

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC SENATE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE
October 28, 2024

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

Absent with Notice: D. Donahue

Guests: Eric Bram, Rieth Jones Advisors; Rob Davenport, AVP, FP&M; Darryl Gardner, Vice Provost for Student Success, Support and Engagement; Sam Jablonski, Rieth Jones Advisors; Ezemenari Obasi, VP for Research

I. DINING RFP

The university has issued a request for proposal (RFP) for a new dining contract to begin July 1, 2025. The Rieth Jones consultants met with Policy to review the RFP process that began in mid-summer with senior leadership input. They are now seeking feedback about the expectations of stakeholders in terms of past problems and future expectations. The consultants claimed Aramark had improved in the last year, but that claim was met with skepticism among Policy members and the provost who noted a concern about considering Aramark for the new contract.

The objectives of the RFP include: i) to expand dining participants beyond primarily residential and create excitement about the quality and diversity of menus and catering possibilities; ii) to ensure continuing and appropriate feedback regarding quality, diversity of menus and catering; iii) to provide an equitable financial arrangement with mutual benefit; iv) to provide career development for student employees beyond hourly work into management positions; and v) to create an appropriate balance between student access and affordability.

Policy members discussed the many ongoing problems with Aramark, ranging from food quality and taste to terrible service and lack of a sustainability agenda in terms of plastic and packaging generally. Some units work around the rules to seek cheaper, better and more reliable catering service. AVP Patricia Romer, the new student auxiliary services and chief housing officer, has been working to make food service more accountable, but Policy members thought that should not have to be that person's role. Pramod Khosla noted the potential for foodborne illnesses and wondered whether the RFP allowed for spot checking to avoid things like the recent McDonald's E. coli outbreak related to onions.

Vice Provost Gardner will share a copy of the RFP with Policy. This will also be discussed at an upcoming Academic Senate plenary.

II. CAPITAL PLANNING UPDATE

AVP Davenport covered the planning process for the new health sciences building which is now past the project initiation phase and into the schematic design and design development phase. The next phase is development of construction documents (e.g., design decisions, equipment and blueprints for mechanical, electrical and plumbing) in June with start of construction in September 2025.

Davenport shared a slide on input to the planning process. The primary core team has been Professor Hyeong-Reh Kim (Medicine), Dean Wael Sakr (Medicine), VP for Research Ezemenari

Obasi, Larry Matherly (Assoc. Dir., Medicine) and Evano Piasentin (WSU Affiliate, Medicine). There are a number of thematic captains shepherding the discussion across various areas that include a range of users of the new facility, including veterinary and animal services, pharmacology, oncology and other disciplines. Kim has served as a key facilitator in ensuring that faculty viewpoints on equipment and needs are taken into account. Davenport has attended about 75% of those meetings which have provided primarily positive feedback.

The timeline for the final commissioning of the building is late 2027, with labs moving in early 2028. Overall cost is expected to be about \$200 million, including inflation estimates built into the bid process. The hope is to find significant donors of \$50 to \$100 million. The case for support now includes realistic renderings and can be pushed forward with planning information. The building is expected to include a bridge across Canfield to Scott Hall and a covered walkway to the Elliman building. Much of the discussion implies Scott Hall will remain open and be redeveloped over time. The first three floors have been renovated. The question will be how to grow into floors four through nine for future use, so the 2016 study will be revisited. One problem with floor-by-floor renovations is that all of the utilities are done by quadrants on each floor rather than floor by floor.

Davenport also addressed the new law building. The promise from the state is \$30 million, with the university expected to provide at least \$10 million from its funds and at least another \$5 million from major donors. Much of the schematic design has taken place. It will involve demolition of the current classroom building and its replacement with a three-story building linked to the current law campus.

The decision has been made to convert Schaver into the public health building at an expected cost of around \$42 million. The budget request includes a 75/25 split with a \$31 million ask to the state and a \$10-11 million university match. The project would also flip the Community Arts Auditorium into a lecture hall. That space has deteriorated to a point that it can no longer be used well. The renovation will permit it to be used as the largest lecture hall on campus as well as for other purposes. There will be a 16,000 square foot addition to Shaver rather than using the Music Annex because of the quirky legislative requirement that state funding cannot involve more than one building.

There was some discussion about the annual required capital outlay report. Ashley Flintoff (Dir., Planning & Space Mgmt.) drove that report in prior years. Because she left for another position, it has been difficult for the facilities and maintenance staff to put that report together. Davenport said FP&M will ensure inclusive feedback and discussion in future years. He will share the report with the Policy Committee as currently drafted. It is generally due to the state the last day of October.

III. POLICY PROCEEDINGS

The October 21, 2024 Policy Committee proceedings will be approved via email.

IV. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Dean Steffi Hartwell: Provost Clabo shared with Policy Committee that CLAS Dean Hartwell had a death in the family. Members noted condolences.

October Board of Governors meeting: The committee meetings of the Board were held on campus prior to the full Board meeting in Grand Rapids. The Board passed the recommendations on Ph.D. credit reduction. Clabo thanked everyone who participated in that important committee work.

A donor relation event following the full Board meeting in Grand Rapids had a good turnout. Vice Provost Enrollment Management Charles Cotton and his team also hosted an exciting recruiting event with school principals, counselors and superintendents. Grand Rapids public schools cut their funding for counselors to do campus tours, so Clabo noted it might be worth finding funding to bring people from there to see our campus. There is much misinformation about Detroit and Wayne State, but Cotton and his team delivered information through a Wayne State and Detroit trivia contest, a video of campus and discussion about our status among the top 100 public universities.

Fall campus tour: Clabo has been visiting schools/colleges/units as part of a fall campus tour. Last week she met with Law and CLAS, talking to students and faculty about what is working and where they need additional support. She will meet with all 13 schools/colleges before the holiday break as well as the various academic support units under the Office of the Provost.

Provost and Academic Senate Task Force on Academic Interdisciplinary Programs: An email went out announcing the interdisciplinary task force. Clabo thanked members of the Senate for their recommendations. This is good collaborative planning, and she looks forward to a report from the task force by spring and implementation in the next academic year.

SVP Health Affairs search update: The SVP Health Affairs search is moving forward with on-campus interviews this week and in early November.

V. REPORT FROM THE SENATE PRESIDENT

VP Enterprise Planning and Operational Excellence search update: Beale reported the VPEP&OE search is ongoing. It is not clear how many candidates will be brought to campus at this time.

LMS/LTI Governance Committee: The Senate's LMS/LTI appointees have been finalized.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Steve Chrisomalis noted that the Student Affairs Committee had written a memo analyzing the new academic speech and freedom of expression policy and the Faculty Affairs Committee had reviewed it and supported it. Beale noted she expects that to come back to Policy for an in-depth discussion before the end of this year.

Beale raised related concerns about the term "threats" in the policy, and noted the news about things that have been happening at other campuses (e.g., Harvard excluded their faculty from the library). Faculty and students have voiced an ongoing concern about City Shield, the private security visible on the campus (i.e., parked cars in central areas along sidewalks). Beale mentioned she spoke with Bethany Gielczyk (SVP Finance/Bus. Affrs., CFO and Treasurer) about this recently, who noted that City Shield is still here to monitor because of various acts of vandalism that have occurred, including spreading paint on the fountain in Gullen Mall that required significant expenditures to clean and restore it. The provost mentioned that machine gun stickers had been posted around campus. It is not clear who is committing these acts of vandalism, but it is important to know when they occur so that they can be addressed as soon as possible. Gielczyk did note in speaking with Beale that her hope is to gradually reduce that presence. They have already slimmed it down, but it is not clear if they can remove it entirely. Clearly, the expenditure is a concern as well as the chilling effect it has on speech. The provost noted that there is currently a 30% vacancy rate for the campus police, and it is important to have this private group to assist with monitoring. She acknowledged that the visible presence is a

drawback. Various Policy members noted their concerns and made suggestions about possible alternatives such as hiring other staff to do that monitoring or adding cameras.

VII. UPDATE ON RESEARCH THRUST AREAS AND F&A/ICR FUNDS

VPR Obasi recognized various things had gone wrong in the past in terms of research use of F&A funds, resulting in some lack of trust not consistently directed to the same person. To think through the possibility of new interdisciplinary thrusts that result in significantly larger grants campus wide, he has met for feedback with research officers, deans, associate deans for research and chairs. A survey to all faculty received about 160 responses. He now has a tentative seven buckets for research that he expects to whittle down to fewer. They include: 1) health disparities/health equity; 2) environmental health/justice and clean energy; 3) data science/AI/machine learning; 4) mental health/cognitive neuroscience/arts as therapy; 5) social justice/inequities; 6) mobility/transportation; 7) educational disparities with a focus on K-12 and upward mobility.

The goal is to think through how those themes relate to current work and expertise across the university and develop a draft document for further feedback. There was considerable discussion among Policy about the possibility of merging some buckets into one, and questions about sources of funding that would allow the university to expand an area by hiring for expertise. In terms of hiring additional faculty to allow us to move into aspirational areas versus areas with existing depth of research, Obasi noted that he needs to understand better where we are right now. It will be important to have a cohort of faculty who can brainstorm about the current strengths and then to engage Lewis-Burke Associates in developing that further. There may be corporate connections for equipment and other funding that would be possible under these thrusts compared to circumstances involving only one or two faculty researchers.

Noreen Rossi pointed out we have to know who already does these kinds of research and be aware of the holes where we would have to add strength. She also pointed out that social justice is a part of each of the other proposed thrusts, not necessarily an objective in itself. Members also suggested Obasi not use the term "team science" because many of these thrusts should also have opportunities for those in humanities. AI, for example, impacts the humanities as well as STEM, but other research areas also have broad possibilities for humanities and the arts inclusion. Several members suggested broader discussion directly with faculty rather than just with research administrators: if we move too fast without ground support, it will not be successful. One possibility would be to bring in visiting faculty and encourage our faculty to visit other campuses working in those areas. Policy recalled the problems with the process for the IBio hiring done by the former VP for research and how that underscored the importance of listening to pragmatic faculty feedback.

Obasi verified that centers and institutes must go through the appropriate chartering process. His goal is for these thrusts to be budget neutral based on the return of investments annually from the money invested by DORI with input from faculty and other stakeholders. He does not intend for these investments to be made as individual awards, but rather as support for a team research project.

In the widespread discussion that took place, various members pushed the importance of foregrounding arts and humanities. Even in health equity issues, for example, dance therapy is useful. Rossi noted it will be important to have a representative advisory group so there is clarity about how the money is used. Obasi agreed that transparency will be important.

Beale questioned how F&A/ICR dollars are expected to be used. Obasi acknowledged there has been considerable concern about this topic, so no decisions have yet been made. Obasi will seek

university leadership's and chairs' input before moving forward. It is his view that we should be open to shifting that funding, whether at the school/college/department or even the PI level, to develop a more flexible model. Schools/colleges may have different methods that work better within their disciplines. Faculty time spent on submitting grants without staff help is something that F&A money should be used to remedy to the extent possible, although it will never be perfect. The timeline shrinks if we invest in supportive infrastructure. If we invested in facilities, we would not now have the mold, leaks, temperature swings and similar problems: we are paying for not prioritizing those infrastructure improvements. Some departments put their share of F&A funds into an account that is not being used: that does not serve the purpose of F&A to be used to support research infrastructure. There needs to be transparency in all schools/colleges/departments, not just in DORI. He has no position at this point because there has to be more information internally before changes can be recommended. Real conversations will lead to a real solution.

Beale questioned if this is mostly in terms of the school/college/departmental F&A percentages or the PI percentage. Obasi has an open mind for all of it. Are there models that provide flexibility that might better serve some colleges if there was more flexibility? He has witnessed healthy colleges have their own policies on splits between the department and the PI which allowed for greater flexibility and saw acceleration from expenditures at a much higher pace. He is not necessarily pushing for that, but it is an option. Where we land will be a shared agreement or responsibility.

Rossi was on the Budget Committee at the School of Medicine and did not see a budget. She asked the accountant where salary savings at the School of Medicine go, and he had to get back to her. Schools/colleges must have transparent policies in how they are handling both ICR and salary savings. Jennifer Lewis added she was awarded a large NSF grant and feels like she has to plant and thresh her own wheat, yet all of that federal grant money goes to the university. Obasi noted that there is no way to do a PI split that will solve all the problems that PIs feel like they face. It takes a university-wide approach to infrastructure.

Approved as revised via email November 13, 2024.