

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC SENATE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE
November 11, 2024

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

Absent with Notice: L. Clabo; J. Lewis

Guests: Danielle Manley, AVP, Corporate Engagement and Advancement

I. CORPORATE ENGAGEMENT

AVP Manley shared some of her background as a fundraiser and seven years as a strategic partnership director for TechTown. She became AVP for corporate engagement and advancement under VP Ned Staebler's Entrepreneurship and Economic Development office earlier this spring. She shared a few slides about the goal of creating working partnerships with corporations under the WSU OPEN rubric (Opportunity, Partnership, Engagement and Network). The goal is that the office serves as an entry point for one-source communication with corporations to further President Espy's Prosperity Agenda and development of various categories of relationships with the university's internal stakeholders. The original six categories developed in early May with President Espy and VP Staebler included: location; talent (workforce); entrepreneurship; research and development; branding (defined by Manley as the value that corporations derive from working with a research university); and environmental sustainability (the corporate desire to appear environmentally sound, such as by supporting "green" chemistry and ESG factors).

Policy members noted a number of issues with the description of what WSU OPEN would do and how it would work. Linda Beale first noted that there was no information shared with anyone on the Senate or with faculty until the "announcement" that went out to all faculty recently: that announcement caused considerable consternation due to its vagueness and lack of any indication of awareness of academic processes for approval of credit-related internships or curricular changes. She noted the importance of shared governance in developing these kinds of activities that intend to engage with external corporate and commercial interests to connect with faculty and students. It is important, she noted, that Manley and her team who are working with WSU OPEN understand the faculty role in curriculum development and in the development of experiences for students, including internships, externships, consulting arrangements and student positions with corporations. Many schools/colleges/departments have academic staff personnel who handle those relationships and there are often academic standards that govern possibilities. Law, for example, has a number of externships and a director for those programs: faculty approval is required. That critical academic process seems to be missing from the discussion of how WSU OPEN intends to work. Beale noted that this service needs to be university-wide as well, whereas almost all the examples in the slides and in the announcement about WSU OPEN were STEM- and AI-oriented.

Policy members agreed with Beale's statement and added additional concerns. Stephen Chrisomalis, for example, noted that it will not work if WSU OPEN talks with a corporation that wants us to provide X service to the corporation and simply says "sure." In fact, anything developed must go through the academic process that allows faculty to tap into the resources the corporation has: it cannot be viewed purely from the perspective of the corporation tapping into *our* resources.

Policy members talked briefly about the College-to-Career aspect of this, noting that establishment of internships, externships or any kind of credit-oriented role for students with commercial interests is an

extraordinarily time-consuming and consensus-oriented process of work by the faculty in the field in which that externship or internship is to be offered. Pramod Khosla noted there was a question that his department needed to answer on a recent survey about Espy's Prosperity Agenda, but none of the faculty were even aware of what the Prosperity Agenda presumed to put forward. Chrisomalis noted in the WSU OPEN materials an item about graduate students providing "free services" to a particular industry. That raised alarm bells for us as faculty: who identifies the graduate students? Why is it free if they are providing a service to a corporate entity? What kinds of advising or consulting services are graduate students providing? Robert Reynolds added he was concerned about the impact on faculty of WSU OPEN initiating such an agreement, because the information and knowledge that the graduate students would share would likely be information and knowledge that the faculty member had created. The idea of providing this to a corporation for free is contrary to the way licensing and intellectual property (IP) works: university IP cannot just be given away by students through WSU OPEN to a commercial entity.

Policy members noted that the examples—and the emphasis in the materials on "speedy and simple" responses to corporate requests—seem to be short-term corporate demands trying to interrelate with long-term faculty interests, whether it is research or creating particular curricula that conform to a particular existing corporate workforce need. All that must go through the faculty consensus process of deciding that it is worthwhile to have students learn it and whether courses might incorporate a module related to the corporate need rather than create an entire new course "to suit" the corporation. Members noted that we have been doing these kinds of things for a long time, and one would think that the first step taken by Staebler and Manley would have been to familiarize themselves with what kinds of internships exist in what fields with what kinds of requirements so that they would understand the processes for approval.

Others noted the issue of developing curricula is a school/college and departmental process: it is not something institutes or centers are able to do, though the materials Manley had provided suggested that institutes and centers could do so. Manley responded with an example of how they envisioned curriculum development to be undertaken to please a commercial enterprise: the engineering school's development of a curriculum desired by Tata Technologies under former engineering dean Farshad Fatoui. Members responded that the example is in fact an example of top-down action that did not go through the regular curricular processes because the dean pressured the faculty: it is an example of what should not be done, not an ideal way to work with corporations.

Beale also asked about the phrase on one of the slides that said that WSU OPEN would provide "state-of-the-art testing and lab equipment to develop new technologies." She pointed out that this seems to suggest free access to labs and testing, whereas we generally charge for access to the research cores that we provide. Manley noted an example was the AM-HY tech startup that had a large federal grant and was being courted by different universities: it is now operating through the Industry Innovation Center (I2C) under DORI, with the grant funding the I2C research support. Beale noted the variance between the language in the phraseology versus that example. She also noted that the cores are different from the individual faculty labs.

Chrisomalis reiterated that we cannot allow corporations to dictate how we respond (asking us to develop X and then we jump and do it), but rather the language that WSU OPEN should be using is that the university generates knowledge and innovation, and in some cases can work with corporations to distribute that. Noreen Rossi also pointed out that we have fewer faculty who are being asked to respond rapidly ("speedy and simple responses" is in the language of WSU OPEN): that is a burden on faculty who are already overloaded with taking up tasks of faculty who have left. For example, in the medical school, there are fewer faculty, the same number of students and more small group classes that are required, leaving less ability to take on additional responsibilities.

Manley thanked the members of Policy for sharing with her the realities that she had not been aware of and noted her regret at not having the conversation earlier. She said that WSU OPEN has been launched and will move forward, but she will work to make adjustments given this feedback. Beale indicated that

it would be fruitful to have Manley back at Policy to discuss adjustments and also to present at a future plenary session. She suggested Manley meet with the Council of Deans specifically to seek information on each of their school's processes for internships and externships. Other members suggested that she wordsmith a document describing WSU OPEN that takes our comments into account so that she would have something that would be clearer to faculty. Beale also recommended she meet soon with the Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) and the Student Affairs Committee (SAC) to talk about WSU OPEN and get more feedback.

Beale thanked Manley for coming and spending more time than planned with Policy to discuss this important topic.

II. POLICY PROCEEDINGS

The November 4, 2024 proceedings of the Policy Committee will be sent via email for approval.

III. REPORT FROM THE SENATE PRESIDENT

Enrollment: Beale pointed out current enrollments are positive, although many of the schools and colleges do not have the next term's enrollments included yet. Even so, there is an overall increase of about 1.7% compared to this time last year. Master's enrollment continues to look positive.

SVP Health Affairs candidates memo: Beale invited all members of Policy to give her comments on the Senior Vice President for Health Affairs candidates. A memo from Policy must be submitted by end of business Wednesday, so comments are requested by noon Tuesday. Even those who did not meet candidates should give their comments about the qualifications based on the resume that might be included in the memo.

December plenary agenda: Policy discussed the possible topics for the December plenary agenda and concluded to include the RFP for dining and the Student Code of Conduct to incorporate the AI changes that Policy had discussed before. Beale will invite Board of Governor Michael Busuito to speak. If Policy agrees with what has come from FAC on emeritus status, that will also be included. Although Beale had originally thought corporate engagement with Manley might be appropriate for this meeting, everyone agreed that we should delay until February given today's discussion.

Policy on religious observance: Beale reminded the Policy members they had agreed to develop language related to Interim Vice Provost for Inclusive Excellence Donyale Padgett's request for a policy on religious observance. The University Leadership Council agreed instead to develop a website available through both the Office of Inclusive Excellence and the Office of the Provost that would provide guidance on three areas: syllabi language options for faculty; student responsibility regarding religious holiday requests; and faculty responsibility for "reasonable accommodation" with the understanding that not all courses would allow the particular accommodation that a student may request. All pieces of the guidance could be incorporated by faculty into their syllabi if desired or at least available on the Canvas resource site. FAC will work on the faculty responsibility brief paragraph which should likely mention the legal term "reasonable accommodation"; SAC will work on the student responsibility brief paragraph, which might require sufficient notice to alert the faculty members of a religious observance for which they would like accommodation as well as awareness that various faculty may find that they cannot grant a student's request; and the Curriculum and Instruction Committee will work on potential options for syllabus language.

January Budget Committee meeting: The Budget Committee will hold its meeting with Development in January. Beale suggested this be held as a joint meeting of Budget and Policy (Policy might not need to hold a separate meeting that day). It is tentatively scheduled for January 27 at Budget's regular 11-12:30 time.

Where Olive Trees Weep: Professor Thomas Pedroni (Education) is hosting a viewing of the sixth film in the Voices of Palestine film series, *Where Olive Trees Weep*, this evening at 7 p.m. in Bernath Auditorium.

IV. DECEMBER COMMENCEMENT SPEAKERS

The following Policy members agreed to speak at the December Commencement:

Ceremony I - Stephen Chrisomalis

Ceremony II - Noreen Rossi

Ceremony III - Linda Beale

Approved as submitted at the Policy Committee meeting of November 18, 2024.