

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC SENATE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE
January 22, 2024

Present: D. Aubert; L. Beale; S. Chrisomalis; L. Clabo; r. hoogland; P. Khosla; J. Lewis; N. Rossi; B. Roth; S. Schrag

Guests: Kelly Dormer (Assoc. Dir., Strategic Academic Initiatives); Darin Ellis (Assoc. Provost for Academic Programs)

I. APPROVAL OF POLICY PROCEEDINGS

The proceedings of the November 27 and December 11, 2023 Policy Committee meetings were approved as submitted.

II. UROP FACULTY COORDINATING COUNCIL AND FORAGER ONE

Dormer briefly reviewed the charge of the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) Faculty Coordinating Council that had been discussed at an earlier meeting. Members suggested edits to make clearer the role that the faculty were expected to play in the UROP process.

Dormer updated Policy on the award cycle announced last week. Only 28 and 35 UROP awards were given in the last two cycles, in part due to the pandemic. This year 48 were awarded, with 13 students able to use workstudy placement for UROP. This change to allow using workstudy increases the number of awards without using budgeted funds; and students can earn \$400 more than the non-workstudy UROP award (\$2000 per semester for work study). There were 58 applications but some students had already maxed out aid: they can apply for the spring/summer/fall cycle to get UROP funding over the summer. Others needed additional work on their proposals.

Dormer introduced the ForagerOne system that provides a better way for faculty and students to find potential partners. They worked with C&IT to make it available to the whole campus. It has capacity for both faculty and students doing research at any level to load profiles and indicate research interests. C&IT has loaded existing Wayne State faculty profiles into ForagerOne from the CMS. Students can work through the system to connect with a mentor for UROP, but the system is also available for other purposes, such as use by the medical school, postdocs or master's students.

Faculty must claim their profiles by logging in to the ForagerOne website with their Wayne State access ID and indicating if they are accepting students. If a student inquires about potentially working with a faculty member, the faculty member would receive an email (linked to the Wayne State email) notifying of the inquiry. If faculty are not accepting students, students cannot message them through the system.

Steve Chrisomalis asked about the data loading from faculty profiles. One of the problems with the old site was that once loaded, it was there for eternity. Dormer confirmed profiles are updated every Friday night, removing people as well as including people and adding any profile changes made.

Linda Beale asked about the process for removing faculty profiles. Dormer responded that the existing offboarding workflow will result in removal of that member's profile throughout the system. Clabo noted these concerns are another example of problems within our enterprise systems: it should not be incumbent on a faculty, staff member or others to alert offices that an employee who has retired or died is still appearing in the system. Beale agreed that it should be automatic through the HR systems.

Noreen Rossi asked about the treatment of emeritus professors who still mentor people on various projects. If we keep them in the CMS, we probably pull them from that. Dormer confirmed nobody's file is deleted and can be reactivated.

ForagerOne also allows faculty to connect with one another. Faculty members can indicate that they are actively seeking faculty collaborators. In theory, this could be used for faculty-to-faculty engagement even when not accepting students. There is also the ability to edit or add information about yourself. The vendor is creating customized videos that will be posted online to walk people through the system step-by-step. Dormer demonstrated how to add a project, which prompts the user to choose the student's expected time commitment, if it is paid or if they can get credit, if it is volunteer, adding a deadline so people cannot contact you after the deadline and a virtual or remote option. She noted the Student Senate appreciated the clarity around the projects compared to the old system.

Chrisomalis was concerned that weekly updates might erase any edits faculty make in the system. Is ForagerOne going to recognize these edits or is it going to pull every Friday from what has existed on the faculty web page? Dormer was told if users edit their publications, it will change back every Friday to match the Wayne State profile. If users just update information unique to ForagerOne, it should not overwrite that information. If users update the Wayne State profile, the ForagerOne profile will change. Beale pointed out the importance of letting people know how these editing updates work. Policy members suggested inviting the web team for a follow-up meeting to move this discussion about faculty use forward, to ask those specific questions that concern us about informing faculty and making any changes for problems that may exist.

Dormer demonstrated ForagerOne from the student perspective. They can search for faculty who are accepting students, faculty who have posted projects, remote projects, search by division or the department or by keywords. Students can indicate if they are seeking opportunities or if they are seeking other students to join them on collaborative projects. There is also space for students to add a resume or letters of recommendation. Students could bookmark faculty and come back later to outreach. If they want to send a request, ForagerOne gives an example of an interest statement. The goal is to help students draft more professional outreach.

Dormer noted that this system will provide data analytics about research happening on campus beyond UROP (i.e., how many connections there are, how many people are using the system, how many people are able to connect with a mentor through the system). This is lacking in current information about the university. It is not limited to UROP programs and, in fact, does not have a specific UROP identifier connected with it. Rossi noted an initiative at the medical school called Scholarly Concentration that ForagerOne will be ideal for. Medical students are currently using UROP Connect.

Ellis suggested introducing the system to the Council of Deans, Graduate Council, the chairs' meeting and the Senate plenary. Matt Orr (Program Coord-UG Research, VP Academic Affairs) is available to do Zoom sessions, and Dormer has already started talking to some of the associate deans of research in the various schools and colleges.

Policy suggested a need to create a good fact sheet for faculty and a good one for students. It might also be valuable in meetings with the Faculty Affairs, Research, Student Affairs and Curriculum and Instruction Committees to think about recommendations that may help the ForagerOne software system work better specifically for the UROP that could be brought back to Policy for finalization.

III. HLC QUALITY INITIATIVE

Ellis talked to Policy about required Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Quality Initiative that must take place over the next two years. The proposal is to do a quality initiative around data literacy using the Association of Institutional Researcher (AIR) Data Literacy Institute to help faculty and others understand data literacy and its use in projects. This is part of the 10-year cycle. A few years ago, we did an assurance review. We are now in the proposal phase, which is due in June. Then we will have two years to get the quality initiative done. That will go into our package for the HLC comprehensive evaluation in 2026-27.

The quality initiative is a collaborative effort that involves a significant portion of campus to improve an aspect of the university's mission to drive a part of the university's mission forward. It must be linked to the strategic plan, and we need to demonstrate a good faith effort with the right people involved. That is, specific results are not required so long as there is a good plan that HLC can support. It is a developmental process rather than an evaluative process. The last quality initiative was the advisor initiative that involved hiring a number of advisors and the establishment of the Advisor Training Academy, as well as changes to STARS and to EAA. This time, we want to do something that improves our campus capability to make use of data for decision making. The focus is to look at the DEI aspect of our strategic plan to have a data-informed DEI quality initiative promoting data literacy, data infrastructure and to equip faculty, staff and administrators with the tools to design data-informed strategies to close the gap in educational outcomes.

When asked to define data literacy, Ellis used the word “enrollment” as an example, knowing the nuances of what exact data to use, how that data is collected, understanding proper ways to use the data in ways that might be a stretch. Data literacy can also be knowing what data we actually have and what is available to put to a higher use. Clabo noted it is unusual that there is not a single source of truth for many of these items at the university. There are often discrepancies between a department's or school's data and the data provided by Institutional Research. One of the reasons she is excited about this as a quality initiative is that there is much to improve in the university's enterprise systems, both data in and then accessibility to the right bodies. This is a big step in moving us towards a data-informed culture. We have built homegrown systems to go around the things that are broken, with the unfortunate result that we have built broken systems because the homegrown ones are not that good or are under-resourced. Rossi agreed that makes it very difficult when people are looking at it with any kind of critical lens: it is disquieting to see different numbers.

Clabo noted that not everyone is familiar with the data dictionaries that are built behind enrollment numbers. This is a small step towards a more mature system. Beale pointed out this issue within the Graduate School in particular. The reports about admissions she received as a member of the Graduate Council did not usually comport with her first-hand information about LLM inquiries. Ellis noted Carly Cirilli (Sr. Dir., Institutional Research & Data Analytics) is a member of the DEI Council metrics subcommittee that has been having a particularly difficult time coming up with the right way to measure our current status, the right way to express it and what kind of goals to set. This initiative can be particularly helpful in the DEI area.

Ellis discussed the main components of the proposed project. Data mapping and needs analysis will determine how we better communicate the data, better explain it and consider what is needed to make it more accessible to the right people.

Beale asked who the “we” is, to which Ellis responded that the small “we” consists of himself and the core project working team (Shawntae Harris Mintline, Assoc. Dir., Academic Programs and Institutional Effectiveness; Cathy Barrette, Sr. Dir. of Assessment; Cirilli in Institutional Research). The broader “we” includes an advisory council for this project that is comprised of university leadership, deans, faculty and academic staff.

The proposal will be centered around the AIR Data Literacy Institute 12-week program that many universities have worked with. The idea is to select three projects and staff each project with a team of about 10 people (academic staff, faculty, administrators, student affairs people, business affairs people). The goal is for the three project teams to develop ideas for an intervention to improve their project areas.

Policy suggested a good start would be to have a better-defined set of three to five target projects that the proposed faculty advisory committee could refine to a stage where the administration and Policy could select nominees for the three teams. That is, Policy members thought it important to narrow the potential scope of projects in order to select appropriate team members.

Beale suggested that the Faculty Affairs, Student Affairs, Curriculum and Instruction and Research Committees discuss this matter at their next meetings and share ideas with Policy that can be passed along to the advisory committee and Ellis.

IV. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Detroit Center for Black Studies: Clabo provided a brief update on the Detroit Center for Black Studies (DCBS), explaining that she would plan for a full discussion at the next meeting.

Chrisomalis was concerned that the deadline for faculty applications is January 30, and there is uncertainty about recruiting that pool of applications. There has been a significant push for applications in his department, but there are some other departments in units who are less aware and have not done that same push. How do we ensure that every unit in humanities/social sciences across the different colleges gets that word out?

Clabo shared some insight around the hiring for this coming academic year. Provost Kornbluh had already committed about 18 positions for potential Mellon hires, meaning a commitment to a department for a Mellon hire if the department found an acceptable candidate. The number of positions remaining for this year, while not yet perfectly clear, is thus relatively limited, but there will be additional hires in the next two years as well so departments will have an opportunity. If a given department was promised two slots but there are no viable candidates, those slots may be reclaimed for future years. For the next meeting, she will provide a chart showing the hires in place and tentative commitments made, including both the Mellon hires and the Pathway to Faculty program that will convert to faculty positions. It is unclear if folks on campus are fully aware of how many of those commitments have already been made for this year.

Danielle Aubert asked whether those applications go to a search committee. Clabo explained the grant does not specify how those positions are searched. Kornbluh formed a steering committee to assist, but the steering committee is not a search committee. Further, the grant does not specify that any of these hires are appointments to DCBS: they are school/departmental hires in units expressing a willingness to be a DCBS affiliate. To get the program underway, approximately 18 positions have been allocated through the Provost’s Office: commitment of a line to a department

chair and steering committee referral of a viable candidate does not mean that a hire must be made or that the unit would lose the line, but it does require that there be a possibility of a viable pool for the line to be retained for further search. It has to be a legitimate search. The steering committee should serve as the first screener as applications come to determine that the applicant satisfies the criterion to be part of this initiative because they have an interest in some aspect of African American studies or other interest that would be housed in DCBS. Then the steering committee would pass that application off to the appropriate search committee in the school/college. What the steering committee is currently requesting of the provost is that they have representation to sit without vote on the search committees formed (they have no vote) so that they can respond to questions that relate to affiliation with DCBS. Beale emphasized the importance that it must be the faculty in the department making the final decision about the suitability of a candidate.

Rossi asked whether an existing search, already planned with a line to support the position, could be shifted to a Mellon hire. Clabo confirmed that is the way the first hires were handled. Clabo noted that between original funding of the grant and Kornbluh's leaving, there was not sufficient coordinated communication across the university's units. It will be important to communicate better moving forward.

Budget Planning Council: Clabo thanked those who have agreed to serve on the Budget Planning Council (BPC). The templates, calling for information on handling both a 3% and a 6% reduction, went out to deans and division heads, and the budget hearings will take place in February and March. That does not mean there is a 6% reduction coming, but it does mean we are preparing across the board. Both Clabo and Beale noted they will advocate for not making across-the-board cuts but making decisions about investing and disinvesting. Clabo hopes that the BPC gives serious thought about building efficiencies and revenue generation. Often deans claim that building a new program will pay for itself with a large number of new students, but they have no market analysis or other data to support the predicted outcome. In the past, the proposal may have been funded but not borne fruit. Deans have therefore been told that they must have some data on which any new program proposal is based, as well as periodic benchmarks. After 5 years, if the program has only 5 students and not the 275 projected, there will need to be a plan for change. The BPC also focuses on reducing expenses, but we cannot continue to add new programs without demonstrable enrollment growth generating new revenue. Law is a good example of building programs that have added revenue without adding expense: it serves the community exceptionally well.

Pramod Khosla asked for further clarification. Clabo noted that even optimistic modeling of enrollment growth from traditional populations will not match known expenditure increases. Compensation for personnel comprise the largest and easily projected expenditure. Increasing master's enrollment growth needs to be an area of focus: while there have been post-pandemic declines in masters enrollments nationally, Wayne State's declines have been more substantial.

Rossi reported on last Friday's medical school budget committee meeting where the committee asked for accurate information on sources of med school funding. It is important to know what funding is coming from the different entities—Wayne Health, PEPPAP, FMRE, university general funds, etcetera. If they do not get that information, she will let the provost know.

Searches: Clabo provided updates on the two searches that are currently in progress. Policy had a chance to meet with SPA, the search firm for the senior vice president for business affairs. She has confidence in the firm, though the president has an ambitious timeline for an appointment announced by the end of March. As chair of the search, her view is that the university must be willing to walk away if there is not a viable candidate and restart the search. It is not about

getting the best person available at that moment, but it is about getting the best person for the job. It is too important a role merely to settle for someone.

The other search is the university relations officer and chief of staff. It is an important role that will have responsibility over marketing and communications, government relations and the Board of Governors office, all of which traditionally reported to the president with VPs heading them and operated in silos. The goal is more coordinated university messaging and relationships (local, state, federal) than there has been.

Accenture: Clabo reported the Board of Governors has authorized Accenture, an external consulting firm, to do an enterprise-wide review of the university's personnel processes. This consultation likely will be announced at the January 31 BOG meeting. Accenture will meet with constituent groups (including Policy).

V. REPORT FROM THE SENATE PRESIDENT

Inauguration Committee: The Inauguration Committee is planning events for March 18. It has been proposed that the day start with a lunch for faculty and academic staff with the president—something similar to the brunch at the Fall Opening. It will likely be followed by a short student event, which may be a performance in the Community Arts Building before the official inauguration event. The inauguration event will be a ceremony involving the Board of Governors, the president and robed representatives from other universities around the country, as well as some number of governmental and community organization VIPs. It is expected at this point that the ceremony will take place from 3:30 to 5 p.m. with a reception afterwards.

December 7, 2023 BOG Meeting: At the board meeting, resolutions approving two new centers (Ben L. Silberstein Institute for Brain Health and the Center for Emerging and Infectious Diseases) were to be approved, and the directors of the centers and Interim VPR Tim Stemmler were there to share some of the excitement about them. Approval of the two centers was, however, moved into the consent agenda announced by President Espy, so no individual presentation was made. This seemed like a missed chance to inform the BOG about the move to more efficient organization of support for research in centers/institutes under Stemmler and more pressure for those centers to get T32 and other large grants that Policy has worked on with Stemmler over the last 18 months of his interim role.

The meeting adjourned at 3 p.m. so that Clabo and Beale could participate in a search interview.

Approved as submitted at the Policy Committee meeting of January 29, 2024.