

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC SENATE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE
April 22, 2024

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

Guests: Thomas Cavalier, Assoc. General Counsel; Philip Cunningham, Assoc. VP Research; Joan Dunbar, Prof. Temp, OVPR; Ahmad Ezzeddine, VP Academic Student & Global Engagement; Lorry Sabo, Manager, Export Control & Regulatory Compliance; Eulonda Whitmore, Assoc. VP and Chief Audit Executive, Internal Audit

I. FOREIGN INFLUENCE POLICY, FAQ AND WEBSITE

The group attempted to undertake the discussion of the foreign influence policy but ran into technical problems since the Foreign Influence Committee members were attending by Zoom and a key person could not connect to audio. The matter was deferred until the next meeting.

II. APPROVAL OF POLICY PROCEEDINGS

The proceedings of the April 8, 2024 Policy Committee were approved as revised.

III. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Master's enrollments: Policy had recently discussed concerns about master's enrollments and the large number of what may not be viable applications from countries such as Nigeria where students likely need aid to attend. Although it is too early to determine accurate fall numbers, Provost Clabo shares some information from the Fall 2024 registrations. Master's registrations are up almost 17% from this time last year, international registrations have increased from 13 to 24, and domestic registrations have increased from 148 to 252. That suggests that the application increase does reflect likely increased enrollments.

Steve Chrisomalis pointed out he received information from Jennifer Hart (formerly a Wayne State historian but now at Virginia Tech) who knows the Ghana situation very well: she noted that the earliest Ghana students will have visa appointments is March 2025. Though we may not be getting an influx of Ghanaian students this year, that is a separate issue than whether the overall enrollment climate is okay. The concern persists about the effort to process all these applications.

Policy members noted a variety of factors could be at play, depending on which departments show these gains and whether students are essentially registering to preserve a potential place in the program. These numbers could be a result of the new MLS programs in law and/or some of the new online programs in engineering and business.

Clabo agreed to look into registrations by department and will bring master's registration numbers to Policy every week. She is particularly interested in engineering and business, where they have new online registration, to determine whether these are new students or simply a shift from in-person to online.

Boad of Governor's (BOG) meeting calendar: Clabo reported the Board has adopted a new calendar of meetings for the next academic year (2024-25) that will impact Policy and Academic Senate moving forward. There will be six meetings: September 13; October 23; December 12; February 14; April 25; June 26. Clabo suggested Senate members serve on the BOG committees through the September meeting. Linda Beale agreed that is the simplest thing to do.

The October 23 committee meetings will be on campus on that Wednesday, but the Board will hold their full meeting on October 24 in Grand Rapids with a virtual option. Clabo indicated that the Board believes there is a need to establish its presence in Grand Rapids, including participation in some other events (i.e., advocacy committee meeting; alumni event). It is relevant that the apparent second choice of students who are accepted here but go elsewhere is Grand Valley.

Chrisomalis noted the BOG Student Affairs Committee has not met this semester. Clabo explained there has been some discussion about whether the Academic Affairs and Student Affairs committees should merge into a single committee, but that is a Board decision.

Update to Web Accessibility Policy: An updated web accessibility policy requires all vendors to the university to provide a voluntary product accessibility template to the university. Web-based applications will undergo an accessibility review by C&IT during the procurement process. This is a change in concert with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2.

Commencement update: An invitation went out requesting faculty participation in commencement where they can. Clabo discussed changes to the commencement ceremony. Faculty will move one section to the left, so they are no longer obstructed. This allows them to interact with students as they line up. There is also some change in the order of ceremony. The president's address moves up, and comments from both the alumni association and the student speaker will be videotaped to address concerns about ceremony length. At the end, upbeat music and a video montage of fireworks will be played. Hopefully ceremonies will be crisper, more celebratory and upbeat.

Jennifer Lewis asked whether there are plans for potential protest disruptions. WSU Police Chief Holt informed the University Leadership Council (ULC) of the operational plan which includes additional police presence and plainclothes police. If there are disruptions, the provost goes to the podium to thank them and have them move on. If protesters were to do a sit in on stage, plainclothes police would escort them away. Holt will direct the platform party and faculty if there is a need to move. The platform party will be briefed before each ceremony about the operational plan because threat assessments change.

FAFSA update: Our deadline is fluid. Each time the feds announce a deadline we have a fold, and that has happened yet again. Clabo noted family incomes below \$70K will be fine: it is the students and families above that level who still have significant need that will be most in jeopardy because of the delay.

IV. REPORT FROM THE SENATE PRESIDENT

Student Senate invitation to Policy: Beale invited Student Senate President Hayden Johnson to meet with Policy to discuss curricular issues and processes ensuring earlier consultation. He indicated that all are busy through exams and commencement, so she will extend the invitation again in early summer.

Employee Recognition Ceremony: The Employee Recognition Ceremony will be held on April 24 from 3 to 4 p.m. in the Community Arts auditorium with a reception immediately following at McGregor. The ceremony will honor employees who have achieved milestone years of service, those who have retired from the university and Value Award winners.

Academic Recognition Ceremony: The Academic Recognition Ceremony and reception will be held on April 25 from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at McGregor. The ceremony will recognize outstanding faculty, academic staff and graduate students for their contributions to the university, academic community and pursuit of professional interests.

Graduate Council: Beale reported Graduate Council met last Wednesday. They discussed the dissertation credit issue that came from the PhD Committee but, as Chrisomalis reminded, no actual vote was taken at this meeting. It had already been considered beforehand by the various Graduate Council groups, and there is clear support for changing to 18 from the 30 current minimum. Some people remain concerned that the proposal does not include a reduction of the minimum 78 total credits to 60 (42 didactic + 18 dissertation). Chrisomalis noted there were a few who insisted that the Graduate Council should approve an entire package reducing from 90 to 60 credits, despite the fact that the report clearly recommended more discussion. They felt that there had been enough discussion, and the evidence was clear to them despite the need to consult with a broader range of stakeholders. Chrisomalis added there are concerns about changing the minimum down to 60—i.e., what that says about a Wayne State degree; what that would say for different programs that would have inequities. Currently every program has 30 dissertation credit hours, and moving every program down to 18 is workable.

Beale noted that the vote on the change in the allocation of Rumble fellowship funds (which increases Rumbles for Education while decreasing them for Medicine) failed, but it will likely come before the Council again at the May meeting. Chrisomalis pointed out it was an unfruitful discussion because the points that were raised were not the most pertinent ones. For instance, there were a number of people from the medical school who were making an argument about no GTAs. That is true, but the College Education, which is the main beneficiary of the change in allocations, also does not have a GTA pool. That argument is irrelevant to the question of whether there should be a redistribution from medicine to education and is mainly just an argument for retaining what Medicine currently has. Dan Walz (Assoc. Dean, Research and Graduate Programs) made a passionate case that STEM needs to be treated differently than non-STEM because of time to degree, but he could not define what STEM was. It is not clear to everyone how that can function as a relevant factor by which Rumbles would be allocated. None of the principled arguments that could have been raised were actually raised in that meeting. Beale added that there are arguments about a need for more of this kind of aid. There are currently 100 Rumbles at \$22,000 each.

Center for Molecular Medicine and Genetics (CMMG) complaint: Last year, Policy discussed how CMMG had not in the last charter period acted on getting more grants, that they lost clinical affiliates who were doing related clinical trials, and that they are essentially a center functioning as a department of the medical school. Ideally, those should all change. Beale and former interim VPR Tim Stemmler had met with the directors of the center and talked about these issues. The issues seemed resolved, but the directors of CMMG have sent a complaint memo to Beale, Clabo and VPR Ezemenari Obasi. They object to a three-year charter, claim that having a center function as a department works fine, but agreed that they should seek a T32 grant if possible. Beale noted that the idea of the three-year charter was to push them to do a mega grant, instead of just resting on the laurels of the grants they have done as PIs. She continues to believe that there should be a distinction between a department and a center, and this matter should be resolved within the medical school.

The Rushton Journal: *The Rushton Journal* sent out a new call for student work.

Upcoming Policy meetings: Richard Pineau (CLAS) is on next week's Policy agenda to provide an update on the work done by the ad hoc AI committee. Beale needs to schedule the Campus Police Oversight Committee that was put on hold until Michael Wright (AVP Marketing and Communications, Chief of Staff) retired, which will be done after the rescheduling of the foreign influence policy meeting.

Speech on campus: Beale noted that the current state of national attention to campus protests about the Israeli-Gaza war is disconcerting. The president of Columbia University appeared to cater to the right-wing in the congressional hearing, and Columbia has been draconian in terms of having police arrest protesters and speaking publicly about unclear "investigations" into faculty for their speech. They have banned student groups, and changed their policies governing protests with instant effect, making it hard for any shared governance to take place.

Chrisomalis serves on the new task force on annual topics with this year's topic being Discourse, Dialogue and Debate in a Charged Environment along with Brad Roth and Damecia Donahue. The group of about 22 has had one meeting so far. He will share with Policy a link to University of Texas San Antonio's civil discourse policy that has raised some concerns—i.e., if you are going to say something uncivil, do not say anything at all; and a FAQ that links to a university website that talks about student and faculty arrests. He noted Wayne State's body is doing an appropriate job of setting up a co-curricular set of events, but he found the testimony of President Shafik of Columbia and the aftermath concerning. Sometimes nice is not the appropriate response.

Policy Committee summer meeting schedule: In order to determine the summer meeting schedule, Beale asked Policy members to share the dates they will be out of town with the Senate office.

V. ACADEMIC SENATE PLENARY MAY 1 AGENDA DRAFT

Policy members finalized the May 1 plenary agenda.

VI. SENATE PARTICIPATION IN ADVOCACY DAY MAY 7 IN LANSING

Beale is seeking Senate participation in Advocacy Day on May 7 in which members of the Wayne State community go to Lansing for a luncheon and meet in small groups with legislators and staff. A number of administrators will be attending, but it is important they hear from faculty as well.

Noreen Rossi agreed to send some names from research to Beale. Lewis suggested Stacey Brockman in Education.

VII. FALL OPENING FACULTY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE SENATE PARTICIPATION

Clabo had asked Ahmad Ezzeddine (VP Academic Student & Global Engagement) and Chanay Peterson (Exec. Asst/Chief of Staff, Provost) to again this year lead the coordination of the various planning groups for Fall Opening. They put out a generic call to faculty and staff interested in participating in a variety of subcommittees related to Fall Opening. In addition, she asked them to reach out specifically to the president of the Academic Senate to see if the Senate wanted official representation on the faculty engagement events, planning what might we do in the first week to bring faculty together, starting with the faculty brunch. Written updates on what is planned for the week will be shared with Policy. Lewis agreed to serve and renée hoogland will consider serving.

VIII. BOG BUDGET AND PRESIDENT'S OFFICE CHARTS

Policy discussed the BOG budget.

Beale shared with Policy members a chart of how the Office of the President is being staffed now compared to how it was staffed under Wilson. She has not yet determined how Angela Griffith's position as AVP for Operations and Strategic Initiatives relates to the budgetary and strategic initiatives of the university.

Clabo noted Griffith's position has assumed some of the functions that Wright provided in the chief of staff role. She added that the changes in the president's office have been budget neutral. For example, offloading Christine Green (Senior Director of Business Affairs) to have responsibilities that are shared with government relations makes sense. The practical impact of having Griffith in this role is to ensure things get done. Rhonda Federspiel (Executive Assistant to the President) is managing the president's calendar, which is a full-time job.

Beale's primary criticism (that she has previously discussed with Griffith and Melissa Smiley (URO/COS) directly) is that these offices need to understand protocols for shared governance. It was odd for Griffith to direct Sarah Schrag to provide access to communicate to Senate members about the President's Reception being moved to the April plenary date without any prior discussion with the Senate president. That is probably just the need to learn more about the shared governance procedures and what is important.

She added that revenue neutral just means that the significant funds for high-level positions that had accrued under Wilson are still being used for these positions. It would have been nice to see budget savings from the restructurings.

IX. REPORT FROM STANDING COMMITTEE LIAISONS AND NEW BUSINESS

Curriculum and Instruction Committee (CIC): Roth reported CIC had some interesting discussions at their last meeting. One was about course waitlists and how those and related issues could be dealt with. It is strange that the waitlists disappear the moment the semester begins, so if spots open up in your class after the first or second class when those first successful in registering have decided to move on from that and open up space, there is no waitlist to go back to. Apparently, there are issues involving financial aid that relate to this. Kurt Kruschinska (Sr. Dir., Registrar) has said he will try to figure out some approach to remedy the problem. In Clabo's experience, it is common practice in most places because financial aid is linked to a number of credits. It is unclear if block tuition changes that. Another issue is a student's schedule. You would hope that by the first week of class, the people on your waitlist have found a slot. Danielle Aubert added that many schools have "shopping periods". Her department has people who cannot get into classes, and that prevents them from moving through the curriculum. Very few people drop, but that may shift with block tuition.

Roth also reported that CIC had talked about instructor access to Canvas. All course materials are archived forever, so that is not a problem. Beale noted that apparently there was a claim of a new policy that the instructor must identify a student with the incomplete and share a copy of the student contract about the incomplete in order to open the course for a student with an incomplete. Roth explained that at some point a Canvas course must become a fixed site with no further interactive capacity. Lewis pointed out that faculty discovered that the gradebook feature of Canvas courses from the past year had been closed under this 'new policy' that requires faculty to make a request for the gradebook features of their courses to be reopened, and C&IT would determine whether the gradebook opening was warranted. In response to concerns about this new policy, CIC invited Kruschinska, Senior Director of IT Management Curtis Kratt and Chief Information Officer Rob Thompson to attend the CIC meeting on April 17. Kruschinska, Kratt and Thompson assured CIC that this new policy will no longer be in effect, and instructors will have full access to their Canvas course materials, including the gradebook features, for one year. After that, access to the gradebook features will be by request only. She would like to see this policy in writing.

Clabo noted it does make sense that the site is locked after a certain point to protect grades from being changed after the fact through that site. The fact that there is a process by which that can be changed is normal. Beale reiterated Lewis's concern that the policy change indicated would be made in a way that faculty can easily access from an obvious website. Clabo noted it is in the Canvas Access Policy. The website should include a request form that is electronic and fillable and allows faculty to explain the reason for the access.

Student Affairs Committee (SAC): Chrisomalis reported SAC met with Michelle Jacobs (CLAS) from the prison program. It is still at an early stage so there are a number of unanswered questions, which she acknowledged.

SAC has also decided to use part of the April meeting to raise items to set the agenda for the next academic year rather than spending the entire September meeting approving the agenda because it does not offer any opportunity for senators to add their own input about what they would like to have included. Beale agreed that would be good for every Senate committee to do. It would be helpful for Policy to have a range of issues suggested by the committees to aid Policy in determining what charges to emphasize for the groups.

Approved as revised at the Policy Committee meeting of April 29, 2024.