

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC SENATE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

August 26, 2024

Present: L. Beale; S. Chrisomalis; L. Clabo; r. hoogland; P. Khosla; J. Lewis; J. Moss; N. Rossi; S. Schrag

Absent with Notice: D. Donahue

Guests: Carly Cirilli, Sr. Dir., Institutional Research and Data Analytics; Curtis Kratt, Sr. Dir, Service Management, C&IT; Richard Pineau, Ad hoc AI Committee Chair; Rob Thompson, Assoc. VP, Chief Information Officer

I. WARRIORGPT

C&IT is creating a generative AI tool for classroom use, and Policy invited Kratt, Pineau and Thompson to provide an overview. WarriorGPT is secure and private, so we do not have the same concerns as we do with ChatGPT's user privacy and security policies. Kratt was tasked with spearheading this effort and worked with the Senate's ad hoc committee in developing the product. We have a pilot program this fall with over 35 faculty broadly represented across the university who will use this in their classes.

Linda Beale asked whether there is an expectation that this will also be used for research. Thompson explained they have a project with Google that is centered on research areas and has some tools that will help researchers cite references and develop research papers and applications. Eventually this will also be expanded as WSU's generative AI tool used by staff and others for work purposes; however, the current focus is on faculty use in instruction. Beale suggested it be pointed out to faculty doing the pilot that it is not designed for research at this time.

Steve Chrisomalis received the email to sign up for the pilot program. His concern is that this is set up as though faculty in the pilot will definitely use it this semester in a course (i.e., the form asks what course it will be used in, how it meets and what the enrollment is). He did not sign up because he does not yet know whether he wants to use it in a course. What is needed is the ability for faculty to sign up to play with it before deciding to integrate it into a course. Noreen Rossi added she does not have a course this semester, so she assumed she could not sign up but similarly would like to have that opportunity to explore it.

Thompson agreed to send another communication to faculty so that those who may be interested in learning to use the tool can do so. He will share a draft of that communication with Brandon Gross (AVP Strategic Operations & Academic Communications). He reiterated that the purpose of the pilot is to determine what technology pitfalls there may be in a classroom setting. If we do not provide this tool, students will simply use other tools. Also, C&IT expects feedback on innovative ways it can be used in the classroom.

The current model is provided as an open-source model from Meta (the Facebook company). They do not divulge all of their sources (e.g., URLs), but it is generally available internet sources. It is a gigantic sum of information pulled from the web, academic sources and other agreements they have. Beale asked whether we can be sure that there is no data from other confidential research included and whether our data from use remains only with us. Thompson noted we do

not know whether their process scoops data from others' research; however, they do not receive our data, which is the core advantage. The database we get is a snapshot in time: if we update it, it will have retrained itself on the public data sets, but it will not use our input for retraining itself.

Beale wondered if there might be potential legal risk if the Meta open-source model has research data that it should not have. Thompson responded all the data sources that it consumes are public data sources; however, it does not mean that the data that was consumed was not copyrighted or subject to restrictions. The same risk applies to all of these public-facing AI models. Provost Clabo noted the question of legal risk is one we should address to the Office of General Counsel.

Chrisomalis questioned model degradation. Do we have a planned update scheduled? Kratt explained they typically do a couple of releases a year, but we can preserve earlier models. If you close your window on your WarriorGPT chat, all of that information is gone. It only learns while you are using it, and it will build using that previous context. We are not even storing our own data.

The WarriorGPT tool is embedded in Canvas on the left-hand menu, and instructors and students must be given individualized access from C&IT. With WarriorGPT you do not have to worry about the privacy agreements, the terms of service, where this data is going to be stored, etcetera. Pineau pointed out that there is an introductory paragraph to remind students of their responsibilities, including not using the tool for classes when the instructor had indicated it is not available. The introduction also includes a link to the Student Code of Conduct. You must click "I agree" every time the tool is used. Faculty should be aware that students can of course still use ChatGPT even if they do not have access to WarriorGPT, and they may do so, although we want to try to let them know what is expected of them.

After the pilot there will be some additional review to get feedback about any problems that occurred. It is clear that there are some faculty that would like to know about student inputs, so this is something that needs to be considered. It is expected that it will be available to everyone in the winter.

II. STUDENT CLEARINGHOUSE DATABASE

Cirilli introduced Policy to the student clearinghouse database that we have created for our use. We will now retain the data that the National Student Clearinghouse provides each year in a database that can be used to better understand our undergraduate student pool. It allows us to see trends, including the institutions students attend when they decline to come here, if they do not go to college at all, if they drop out and if they transfer to another college. We can opt to see that data by fields of study. It will be a tool that can be useful both for admissions committees and curriculum/program design committees. A graduate student database may be available in the future, but that will require additional work.

Clabo noted this tool allows us to target specific populations that we think are more likely to result in an increased yield. For example, Enrollment Management received a list of all students who applied but did not attend any college, and they will attempt to re-engage those students. They will track what is done, to see if a particular initiative worked. This initiative may not have been undertaken at other institutions and may give us an advantage.

Policy urged that faculty—as well as deans and department chairs—generally have access to this tool and be able to use it for various purposes in academic departments (e.g., by admissions, retention, academic curriculum and programming committees).

III. POLICY PROCEEDINGS

The proceedings of the Policy Committee meeting of August 19, 2024 were approved as revised.

IV. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Enrollment: Clabo reported enrollment numbers as of the first day of class: FTIACs are up 2.38%; transfer students are still down 4%, but an additional 50 expected in one program bring that to the same as last fall; undergraduates are up 0.1%; doctoral students are down about 5%; master's students are holding at about 10% but there will likely be some melt pre-census; graduate and professional students are up 5%. Total enrollment is up 1.68%, and there are 6921 new students on campus. We are on track to meet our enrollment goals and should now be moving towards more stable enrollment. We are still waiting to hear from our competitor schools. Given the FAFSA debacle, Clabo was stunned that the results were so positive and gave credit to our new VP, Charles Cotton.

Fall Opening: Clabo thanked everyone who volunteered to help students with move-in, orientation and all of the things that led up to Fall Opening weekend. She also thanked those who participated in the many activities over the weekend, including Renée Hoogland and her team for organizing the faculty social mixer. The New Faculty Orientation went exceptionally well and Clabo has received positive feedback.

Beale noted a few concerns. First, she found university leadership wearing what amounted to a uniform for New Student Convocation in poor taste. We are a university that celebrates diversity. We should not portray ourselves as a leadership that is in march-step wearing a uniform. Clabo explained that the intent was that families would be able to recognize people but agreed there are ways that we could be recognizable without being in uniform. Second, Beale noted that given the rapid impact of climate change and the fact that this event takes place in late August, we cannot continue to provide sun protection for the 'platform party' but nothing for the parents and students attending. People left throughout the ceremony because of the heat. Some tried to seek shelter in the trees; but as that became crowded, others started leaving. Third, water for all of the participants must be easily available (not just for the platform party), and waste containers are needed throughout the FestiFall area. The only place that a participant could throw anything away was around the university library. There need to be iced vats of water everywhere to avoid having somebody suffer a health crisis from dehydration. Clabo agreed to make those things available next year. She noted we had EMS and a water tent on site, but that is not the same. Fourth, Beale noted concerns about the timing and nature of the brunch and Convocation ceremony. It should be a shorter ceremony without the individual students standing unless the president or provost simply calls on each group as she introduces the deans, without the speech about what the school stands for. She urged returning to the tradition of having a faculty speaker as keynote. The president does not need to give a speech at that event. Convocation should be timed much closer to the end of the faculty brunch. There should also be hot food served at the brunch. Hoogland agreed the brunch food was limited compared to last year's.

V. REPORT FROM THE SENATE PRESIDENT

Academic communications meeting with committee chairs: Beale reported AVP Gross wants to meet with Faculty Affairs, Student Affairs, Research, and Curriculum & Instruction committee chairs to discuss how he could better communicate what those committees are working on. Beale will share their contact information so that he can set up a time to meet individually.

Committee charges: The committee charges prioritized by Policy are ready to go out to the committee chairs. Graduation honors was not included since we had talked about the need for standing committee discussion when we reviewed the proposal at Policy, but chairs should make sure to deal with that early on, since our recommendation has to go to plenary before it can go to the Board of Governors at their December meeting. We are still waiting on data from Kurt Kurschinska (Sr. Dir., Registrar). Beale will reach out to him again and copy Clabo on the email.

Campus expression on university website: Aware of inconsistencies in our rules and rule application, University Leadership Council discussed putting information about academic freedom and rules about campus use on a single, easily findable website. That website information will likely come to Policy's next meeting.

OTL software: Beale reminded Policy about the email from Sara Kacin (Assistant Provost for Faculty Development and Faculty Success, and Director of the Office for Teaching & Learning) regarding OTL no longer providing software funded with OTL funds. C&IT will now have an expanded role in providing software that is used for teaching and learning. A review committee will consider requests for software that will be available through Canvas.

Clabo explained we can pull back some unused reserves from school/college technology fees to fund such software. If a faculty member wants to use a particular software for which the university does not currently hold a license and other faculty likely would find that software useful, it should not have to be self-funded. Not all software can be funded, so the review will determine general usefulness.

VI. TIMING FOR MOVING FORWARD PRIORITY ITEMS A THROUGH F FROM TABLED AND UPCOMING BUSINESS

Policy concluded with a discussion of the timing for moving forward with the priority agenda items from tabled and upcoming business.