hit the 1/2 billion mark, after many years of being in the 350-420 million range. Still small, but a strong step in the right direction.
- b. Public Health. Positivity rate was 2.2% on July 10<sup>th</sup> in the Detroit region. There was an increase in deaths to 2 a day. In Detroit, the positivity rate was 2.1%, with 1 death per day. Wayne, Oakland, Livingston, Monroe, and St. Clair moved up in risk level, likely because of the lower vaccination rate and the spread of the Delta variant.
- c. Title IX. Beale mentioned that the Title IX notice discussed last week was a positive step in acknowledging the need to include both gender and sexual orientation concepts.
- d. Faculty Titles. Beale noted that Policy has long pushed for more effort on funded faculty titles, including developing some sponsored funding for a period of years for simpler titles such as “Jane Doe research scholar.” As chair of the Budget Committee, Beale began an annual meeting with Development, and in that setting the Senate has consistently asked for a greater effort at raising funds to support various levels of faculty titles, such as 3-year titles that are directly funded rather than through an endowment. Susan Burns did agree to make raising funding for faculty titles a priority once the last campaign was completed, although she has consistently stated that donors do not want to support faculty titles. Further, in the most recent Budget Committee meeting with Development, she made clear that she did not consider this an important priority because her staff had compared the number of faculty titles university-wide with numbers at various four-year colleges in Michigan and found general similarity in numbers. Senate members pointed out that such institution-wide comparisons are inappropriate: benchmarks should be at the departmental or field level. That is, the

number of Wayne State University chemistry faculty titles should be compared with the number at stellar chemistry departments at its similar rank nationally, not with chemistry at CMU or EMU. There is also a real reputational benefit for the university from such titles that seems not to be understood by Development. Beavers suggested setting up a meeting focused on this issue with key personnel. Kornbluh indicated he would review this issue to see what can be achieved. Graduated amounts and immediate-use funds may be options for endowment. Rossi also suggested finding out what pushes people away from Wayne State to go to other schools, since titles may be a factor in retention.

- e. New Faculty Orientation. We need to plan for one hour with the new faculty on August 19<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am. This will be on the next Policy agenda to schedule our items of discussion.
  - f. Announced Programs. Beale noted three items that came through as recent announcements where the university role and/or approval process was unclear. One was a new grant-supported “*pipeline program*” pilot in CLAS for formerly incarcerated individuals that will train an “educational transition coordinator”. The CLAS dean is principal investigator on the grant, but it wasn’t clear whether there was an arrangement for other faculty involvement in the program, admission of participants to Wayne, or further support if a student from this pipeline came to Wayne. The second pilot program is a “*financial capability pilot*” for students supported by various banks and headed by an adjunct faculty in the School of Business and Matt Roling, the head of Wayne’s (new) Office of Business Innovation. There is apparently also participation by the School of Social Work and other offices on campus as well as in the city. This is apparently an interdisciplinary program headed primarily by an adjunct, but it is not clear whether it is a program for Wayne students or whether any faculty units’ approval or participation has been involved. The third program is a “get involved” event organized by AVP Monica Brockmeyer using Tema Okun’s “White Supremacy Culture” workbook, which has drawn some stringent criticism for labelling as “white supremacy” both characteristics that are just poor examples of planning and thinking (the view that there is only a right or wrong way to do anything) and many characteristics that are in fact hallmarks of a well-run organization (good writing, timely productivity demands, clear processes for reaching final decisions, etc.). It seems a poor choice as a foundation for a university discussion of racism. These three items exemplify the lack of clarity that sometimes occurs in university communications, as well as lack of full consultative process and foresight in what is covered.
  - g. Syllabus COVID Statements. Beale noted ongoing concerns about the push for “back to normal” in-person activities and classes. The university has made clear that there is no requirement for masking or social distancing, except that those who are not vaccinated are required to wear a mask indoors. There is no way to enforce that rule since neither faculty nor staff will know anyone’s vaccination status. Members agreed that there needs to be suggested wording for faculty to use in their syllabi, including that mandates and modalities may change if pandemic conditions require it. Villarosa suggested that the Provost join the Academic Restart meetings since they have not been very fruitful since Provost Whitfield left (Interim Provost Clabo did not attend). Kornbluh agreed to join the meeting on Tuesday.
4. Communications and Required Actions.
- a. Summer Meetings. Members discussed a change in dates through start of the fall semester, given the Provost’s availability. The committee will meet on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>

and 30<sup>th</sup>. If needed to conduct Senate business (including planning for the plenary session), Policy may meet (without the Provost, who will be in flight) on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August. Policy will not meet on Labor Day (September 6) but will meet on September 13<sup>th</sup>. The first Senate plenary is September 15<sup>th</sup> (later this year to avoid conflicting with other events). The memo to Senate members on committee preferences needs to go out as soon as possible so that those assignments can be made by Policy at the August 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. The committee will also need to handle the Article XXX committees as soon as possible, and for that Boris Baltes will be invited. [*Addendum: The slate for the Article XXX committees is drawn up by the Provost's Office, so the meeting with Boris to finalize those assignments will depend on when that slate is available.*]

Summary of Upcoming Meetings: August 2<sup>nd</sup>, August 16<sup>th</sup>, August 30<sup>th</sup>, September 13<sup>th</sup>. Please keep August 23<sup>rd</sup> as a possible meeting date. Meetings will be held on Zoom through August. FAB 4339 will be reserved for future meetings and/or we may begin to use the Senate Conference Room as is our tradition, likely with continuing zoom connections for those not able to join the meeting in person. Senate plenary modality is not yet decided.

- b. Update re University Response to Student Senate's Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Statement. Kornbluh explained that the university surveyed all other universities in Michigan and some APLU Universities. None of the universities had an open listserv that their Student Senates could use to address all students. President Wilson decided that having an open listserv was an issue. Cabinet discussion related to the listserv and addition of a statement to emails that are approved to be sent. It is the administration's understanding that the President of the Student Senate was fine with that.

Policy members noted that this is not a full portrayal of what occurred. There appears to have been a past practice through which the Wayne State Student Senate has been able to send messages to all university students, i.e., to the Student Senate's constituents. Access to the list has been facilitated by the Dean of Students Office, and Policy's understanding is that there has not been any content-check on this use in the past. This message, however, was not allowed to be sent, based entirely on administrative dislike of the content of the message. The Student Senate President's lack of concern in this instance is essentially irrelevant since this was debated at length in the Student Senate before being approved by a substantial majority of the Student Senate members (with the Student Senate President voting against it). Professor Sedler makes clear that this appears to be a constitutional violation, since it was a content-based decision when there has apparently been a pre-existing policy of open access to a student list to send items decided through a majority vote of the Student Senate members to all students. Policy members expressed strong concern about this issue, since a decision based on dislike of the content of a message does not augur well for protecting academic freedom of either students or faculty. Beale suggested that the university should create a listserv for the Student Senate that it updates each semester with student names on it. The university could require a disclaimer to be attached to any email from the Student Senate to students stating that the material is a product of Student Senate discussion and does not carry the imprimatur of the university. There should also be a clear statement from the university that there will not be interference with access to listservs. Kornbluh indicated he would look into this further.

- c. SETS Process. Beale shared the email exchange with Laura Woodward that followed her visit to Policy to discuss the decision to associate online SET submission with certain grade information, for the Winter 2021 term. Woodward's summary completely overlooked the discussion of bias and the additional problem that connection with grades adds to bias. Policy had also emphasized that a decision to "opt out" of SETs should not be counted as "participation". Further, Woodward indicated a plan to maintain the online SETs process, even though there had been a clear understanding that SETs would not be moved online prior to the pandemic. The only reason we have done SETs fully online beginning Winter 2020 was because of the pandemic move of all functions to remote modalities. There should be an assumption that SETs will return to paper/in-person as we move mostly back to in-person instruction. Kornbluh will talk to the staff in his office regarding this issue.
- d. Strategic Planning. The Provost has requested Senate recommendations of participants on faculty focus groups and staff focus groups to meet once during the next few weeks. The committee reviewed a draft list and suggested some additional possibilities. The names will be sent to the Provost after the meeting. In addition, the committee considered potential appointees to the focus area subcommittees (research, academic excellence, student success, financial sustainability, and DEI). Beale noted that a primary function of the subcommittees will be to develop an initial draft of ideas for each of the areas. The group settled on individuals, so Beale will contact them and forward a confirmed list to the Provost.
- e. SmartPath. This item on the agenda is based on an announcement that went to associate deans regarding the use of the same software adopted by Medicine for all faculty records (selective salary; P&T; CVs; etc.). Faculty were neither consulted about the software nor informed about its use. Rossi described how the software had worked in the School of Medicine, noting problematic areas. For Medicine, the prior database was just shifted to SmartPath, but there were numerous glitches in the process. For many faculty, the software scrambled the order of authors on papers, which meant that a primary author might not be so listed. Medicine did end up allowing faculty to simply upload a PDF of their CV. External reviewer letters, which are generated with the appropriate factors for the school, also did not generate appropriately (and the auto-generated letter itself is very terse and likely tends to lead to poor recommendation letters).

Kornbluh agreed that the transition should have been noticed to the faculty. He will check to see what the expected use is in schools other than Medicine and let Policy know. *[Addendum: following the meeting, the Provost informed Policy that the P&T process will not change for faculty outside Medicine. Faculty will be able to submit their CVs as a PDF without having to enter the individual data points. The letter generated by the system can be modified by chairs (or deans in non-departmentalized schools/colleges). The terse version is what has been the standard template in the past.]*

- f. Medical School Grant-Drafting Support. This item will be addressed during the next meeting.
- g. SWEET Survey Draft. Members discussed this briefly. Beale noted that her main comments were on the screen grab of the survey that was distributed to the committee. Simon asked that any additional comments be emailed to her so that she can share

those at the meeting on July 22<sup>nd</sup> (where she serves both as Provost's Office and Senate representative).

---

*Approved as submitted at the Policy Committee meeting of August 30, 2021*