

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC SENATE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

February 5, 2024

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

Guests from Accenture: Avante Gilstrap; Elizabeth Klobucher; Jessica Roy

I. MEETING WITH ACCENTURE CONSULTANTS REGARDING HR PROCESSES

The Policy Committee met with representatives from the Accenture consulting firm that has been hired to look at HR procedures throughout the university and recommend steps to incorporate better business practices. Policy Committee members were frank in their discussion of multiple problems that they have seen, experienced or heard about, especially those originating in the centralized HR office. The Accenture members indicated that what they heard at Policy was consistent with complaints made in other formats, especially regarding inconsistency, significant timing delays, lack of transparency and lack of accountability.

II. APPROVAL OF POLICY PROCEEDINGS

The proceedings of the January 29, 2024 Policy Committee will be approved via email since not all members had a chance to review.

III. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Chief of Staff/University Relations Officer (COS/URO) candidates: Policy members will host interviews with each COS/URO candidate and may also attend forum presentations. Acting Provost Clabo noted that President Espy supports public vetting of candidates. It will be interesting to see the campus response to the four candidates visiting this week and next. This is an important role for us in terms of changing the way we tell our story and communicate our message effectively to multiple audiences.

Meeting with CLAS department chairs: Clabo met with the CLAS department chairs last week to discuss their needs from the Office of the Provost and updates on the Mellon hires. The chairs noted they provided detailed information about block scheduling, but they have not received feedback as the schedule is about to go live. Clabo has asked AVP Darin Ellis and his team to provide information campus-wide before the fall schedule goes live.

Alternative calendar: Clabo has asked the registrar's office to consider an alternative calendar that would not hold December graduation during exams. If there is a schedule that looks possible, we will certainly bring it to Policy for consultation before adopting a change.

Vice Provost search: Provost Mark Kornbluh had launched a search for a vice provost for enrollment management that will take responsibility for admissions, enrollment and financial aid. The first attempt at the search landed a weak pool of candidates so Clabo reopened the search in November. After interviewing 10 candidates, she has narrowed the search to five semi-finalists that will be interviewed by a small group on Zoom. After that, she plans to bring two candidates to campus to meet with various groups, including Policy. We need current, contemporary leadership that will oversee enrollment and

financial aid, thinking about how we use a more contemporary strategy that is digitally driven to recruit and convert applicants to enrollees.

Steve Chrisomalis asked whether the position will only cover undergraduates or also graduate enrollment. Clabo explained the posting was deliberately vague. It will focus on undergraduate enrollment, but the goal is to have graduate enrollment—especially master’s enrollments—handled by schools/colleges. Applicants for graduate school want faculty contact, not administrative contact, but it is also important to avoid too heavy a faculty burden. This person may help inform that strategy but likely will not have graduate responsibility directly.

Linda Beale asked Clabo to provide Policy the job description used for this search as well as an organizational chart showing how these fit together. Clabo agreed to share this information. This is a position that will report directly to the provost: moving the title from associate provost to vice provost is to be in tune with current practice at most R1 institutions.

Humanities Center: A celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Humanities Center took place on Friday. Clabo was unable to attend the symposium but did attend the Friday evening gala at St. Andrews—a beautiful venue that needs, however, a new sound system. The center has an impressive record of accomplishment and a forward-thinking new director in Jamie Goodrich (CLAS). Showcasing the work of the humanities is especially important here, where STEM and health disciplines tend to occupy the limelight. She suggested to communications that they provide strong releases on the celebration.

renée hoogland appreciated Clabo’s comment. We almost lost the managing editor for the journal *Criticism* because the dean did not understand that you cannot edit a journal without a managing editor. There is little recognition of work faculty do on journals, and this is one of the few journals that makes money for the Wayne State University Press.

Working group on interdisciplinary offerings: Clabo urged that there be quick movement between the Office of the Provost and Policy on establishing a joint interdisciplinary working group as previously discussed. Ideally, the result will be a framework setting out appropriate faculty-centered processes for handling proposals. Beale asked whether the chairs of the standing committees should be part of that working group, or if it would be preferable to designate a member from each of the key committees. hoogland would like to know the charges before committing. Beale will work with Clabo to draft a charge as soon as possible. She noted the need to add a few other faculty to ensure a broad representation from disciplines.

PhD report: Clabo reported continuing interest in the PhD task force’s report. She has asked the co-chairs of the PhD Committee to make it available by the 16th. Once it is available, Policy should discuss the recommendations to consider appropriate next steps.

IV. REPORT FROM THE SENATE PRESIDENT

Civil discourse: Beale reported that Jon Weinberg (Law) had contacted her about President Espy's desire for a civil discourse initiative. There is, of course, the symposium announced for January 29, which resulted from the earlier talks at Policy and with Provost Kornbluh about a symposium on discourse in the context of the escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Weinberg indicated that he and Denise Baszile (Dean, Education) had been asked to think about how to encourage civil discourse campus-wide both in curricular changes and events, indicating that he would appreciate some guidance on thinking about undergraduate curriculum issues. Beale set a meeting last week with Weinberg, Baszile, hoogland and Chrisomalis to discuss Weinberg’s request and urge a short-term focus in terms of three to four events and symposia that might be scheduled through the 2024-25 academic year, rather than aiming for long-

term curricular changes around such a theme. She emphasized to Weinberg and Baszile that curricular issues would fall within departmental, General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC) and Policy jurisdiction (especially if the idea was to have a Wayne Experience (WE) course that picked up an annual theme), whereas a task force or working group could serve as an umbrella group for bringing a few speakers in and perhaps organizing another symposium for next spring.

Clabo noted this arose at the University Leadership Council at which Baszile suggested an annual theme for students, faculty and staff exploring issues around civil discourse in a complex environment. The notion of a campus focus for a year is not new, it is just new to us. It is likely this project will lead to suggestions for a variety of staff events, community-wide events and/or road trip events. Ideally, there would be another thematic topic for subsequent years. Clabo also agreed that it is important to communicate what is expected clearly, so that it does not seem to dictate particular approaches to curriculum or school/college events.

Jennifer Lewis stated that the Curriculum and Instruction Committee created a small working group to generate some ideas around the current WE vacuum, so she will suggest they consider the civil discourse theme. Hoogland agreed that the WE is a problem that needs to be resolved; but the idea discussed in the group was focusing on activities such as invited lectures, a film festival and a symposium that are not necessarily part of curricular affairs but celebrate the topic. That seems much more feasible than trying to implement a course module about civil discourse. Clabo agreed. In many ways this is about building community. This is another opportunity to bring the community together in different ways. Danielle Aubert had similar conversations while serving on the Humanities Center Board, and now that Goodrich is the director, perhaps that would be a good space to bring this idea.

Beale suggested a task force to think about setting up a film festival or book readings or similar activities during the academic year. Clabo noted Weinberg and Baszile are being asked to lead a group that will have to include strong student representation from the Student Senate as well as the Jewish Student Organization and the Students for Justice in Palestine. Given current campus sensitivities, who will sit at this table is important.

Replacements on Academic Staff Professional Development Committee: At their last meeting, Policy appointed two replacements for the Academic Staff Professional Development Committee. Beale gave Jake Wilson (Faculty Affairs) the names only to learn that there had been no recheck of eligibility on the list considered: one selected is no longer eligible. The question is whether to allow the committee to complete its work (usually by end of April) with five members or have Wilson seek additional people so that a sixth person can be selected. Policy members agreed that the five people should represent a sufficiently diverse group to work with the professional development issues and it is better for the committee to be able to start its work now. Beale will communicate that information to Boris Baltes (Sr. Assoc. Provost Faculty Affairs) and Wilson.

Elections: Elections are coming up soon for Senate membership and the Senate Office will be notifying members (and their chairs) whose terms are expiring.

Apparently, the Senate has lost additional slots in terms of number of faculty and academic staff on campus, moving down from 76 members to 74 members. We had 83 members not long ago, but there are fewer faculty and academic staff that are eligible to serve on the Academic Senate. Beale hopes to change the bylaws to include the head of each of the schools and colleges as members of the Senate, which will ensure we retain a larger membership. Although it will not be done before the elections, those people could still serve if we pass the bylaws before fall. If Policy members know people in their units who are thinking about running or who served before and might run again, ask them to consider running when the announcements come out.

Senate resolution in appreciation for Tim Stemmler: The Research Committee has agreed to propose, and Policy then put on the plenary session, a resolution in appreciation for former Interim VPR Tim Stemmler's role in research recognizing the work he did to bring some order and efficiency to the office during the year and a half he served. Policy agreed.

Master's recruiting: Chrisomalis has invited Sherry Quinn (Director, Graduate Admissions) to the Student Affairs Committee meeting next Wednesday, February 14 to discuss master's recruiting. Beale encouraged Policy members to attend because that relates to some of the issues they have been talking about. They will talk about graduate admissions in general, and Chrisomalis will specifically question what is going on with respect to master's students. He has been told they were offloading, but that did not happen in a systematic way. Some departments have substantial staff (i.e., the business school handles the MBA), but most ordinary academic departments do not have enough staff to do the recruitment needed.

Interdisciplinary task force: Beale reiterated the need to do something about the interdisciplinary task force, and suggested Policy try to move that forward quickly. She and Clabo will get started on the charge.

Faculty to speak to the Foundation Board: At the last Policy meeting, Beale mentioned that VP David Ripple wanted Policy to recommend faculty who could speak to the Foundation Board about their field of research to help the Foundation Board have a better understanding of what we do as faculty. Beale requested each member of Policy to provide at least two names of faculty who speak well and could present the essence of what they do as academics in a way that would help the Board understand the academic enterprise better. Presentations will be 30 minutes, including time for questions. Beale will suggest someone directly to Ripple for the March meeting, to get that effort off the ground.

Installation of bidets: Beale had a discussion with Rob Davenport (AVP, FP&M) about the importance of installing bidets in at least one restroom in most buildings across campus. Policy agreed there are many reasons why it makes sense. Beale will draft a memo to Davenport for Policy to review.

V. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS WITH COS/URO CANDIDATES

Policy members discussed details about the upcoming interviews with the COS/URO candidates as well as their availability to participate. As usual after the interviews, Policy will develop a consensus memo to send providing strengths and weaknesses of each candidate, unranked, rather than individual Policy members sending info to the feedback link.

VI. POLICY MEMO IN SUPPORT OF STUDENT SENATE RESOLUTION ON MENSTRUAL PRODUCT AVAILABILITY

Policy members reviewed the draft memo supporting the Student Senate's resolution on menstrual product availability and made some suggestions for edits.

VII. APPENDIX ON RESPECT FOR STUDENT SENATE RESOLUTION

Policy discussed the Student Senate's resolution on respect and the new appendix offering a definition of respect. Brad Roth pointed out that although supporting the addition of "respect" to university values appears on its face to be a "no-brainer", it in fact creates significant problems, especially in the current climate where progressive policies are co-opted to license exercises of power that are not helpful. Policy agreed the problem is that it can be weaponized, and the student group may not have been fully aware of

the weaponizing possibility. Clabo noted the opportunity to use it as a learning experience for this group in rich dialogue with faculty leadership. There is a lot to be accomplished from student senators being exposed to faculty leaders in a deeper understanding of what is obviously well-meaning, but potentially quite dangerous and not something Policy could support. Policy members concluded that the next step forward should be an invitation to Student Senate President Hayden Johnson and the two senators who sponsored the “respect” appendix to join us for the February 12 Policy meeting for discussion.

Approved as amended at the Policy Committee meeting of February 12, 2024.