WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC SENATE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE
September 9, 2024

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

Guest: Ezemenari Obasi, VP Research

I.   POLICY PROCEEDINGS

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

II.   REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Enrollment: Provost Clabo reported there are 23,992 students enrolled as of Census Day. FTIACs are up more than 2%. Transfer students are still down: the expected cohort of 50 transfers did not materialize. Total master's enrollment is up nearly 9%. The overall numbers are not bad, but total undergraduate enrollment is down almost 0.5%.

Clabo will ask VP Enrollment Management Charles Cotton's team to investigate those students who are not continuing at undergraduate and master's levels. The retention drop off is not first to second-year but rather the upper-class level. Stephen Chrisomalis asked if it is a result of faster graduations, but Clabo said we have not made significant gains in graduation rates over the last three years. Linda Beale suggested sending an email survey to those students since we can identify them: they would presumably still have their Wayne State emails. We should look down to the program level as well.

On Friday the Academic Affairs subcommittee of the Board of Governors (BOG) will present a better picture of what this fall's class looks like. Almost 60% of undergraduates pay zero in tuition and fees because of the Michigan Achievement Scholarship. Bob Reynolds pointed out both Engineering international students and out-of-state students are impacted by tuition and fee increases but are not helped by the increases in funding for Michigan residents.

Year of Focus: This Thursday is a presentation by author and associate professor of law at Washington University in St. Louis John Inazu. Registration is full, but Clabo encouraged Policy members to attend.

Academic Senate September plenary: Clabo thanked Policy members for their attention and participation in the first plenary of the year. It went well, other than the dramatic moment when the table on stage collapsed.

III.   REPORT FROM THE SENATE PRESIDENT

Academic Senate September plenary and President's reception: Beale raised the issue of sparse Senate attendance at the president's reception following the plenary. We have generally had 60-70% of senators attend and this year it was only around 20%. Reynolds noted he teaches at 4 p.m., so it is possible that more people are being scheduled for 4 p.m. classes. Beale may send an email to Senate members as a survey about the reception. Clabo will let us know the number of senators who RSVP'd and if any provided information on declining. Beale noted it is a good

event because it is a chance for senators to interact on a social level with administrators that many do not know well.

Beale asked Policy for other feedback on the plenary. A problem occurred because the president's office had provided the list of speakers in President Espy's slot. They were included on the emailed agenda, but then that was revised at the end of the week before the meeting. We provided an updated agenda in print at the meeting but did not send out a revised agenda. Senate members were not clear about the roles of the people who spoke, so in the future we should ensure a clear introduction of each person. It was helpful to have the speakers, but the idea is that the Senate members get a sense of who they are and what they do. This was more difficult because of the reorganization of various offices.

renèe hoogland would have preferred a substantive presentation from the president, who really gave a cheery welcome. Reynolds agreed that big picture needs to come from the president. Beale agreed that it would have been better to have, at the beginning, some substantive remarks from Espy. She did appreciate having the four vice presidents, though. Perhaps in the future we can have marked seats reserved for people on the program and name cards that can be used when they speak.

State of the classrooms: Beale mentioned Richard Pineau (CLAS) originally shared with her, and then shared with the chairs of Faculty Affairs (FAC), Student Affairs (SAC) and Facilities, Support Services and Technology (FSST) committees, various problems in the classrooms for the start-up of classes, both in terms of uncleanliness and in terms of number of seats for assigned classes. The number of seats was an ongoing problem all last week. The trash left in the room from the summer camp was also a problem. Jennifer Lewis suggested a waste basket should be located in every classroom, but she was informed that central garbage collection requires that trash be carried into the hallway. That does not work: students (and some faculty) will just leave their garbage. hoogland disagreed, noting that they organized the renovation of State Hall to have centralized garbage collection in the hallways because it is much easier to collect. It does require students to take some responsibility. Clabo indicated there will be a meeting of AVP Rob Davenport's team and the registrar to determine what happened and establish a plan for responsibility in the future. Custodial staff can only clean boards at beginning or end of day and not between classes, so instructors need to take some responsibility there. Furniture being relocated is a different matter. If a room has an established capacity of 35, then there should be 35 seats in the room. FSST should look into this situation, and Clabo will report back to Policy on the outcome of that meeting.

IV.   GEOC ACADEMIC SENATE APPOINTEES

Beale shared with Policy the GEOC committee listing that includes the people that Policy selected in the Article XXX process. Policy discussed a Senate faculty appointee and a Senate academic staff appointee. Beale will reach out to determine willingness to serve.

V.   RESEARCH THRUSTS

VP Research Ezemenari Obasi introduced the decision of the administration to reinstitute a license with Academic Analytics and then spoke about his goal of determining five important research areas for emphasis over the next few years.

        A. Academic Analytics

Obasi is aware there have been questions about Academic Analytics' past utilization. He highlighted the need for such a tool and noted that Academic Analytics has significantly updated

its capabilities, including features that will allow us to determine who is doing what in specific research areas, with whom they are collaborating, sources of funding, and so forth. This is a premiere research tool that is used at institutions for many different reasons. For example, it would be extremely beneficial when we are hiring researchers. The Institute of Gerontology is trying to hire a new director, which requires knowing who might be potential candidates. This tool provides listings of folks across the country based on input criteria, providing information useful for recruitment and retention. There is an honorifics component that will allow us to determine what awards faculty qualify for. It will help facilitate establishing teams to pursue big research grants. Without this, we have no tool to do this effectively. Google or Info Ed are too limited. Academic Analytics is the most comprehensive tool, at a cost around $200,000 per year.

Beale asked about the source of Academic Analytics data. Obasi said it is sourced based on a wide range of factors; however, faculty can access and modify their existing profiles (they do not have to put everything in from scratch). Obasi found his existing profile included everything he had done prior to and after coming to Wayne State.

Beale noted in the past there were complaints from people in the medical school about inaccuracies and the time spent trying to get them corrected. Clabo explained that faculty did not have access to edit their profiles in that iteration. Wayne State implemented Academic Analytics in 2018 and dropped it in 2020. It was a less mature tool and access was limited. That was a different environment than we are in now, which gives access to everybody.

hoogland noted that the tool is focused on funded research, so the sense was that humanities and social sciences were not covered in the same detail as funded research. Obasi indicated he would check into that for the new tool, but he noted that the honorifics were inclusive of all disciplines. There is a new module for medicine, for example, that just came out this year, likely with different capabilities.

Clabo noted another common misperception was that this tool would be used by the administration as a metric for faculty success and faculty productivity for P&T purposes. This is not a tool expected to be used in relation to teaching or service but one that will help us support faculty research. We deliberately did not purchase the P&T module. Obasi added that there will be a website on best practices for using Academic Analytics. It will be clear what faculty have access to, how to make modifications and how to use it to move research forward.

Reynolds asked whether the tool has AI components that might be used in recruiting and assessment. Obasi responded that there is no AI portal currently.

Noreen Rossi emphasized that communication to faculty will be important: they need to know the tool exists and that they can make changes to their profiles. Regrettably, faculty use of ForagerOne has been low. The tool will only be as good as the engagement of the faculty.

Chrisomalis was not on Policy when Academic Analytics was originally purchased or when we unsubscribed, but he is aware of it through news articles focusing on its use in P&T that appeared in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Ed*. There is an optics barrier that Obasi must surmount before people will be supportive. It needs to be clear that it will not be used for P&T. We also should have metrics to determine whether there is $200,000 a year of value added. Obasi acknowledged that the negative history is unfortunate. Most Tier 1 universities use this system, and it is difficult to increase research without this tool. While it is not intended to be used for P&T, it is important to recognize that many other online resources (Google, Google Scholar, PubMed, et cetera) can be similarly used to skew information beyond the provided portfolio.

hoogland noted that the sophistication of Academic Analytics is much more than those other online searches, since it allows an administrator to focus on a single department to determine whether loss of a person would impact productivity or not. That cannot be done with a Google search. Obasi agreed the tool does have those capabilities, but we are not purchasing the P&T module.

Obasi continued by noting that if there are abuses, we can decide how best to handle them. The plan is to communicate with all faculty and to provide training to administrators, deans, chairs and faculty, so that we are clear about its utilization and the rationale for this investment. It will be important also in our federal relations, since Lewis-Burke Associates (LBA) will benefit from having a way to know what areas faculty are working in. This is a tool to help us accelerate our expenditures and to put teams together. Without a tool like this, there would be bias based on the research division's familiarity with particular researchers.

Beale agreed that this kind of tool is important to ensure less bias in choosing whose research gets support, a problem we had under a past VP for research. It is clear that we need to make progress in developing large team grants, especially for the research centers, and this tool should be central to making that possible. The goal is to communicate well so that we can move past the negative history we have noted in this discussion. Perhaps we need to bombard faculty with information about both ForagerOne and Academic Analytics. Clabo wondered if there is opportunity to twin information from a ForagerOne profile and an Academic Analytics profile. Anything we do that increases faculty engagement with these products is to everyone's advantage, including the individual faculty member. The number of faculty with national honorifics here is much lower than one would expect: that is not because of a lack of capacity, but rather that we have not identified and promoted those people to national honor societies. Obasi agreed, noting that finding such awards to be considered for is time consuming, whereas a tool like this can make it much easier to identify possibilities. One of his goals is to increase the faculty honorifics.

Obasi has a press release draft that he will share with Policy for feedback after the meeting. Rossi urged that there be clarity that addresses faculty skepticism about the P&T issue. Obasi added that the goal is to do as much training as possible to encourage faculty to engage with it and he is working with Senior Vice Provost Ahmad Ezzeddine as well to encourage engagement with ForagerOne.

Beale added another piece of Wayne State history that relates to faculty skepticism about the way the administration uses any productivity measures. Soon after Roy Wilson came as president, he brought in David Hefner as a consultant, mainly to look at medical school research. Hefner publicly announced that he was doing a "productivity study" that he intended to use as the basis for terminating about 60 faculty in the medical school for lack of research productivity. It is that background context that makes it important to communicate fully about this tool. Clabo responded that the research division has been much more transparent under new leadership, and we cannot afford not to use effective tools for enhancing research expenditures. For the 10 years under the prior leadership, we did not grow expenditures much at all. This is a first step on a road to change. Obasi agreed that this is an important tool to help us move forward: it is just too hard for individual department chairs or the VP for research to put this kind of information together to help researchers move forward. Beale emphasized that communication that makes clear how the tool will help can set the stage right for faculty acceptance. Obasi agreed, the tool can help drive the factors already in our strategic plan—i.e., seeking bigger funding mechanisms, establishing interdisciplinary team, getting large center grants, and increasing faculty honorifics and awards. Pramod Khosla asked what simple tool already available to faculty shows what research colleagues are engaged in, and Obasi responded that no good tool exists, unless the research is grant funded. Chrisomalis added that ForagerOne can do so but with less external reach than Academic Analytics. Obasi noted that AVPR Rachel Wallace's Research and Development

office needs something like this in order to put teams together to support bigger grant applications. When faculty come to us currently in search of collaborators in particular fields, all we can do is look at who has grant dollars, but that is not always sufficient.

   B.   Research Thrusts

The Division of Research and Innovation (DORI) plans to identify four to five research thrust areas for university investment. Obasi sees this as requiring certain factors for consideration.

- First, all the thrust areas are to be related to some societal challenge or need, especially if relevant for the city of Detroit or the state of Michigan. The rationale is that there may be additional city or state funding to become leaders in that research area. Whatever we are doing from a science standpoint, we can begin to think about the impact that it is having on our society.
- Second, it must be an area that can engage multiple schools/colleges rather than each area 'belonging' to a particular school/college, with several left out altogether.
- Third, area selection will not necessarily require an area in which the highest grant dollars are available. It will be important to include areas in humanities and art spaces that would be as justifiable as needs in AI or health equity.
- Fourth, there must be an open process for determining what areas of society will be impacted and how the schools/colleges can contribute to this increased research push.

Obasi expects ultimately to have a broad faculty announcement, with a link for faculty to share their ideas on societal challenges and the colleges that they think can contribute to research addressing those challenges. Everyone should have voice to provide data toward this. In addition to the Policy Committee today, Obasi will meet over the next few weeks with the Research Committee, as well as Council of Deans, Council of Chairs, center directors, core directors, associate deans for research, the president's division heads and community stakeholders: the goal is to make sure we get as much information as possible to identify these areas. The hope is that once we have identified them, we can brand them and put strategies together for moving those areas forward. For example, if the research is a case for federal funding, we can bring subgroups to D.C. to engage with LBA and with the appropriate federal funders in that area.

Obasi hopes that this can serve not only to accelerate our scholarship and research, but also be a recruitment tool. If we are going to go hard in four or five thrust areas, let us think about the kind of faculty that can actually accelerate some of our work in that space as well. Who are those magnets across the country that we might want to recruit to Wayne State to address societal things that they feel passionately about, but may be at an institution that does not have reach? There are folks at U-M that do work in health equity, but they do not have access. We could become a space for people to come and execute that work within driving distance versus having to rely on third-party firms to get this data for them. These thrusts can also help focus Obasi's engagements with U-M and MSU through the University Research Corridor. We are considering some joint research ventures, and to the extent that Obasi can point out areas of leading research strength that can shape our collaboration with other regional institutions.

Beale noted that there is again a historical snafu as background that Obasi needs to consider: VPR Stephen Lanier's "initiatives" where big sums of money were going into something that was arbitrarily selected accompanied by lack of transparency and an intentional avoidance of the chartering process for centers. It would be helpful at the outset of this project to think about the relationship between these thrusts and establishment of centers. Under the BOG statute, a period of organization around research then could be covered by a preliminary center charter. That needs to be carefully considered so that the thrusts do not again undermine the basic requirement of center charters. Ideally, centers should be more than just the grants that the faculty participants

can ordinarily get as PIs anyway without a center: the center should be the way that large team grants are achieved. We have many problems with faculty just putting a new center website online without ever going through any charter process. It is a great idea to identify strengths that can be made stronger and lead to recruitment and retention of faculty as well as larger grants, but this should be done with an understanding of the timing and method for these thrusts to develop into centers that require chartering. There needs to be a clear understanding or statement about how the thrust funding relates to potential center creation from the outset.

Obasi responded that this is part of the rationale for developing these thrusts in a very public way. It allows transparency about funding (there will be no secret emails about funding) and centers and institutes that do not go through that charter process will not exist. That earlier process did not comply with requirements. Obasi has no interest in circumventing policies. The policy already has an exception for a nationally grant-funded center and that is the only potential exception, but it is still different—you are being funded from a federal entity or an external entity to exist, not from DORI. He wants to get to a place where we can increase our centers, but it has to go through the process, and it must make business sense. If we are going to invest X dollars over the next three years, how are you going to sustain this across time? There are some centers that cannot exist without VPR funding: we do not need a lot of those.

Obasi added that he will host annual informal reviews for chartered centers, since he finds the five- to six-year review process too long a time for those budget discussions. The reviews would ask questions such as the following: what are your goals for this year? What is your projected budget? How are you planning to use the equipment? That way there will be some agreement at the beginning of the year, and we can use data to determine performance, and figure out how to grow some centers and eliminate others based on data.

Reynolds noted that different schools/colleges tend to develop their own in-house AI groups and reinvent the wheel, so taking advantage of expertise across the university to consolidate in a thrust would be helpful. Visibility and clout increase with collaboration, such as through establishment of a center. Obasi responded that he has been approached about creating an AI center, but he has said that it is important to do an open, campus-wide process to see what shakes out. That may be AI or it may be something else. Selecting these areas for direct investment does not mean that other areas are not valued. The goal is to accelerate our research expenditures by paying attention to government funding, state funding and positioning ourselves around our strengths and what investments can do to allow us to distinguish ourselves from competitors.

Chrisomalis asked about the lifespan/lifecycle of these thrusts. Clearly, over time areas of research emphasis tend to change. What exactly does it mean for something to be a research thrust? Obasi noted we might all agree that health equity, air and water quality, affordable housing and food have been challenging in Detroit for decades. Those kinds of entrenched problems are not likely to be solved in five years, but we may be able to provide a model for making change that could lead the whole country in solving some of these issues in 10 years. The thrusts should not be so narrow that they become obsolete in a couple of years, but neither should they be so broad that they are ineffective in providing impetus for change. We also will engage external people for feedback based on their experiences. Ultimately, Obasi will bring the projected thrusts back to Policy and engage a wide range of stakeholders before finally identifying them. Whether these thrusts last five or six years, there will be annual evaluations because if something is not moving fast enough or having the anticipated impact, then we need to course-correct versus just sticking with it.

Chrisomalis agreed. There have been a lot of times where we are not successful doing something that we all agree is important and challenging. That is when we need to cut our losses. We need to change and add a new thrust, because there is always going to be somebody coming in because

the problems expand to infinity. Reynolds noted some initiatives like transportation and smart cities have an impact over a variety of different disciplines and are also a corporate magnet. That is key as well. Obasi agreed. Tech commercialization and corporate engagement are being considered with these thrust areas. If a thrust area were to be around transportation, the Department of Transportation also cares about mental health, substance use and access—that goes beyond just engineering. It is not just multiple disciplines being involved, rather having a whole human experience around a topic and how we bring all those professionals together to provide novel solutions that may not have been considered because we only thought about the hardware and not the human using the hardware.

Rossi provided an example of a past failure along this line. Fifteen years ago, we did not apply for the NIH renal cohort, even though we have access to potential renal disease in disadvantaged populations. U-M got the grant and then subcontracted Wayne State to do the research because of access to the population in Detroit, but with a much lower budget than merited. Obasi agreed. That is an example where defining with clarity what our strengths are should lead to application for those kinds of grants.

Damecia Donahue also suggested talking to the group of new faculty, who had many questions around research at the New Faculty Orientation. It will be important that they understand the institutional legacy and the new directions that we are now moving in.

Beale asked how much funding Obasi expects to dedicate to the thrusts. Obasi cannot provide an informed answer yet because he is still trying to fully understand his current budget. There are things that could be modified in order to create room to support this. This will be the first year that research will have very specific budget areas. They are holding budget meetings this month in every office, center and institute to talk about their respective budgets, where they are cutting and where they are becoming more efficient. Money might be moved around internally in order to best utilize funding, and safeguards be established to track and be responsible. It does come with a negative piece: the rumors that Obasi says "no" to many requests for cost sharing or partial support for various applications. We cannot start budget planning in a deficit situation, so it has to fit our starting point. Obasi intends to be fair, equitable and transparent, but also responsible. If we grow, we can talk about what that expansion looks like. He wants to get to this by the end of December so the thrusts can begin in January. That would also give him time to think about budget and what the right initiatives are for investments and then put an engagement calendar out in the new year. Development and corporate are aware of this, and they will have conversations on how this feeds into the campaign from a donor standpoint and corporate relations.

Policy thanked Obasi for sharing his plans for research initiatives. He agreed to engage with the entire Academic Senate at the November plenary.

VI. ACADEMIC INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS CHARGE FOR A JOINT PROVOST/ACADEMIC SENATE TASK FORCE

Policy was supportive of the charge for the interdisciplinary task force. It was suggested that the third point should include not only the workload aspect, but also P&T and compensation. The question was primarily which appointees the provost expected to include so the Senate could consider its appointees.

Clabo suggested the task force be comprised of 10 to 12 people. There will be people from the academic support units, including Vice Provost Darin Ellis, Sr. Vice Provost Boris Baltes and Graduate School dean Amanda Bryant-Friedrich, and perhaps the registrar as an implementer rather than a thought leader. She would also like another dean who is leading interdisciplinary efforts, such as Law School dean Rick Bierschbach or CLAS dean Steffi Hartwell. It will be

important to coordinate representation: if the dean of law serves, the task force should have someone from CLAS who works in interdisciplinary programs: CLAS has had experience tripping over the hurdles. Appointees should bring in faculty that are part of a provost center who are more teaching focused.

Policy will come up with names of appointees at the next meeting.

VII.   CAMPUS FREE SPEECH AND USE POLICY

Members discussed the policy that came out as one of many items in a broad email from President Espy to faculty and the university community. Beale suggested that there should be a specific distribution of the free speech policy. The provost agreed that there would be multiple attempts to distribute that information.

Beale brought up the problem of the DOSO website, which is the place where students would be likely to look. DOSO includes a version that deviates from the new policy. It includes a paragraph on hate speech and a paragraph on consequences for hate speech that are both poorly drafted. For example, those paragraphs include such as "the law, however, does not protect speakers from the reactions of non-governmental actors offended by controversial speech." This odd statement (and other oddities in the section on consequences of hate speech) have a chilling effect on speech, suggesting or almost encouraging students to be hard on someone who 'hurts' them with hate speech. Clabo suggested this was old language that had not been updated yet. Ultimately, the agreement was that the DOSO materials should be deleted immediately with a link to the new policy.

VIII.   NEW BUSINESS

City Shield: Chrisomalis asked whether the plan is to have City Shield car parked in the quad 24-7 indefinitely. Clabo confirmed that is the current plan. Beale suggested having a deeper discussion of the continued use of City Shield at an upcoming Policy meeting.

Student qualifications and SDS: Donahue teaches classes fully online and informed Policy that she received an email from a student who lives in the Palestinian territories who cannot afford the book and requested a PDF. The student explained all the difficulties that they are facing (i.e., no access to laptops or other materials, and libraries that do not have resources).

Donahue is finding that every semester she has students who work with SDS to receive accommodation letters. The accommodations they request cannot work with the way the course works (e.g., giving more time to take tests). She feels that we should consider the opportunity to re-explore resource and access issues in a post-pandemic world to help our students navigate their academic lives, with some particular emphasis to those who are online.

Clabo explained we going to do a profile of the incoming class qualifications on Friday and that may help address some of these questions. She agreed to bring that data back to next week's Policy meeting.

Reynolds noted he received an SDS accommodation letter that does not include the professor's name, the course or even the name of the student, and at the bottom it requests the student's and professor's signatures. The student had sent out a blanket form to all their professors and the email was actually addressed to someone else. The student indicated they sent the blank form out to all their professors as a simpler and faster way to handle the issue. Reynolds suggested SDS should always have letters with the student's name and professor's name.

Chrisomalis noted the form is an acknowledgement that you have received a formal request for accommodations through SDS under the ADA and that you are acknowledging that request. It is not that you are immediately required to accommodate everything in the particular way the student demands. He agrees that there is sometimes a kind of looseness, but he would just treat that as an educational opportunity because students do not come in with a lot of cultural capital.

Lewis does not mind accommodating students without the letter because it often takes four or five weeks to get in to see someone, given the limited staff. Jennifer Moss includes a request on her syllabus that students let her know what their accommodation need is, even if they have not yet had an appointment. She noted when someone is first coming from high school to college, they do not understand the extent to which they have to self-advocate because in K12 it is done for them. They have to have at least met with the SDS person who tells them to talk to their professors.

The provost will look into this for information to Policy at its next meeting.

Approved as revised via email September 18, 2024.