

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC SENATE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE
March 4, 2024

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

I. APPROVAL OF POLICY PROCEEDINGS

The proceedings of the February 26, 2024 Policy Committee were approved as submitted.

II. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Vice Provost for Enrollment Management: The Policy Committee will meet with the second candidate for vice provost for enrollment management this afternoon. Provost Clabo is interested to hear Policy's feedback on both candidates and hopes to appoint one of the two finalists. Enrollment management overall is existential to the future of the university. We have reasonably solid strategies for undergraduate enrollments, but a new leader can help us use data more effectively. There is much work to be done with master's enrollment.

renèe hoogland noted it is not just a question of enrollment systems. Graduate applications are up 200-300% (with about 2/3 from the African continent). Her department is still going through graduate admissions packets, so it is problematic that faculty do considerable work that is ultimately useless because there is no funding for master's students. Clabo noted that reinstating the graduate application fee, which will occur next year, will likely eliminate the many spurious applications that drove this uptick. Master's students are viewed as an opportunity to generate revenue.

hoogland pointed out the disconnect between what master's students want from us and what we want from master's students. Many cannot come without some funding assistance. Steve Chrisomalis agreed that the needs are very different, noting that West Africa will not likely result in increased master's enrollments. There are small, targeted resource opportunities such as the differential tuition in the Great Lakes program: perhaps programs can pay that 10% difference. That is a small allocation so that they are on in-state funding, and there may be similar small things looking domestically or across the river. It was reported at the CLAS faculty assembly that urban planning has 257 applications, of which only 20 are domestic.

Clabo suggested that there should be a way to handle initial applicant screening algorithmically with little time investment: that would also allow us to provide speedier responses. Programs could shrink the pool to viable candidates and reduce the faculty burden while speeding our response. It is important to look at where we target small amounts of investment that will do the kinds of things that hoogland and Chrisomalis have described. She is optimistic because the current process is so deeply flawed that there are vast opportunities to improve. In retrospect, Clabo would not have approved a waiver of the application fee for next year had she known these data which were not available when that decision had to be made.

Danielle Aubert noted that she has interviewed a number of extraordinary candidates this year from Iran. It is unlikely they will be able to come here. It is likely that they would have been algorithmically eliminated based on their country of origin. hoogland noted that language facility is a huge issue in the English department. Noreen Rossi explained the same thing is happening in medicine. She received a request to financially support a master's student, but with the expected

decline in numbers of School of Medicine Rumbles, she would rather support a PhD student. Hoogland pointed out an ethical issue: if we want master's students for the revenue but we cannot confidently say that they will succeed, we are doing the wrong thing.

Rushton Journal of Undergraduate Humanities Research launch: Clabo congratulated the faculty involved on the launch of the *Rushton Journal of Undergraduate Humanities Research*. The celebration had a large turnout of undergraduate students in the humanities and faculty. The quality of the journal itself, from both a tactile perspective and content, is phenomenal. She noted the importance of recognizing contributions in the humanities, but also appreciated that half of the essays were about Detroit. It is Wayne State students telling Detroit's story to a broader audience.

PhD Committee report: Clabo is seeking feedback from Policy and the Council of Deans on the PhD report. Her priority is to draft a charge for an interdisciplinary task force that includes the Policy Committee to look at creating a structure for how we both approve, govern, resource allocate and do assessments for programs that cross more than one department, even within the same college. Clabo and Linda Beale will jointly charge the committee with providing recommendations on how we do all of those things.

University Relations Officer/Chief of Staff Melissa Smiley: University Relations Officer/Chief of Staff Melissa Smiley started today and will work to tell our story in better ways than we have done in the past. Smiley has been thinking deeply about this role and her ability to bring the three disparate offices (Marketing and Communication, Government Relations, and the Board Office) together under a more cohesive umbrella. Policy will soon have a chance to meet with her.

Towers fire displacement update: Clabo reported a total of 99 students displaced by last week's fire due to water damage. There were originally only 40 students displaced, but the suppression system drained internally rather than externally, damaging more rooms. The students will be relocated to the two empty floors above. We still do not have a final report from the arson investigators on the cause of the fire.

Missing student update: Clabo reported the missing student has been found safe.

III. REPORT FROM THE SENATE PRESIDENT

School of public health working groups: Beale reported that Laura Benjamins (Medicine) has agreed to serve on the school of public health (SPH) working group on student services/space utilization. Chrisomalis questioned if there were any other updates on the working groups. Clabo explained the document VP Mark Schweitzer shared was an aspirational plan of meetings. Beale agreed to ask Schweitzer to meet with Policy to discuss the working groups.

March meetings of the Policy Committee: Policy will not meet during spring break. The president's investiture ceremony will take place on March 18 and most Policy members will attend the festivities so there will be no Policy meeting that day. Policy will not meet again until March 25 so any urgent business will be conducted by email.

Housing deadline: Ahmad Ezzedine (VP Academic Student and Global Engagement) communicated with Beale that they did not change the housing deadline because the current deadline is later than our rivals in Michigan, even though advisors expressed the change is important.

IV. UROP FACULTY COORDINATING COUNCIL SELECTION

Policy members selected UROP faculty coordinating council nominees from a list of nominees that were divided into five program areas, similar to the Article XXX nominations. Beale will communicate the result to Darin Ellis (AVP, Academic Affairs).

V. DRAFT APRIL 3 PLENARY AGENDA

The Policy Committee discussed the April 3 plenary agenda. Clabo will confirm with President Espy about presenting the College to Career initiative.

VI. MAY COMMENCEMENT SCHEDULE

The Policy Committee agreed on speakers for the May ceremonies. The following list of tenured professors have agreed to speak at the various ceremonies on behalf of the Senate:

Hooding Ceremony: Steve Chrisomalis
Ceremony II: Brad Roth
Ceremony III: renée hoogland
Ceremony IV: Pramod Khosla
Ceremony V: Linda Beale
Ceremony VI: Linda Beale
Ceremony VII: Noreen Rossi

VII. CIVIL DISCOURSE THEME

Policy discussed the document—on instituting an annual “year of focus” with an initial 2024-25 theme of “civil discourse”—presented by Jon Weinberg (Law) and Dean Denise Baszile (Education) at a recent University Leadership Council meeting. At that meeting, Beale noted that it would be better not to focus entirely on preparing students but rather on a broader concept of university community dialogue and intellectual exchange. The term “civil” discourse is also problematic, since it has operated as a way to weaponize discussions of free speech, especially in the context of states increasingly passing laws to limit topics at universities to prevent what some consider “woke” approaches.

Clabo sought Policy’s feedback on this topic for discussion at the next ULC meeting. She suggested the theme be renamed “Discourse in a Complex World”. Policy agreed it captures the question about different political undercurrents, diversity undercurrents and ideological undercurrents that make it a complex world.

VIII. PROVOST’S PHD COMMITTEE REPORT AND GRAD COUNCIL AWARDS COMMITTEE RUMBLE SCHOLARSHIP REPORT

Clabo would like to bring the PhD Committee report and Graduate Council Awards Committee Rumble Scholarship report to the next Council of Deans meeting, and requested the Policy Committee’s feedback to bring to that discussion. There are things in the report that will require implementation on a broader scale, some of which, like reduction in credits, can follow established policy. However, there are other things that will require writing some new policy.

Beale requested Policy members read the report and share what they think are high priority things to be done or issues they see in a recommendation that is set forth here, and she will put that together in a Policy perspective on the report.

IX. FUND FOR EMERGENCY STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Beale shared a one-pager about creating a Senate-supported endowed fund that could be accessed for student emergency situations. Clabo is aware of these funds existing in various schools, colleges, departments, but not university wide. Another alternative would be encouraging the deans to include an endowed fund in their school and college for emergency use that puts it closer to the student in need.

Danielle Aubert noted this has been discussed within the union since funds administered through the university go directly into students' financial aid, so they do not actually receive the funds.

Pramod Khosla explained they have a proposal which has been around for about three months with a subcommittee looking at bargaining for the common good, and one of the things they picked up on was emergency housing. He spoke to Governor Bryan Barnhill about it, who was quite interested, although he has not come back with anything specific, so Khosla will follow up with him this week. Several universities have this incorporated into their bargaining. The main issue in all this turns out to be how quickly you can disperse the funds, because if it is an emergency, you do not want to go through a committee which will take at least a week. You need someone to make a decision right away.

Chrisomalis questioned the status of the HIGH program which includes housing support, textbooks, school supplies, clothing, transportation and childcare assistance. Last year, as President Wilson was transitioning out of his position, the Student Affairs Committee was assured there was going to be continued support. President Wilson's wife, Jackie Wilson, is still appointed as director of the HIGH program and reports to Ezzeddine. Khosla noted the limitations of the program: last year the funding ran out within two months, the application procedure was cumbersome and it has a minimum grade point requirement. In his experience at another institution, there was an emergency fund for overseas students who had to suddenly fly because there had been a death in the family. Basically, they could go to any faculty member who would cut the student a check or buy their ticket and get reimbursed, because you cannot go through committees when you are getting on the next plane.

Beale suggested the Academic Senate push for establishment of an endowment, since this is something clearly within the Senate's jurisdiction of support for students, with at least the required minimum of \$25,000. Although that is not enough to do much, once established other donors could be sought to move it to a much higher endowment level to throw off enough money to be of real assistance. Clabo recommended at least \$1 million to have enough to support the number of students campus wide.

Policy will find out more about how the HIGH program is working now and talk further about possibilities at a later meeting.

X. REPORT FROM STANDING COMMITTEE LIAISONS AND NEW BUSINESS

Faculty Affairs Committee: Hoogland reported the Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) toured potential buildings for the proposed faculty club. There is consensus on the Music Annex building which is well located on Cass with different-sized rooms for performances or talks and smaller, private rooms. Ashley Flintoff (Director, Planning and Space Management) will come to the next FAC meeting to talk about the next steps.

Clabo noted there has been discussion about the Music Annex as part of the proposed school of public health. An assessment was done on that building and to bring up the infrastructure will cost at least \$2 million. As we talk about a comprehensive campus plan, she is increasingly hearing that a certain space is going to X, except there are three Xs who have been saying the

space is for them, and there is concern about who is making decisions about space—it should not be an individual staff member making those decisions. Therefore, we need this discussion with DumontJanks about what is a more comprehensive plan for the future of the campus that does not involve us asking people to move every three years.

Curriculum and Instruction Committee: Jennifer Lewis noted the focus group about the Wayne Experience course will be held on March 6 from 1:30 to 2:30 in Bernath Auditorium. Several Senate members will be facilitating the small groups.

Approved as submitted via email March 26, 2024.