

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC SENATE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

December 17, 2012

Present: L. Beale; R. Brown; V. Dallas; D. Kessel; R. MacArthur; C. Parrish; L. Romano; A. Vlasopolos; W. Volz; A. Wisniewski; J. Woodyard

Guests: Ahmad Ezzeddine, Associate Vice President for Educational Outreach and International Programs; James Mazoue, Director, Online Programs

Mr. MacArthur, the Vice Chair of the Senate, chaired the meeting until Provost Brown arrived.

The items marked with an asterisk constitute the Actions of December 17, 2012.

- \*1. Proceedings of the Policy Committee Meetings: The Proceedings of the Policy Committee meetings of November 26, 2012, and December 3, 2012, were approved as submitted.
2. Revenue Enhancement Task Force: President Gilmour is establishing a Revenue Enhancement Task Force to analyze current and potential revenue streams and to develop recommendations to enhance Wayne State's total revenue. The President asked the Policy Committee to identify faculty who would be able to participate in the work of the Task Force. The Committee nominated faculty. Mr. Romano will contact the nominees to determine if they are able to serve.
3. Chair of the Research Committee: David Oupicky has resigned as Chair of the Research Committee because he has accepted a position at another university. The Policy Committee suggested a replacement and Mr. Romano will contact him.
4. Agenda for the January Senate Meeting: Policy Committee approved the drafted agenda for the Academic Senate meeting of January 9, 2013. The major item on the agenda is a presentation about the proposed renovation of the fountain area near the Student Center Building. Facilities Planning and Management and the architect will ask the Senate members for suggestions at the meeting.

[Mr. Volz and Mr. Parrish arrived at the meeting. Provost Brown arrived and assumed the Chair.]

5. Online Courses: Mr. Ezzeddine and Mr. Mazoue were invited to the meeting to discuss the status of online instruction. Mr. Ezzeddine responded to comments that Policy Committee members had made that much of the *Online Instruction Task Force Final Report and Recommendations: Guidelines and Standards of Practice for Online Programs and Courses at Wayne State University*, dated July 2012, had been plagiarized. He said that last year, the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools released new guidelines for online courses. Wayne State has to conform to

the guidelines for its next accreditation. The Task Force sought and received permission from the Higher Learning Commission of the NCA to use the guidelines.

Members of the Policy Committee criticized the report because it did not contain curricular oversight. There are no controls to assure that a student who attended a course is the one who gets the credit. There is no assurance that the instructor did not just record a lecture and put it online. Examinations are not proctored. At other universities before approving an online course, the instructor has to present it and it is analyzed to determine if it is appropriate. Good online courses are important to retain students.

Mr. Ezzeddine said that addressing these issues was the purpose of the task force. A number of faculty have not received training in teaching online and Mr. Ezzeddine is trying to rein that in. There has been no determination of what type of delivery would be most effective for the various disciplines. Mr. Ezzeddine said the task force did not want to create structures for online courses that are different from the structures for face-to-face instruction. The report contains broad guidelines that can be adapted at the department and college levels. For example, class size varies by discipline and is determined by departments.

Provost Brown saw the Task Force's report as a document that the Academic Senate can revise. Although the Senate could revise the report, a member said, with students currently taking 12,000 credits online, quality control was needed now. Mr. Romano agreed to charge the Curriculum and Instruction Committee with suggesting a mechanism to use to determine whether a course is appropriate for a discipline's curriculum or pedagogy.

When Deans propose a new online course, i.e. a course that does not have a face-to-face class, the Educational Outreach Office asks the Deans to justify how they will support the course. A member stated that the same needed to be done for existing courses. If there are 200 students in a class when there should be 30 and if instructors are not trained to teach online classes, students are disadvantaged.

The Provost said that standards are his top priority. Each college should have a quality assurance committee.

Mr. Ezzeddine noted that the decision to offer online courses is a departmental academic decision. The Office for Educational Outreach is trying to put a framework around the system now in place. Students want online courses; they are filled within 24 hours of their being posted online. The Office has an instructional designer and a technology person. The Office's purview is limited to courses that are 100% online. The Office is not responsible for hybrid courses. To meet the state of Michigan's definition of an online course, the course must be 100% online.

A member of the Policy Committee noted that the charge to the Task Force included advocating for online courses. An administrator said that there are no safeguards on the online courses because they want the flexibility to increase online education. Students' wanting online courses does not justify teaching them online.

Mr. Ezzeddine pointed out that the Task Force called for additional resources, proper training for faculty, and proper training and preparation for students who take online courses.

Another member noted that many freshmen are not ready for online courses. The University needs to address how we know if students can handle online courses. It also needs to improve the response of students to the SET by those who take online courses. The response rate is about 5%.

Mr. Ezzeddine said that the 2N committee established by the administration and the AAUP-AFT is revising the SET for online courses as well as face-to-face instruction. He will meet individually with the Deans to help them develop their own guidelines.

The documents for the December 5, 2012, meeting of the Board of Governors Budget and Finance Committee mentioned that the Macomb Extension Center had accumulated \$3.2 million in carry-forward funds. A member of the Policy Committee thought that money should be used to support online education rather than constructing an Advanced Technology Education Center at the Macomb campus, particularly since enrollment is dropping. He asked how tuition from online courses was distributed. Mr. Ezzeddine explained that a base amount goes to the general fund, 25% goes to the school/college, 15% to the department, and about 40% supports the Educational Outreach office. That office has funded the summer institute and provided faculty grants.

Asked how online courses are proposed and approved, Mr. Mazoue explained that faculty or departments initiate courses. If the course is new, i.e., there is no face-to-face version of the course at the University, the department submits a request for a new course. After it is approved by the college, it is sent to the Provost for approval. If an online section is proposed for a course that is already being taught, the Chair and Dean approve the request.

Mr. Mazoue said the attrition rate for all online courses is 4%. Policy Committee members were skeptical that the rate was so low. The Committee asked Mr. Ezzeddine and Mr. Mazoue to provide data about the retention rates in online courses for both undergraduate and graduate students, separating the lower and upper level courses for undergraduates. They also asked that the attrition rates for online classes be compared with the attrition rates for face-to-face classes for the same courses.

Another member was concerned that the University was offering many online courses without the necessary technical infrastructure. Mr. Ezzeddine expects the Office for Teaching and Learning to be crucial in providing support. The development of faculty and the design of courses have to be coordinated. He added that the same issue applies to hybrid courses.

Provost Brown wants the Academic Senate to develop guidelines for online courses. Mr. Romano said that he would ask the Senate for a recommendation on how online courses should be evaluated.

[Mr. Ezzedine and Mr. Mazoue left the meeting.]

6. Report from the Chair: Provost Brown mentioned that the University is considering a new computer system to assist in advising. Often students are exempted from a requirement but there is no place to record that for the Registrar. Ms. Dallas said that some colleges note the exemption in STARS.
7. Report from the Senate President: Mr. Romano serves on the University Fountain Committee that has been studying what to do with the fountain on Gullen Mall near the Student Center Building, the Undergraduate Library, and the Fitness Center. The fountain has not been operational for a long time. The plan is to remove the fountain and turn the area into a green space. Also under discussion is the renovation of the Student Center Building. There will be presentations on these issues at the January 9 Senate meeting.

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Approved as submitted at the Policy Committee meeting of January 14, 2013