WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC SENATE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

May 14, 2018

Present: L. Beale; r. hoogland; L. Romano; N. Simon; K. Whitfield

Members absent: V. Dallas; D. Kessel; C. Parrish; B. Roth; W. Volz

Guest: Joshua Neds-Fox, Coordinator for Digital Publishing, University Library System

1. Open Textbooks: Mr. Neds-Fox is responsible for the Library’s publishing efforts**,** digital collection, the institutional repository, and many scholarly communication efforts out of the Library. The Library has joined the Open Textbook Network (OTN) initiative of the University of Minnesota established for developing and sustaining affordable textbook resources in higher education. The OTN maintains the Open Textbook Library, which is an aggregator of peer-reviewed academic open textbooks. The OTN and the Library are attempting to provide open peer review for academic textbooks in its database. They want to counter the perception that open textbooks are of lesser quality than textbooks produced by scholarly publications.

WSU’s Library is interested in joining the OTN to support student retention. Open textbook adoption has produced positive outcomes for students specifically in reducing the time to graduation. According to The College Board, students spend $1200 per semester on textbooks. There is no cost to open textbooks and students can have them the first day of classes. The money they save can be used to take an additional course or to cover other expenses that reduce their time to the degree. For fiscal year 2019, the Michigan legislature voted into law $5 million in competitive grants for development, or encouragement, or expansion of the use of open textbooks on campus.

A few years ago a coalition brought OpenStax, Rice University’s open textbook initiative, to campus to raise awareness and encourage adoption. The Library is bringing the Director of open textbooks from the University of Minnesota to campus in October.

A Policy Committee member asked how many of our courses could be served by one of the books. Mr. Neds-Fox has not determined the exact number of courses. Textbook adoption is an individual faculty decision. The Library is interested in having open textbooks for undergraduate students in introductory courses, such as psychology, economics, chemistry and mathematics. The return on investment would be large. Open textbook is not by fiat. There are 200 or 300 books in the OTN’s database. The OTN recruits appropriate faculty to review the textbooks. The reviews are open and available on their website.

Another Policy Committee member expressed concern about the reviews being open. In academic publishing the review system is very strict. The reviews are

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double blind. The authors never know who reviews their books. An open system is compromised.

Mr. Neds-Fox said that nothing would prevent an open textbook from being published. The core administrators of the network select the textbooks. The OTN has a system for recruiting appropriate faculty to review the textbooks. The reviews are open and are available with the textbooks on the site. The open textbook library is an aggregated database. It is a peer review process; it is an alternate or develop-ing idea of peer review. The selective or editorial function keeps books out of the network and the peer review helps faculty make informed decisions whether the books are worth considering for a course.

Another member noted that the faculty want textbooks that are cheaper and that motivate students, but they are worried about the integrity of the process.

Mr. Neds-Fox asked whether our faculty would be interested in developing a textbook for a particular course. Faculty would control the process. It could be a double blind peer review of the process.

Several members explained the processes they use to select instructional materials.

Provost Whitfield suggested that Mr. Neds-Fox consult with the Senate’s Curriculum and Instruction Committee and its Faculty Affairs Committee. Both Committees have met with staff members of the Library about open textbooks. The Provost also suggested that the CIC and FAC members might meet with the Director of the OTN. Mr. Neds-Fox understands the concern about the quality of the review process.

A member suggested that the Library staff find the open textbooks for courses being taught, send the list of the books to the department Chairs informing them that they are trying to save money by adopting open textbooks. Ask the departments to consider whether they would adopt the books.

Another member asked that the Library find out the details of the decision-making process for adopting a textbook. The posted reviews are only blurbs.

Summarizing the discussion, members asked Mr. Neds-Fox to describe better the process used for reviewing and adopting a textbook for the OTN. He needed to address the question of integrity. Who are the authors and how are they chosen? Ask our faculty if they would be inclined to provide a chapter for a textbook. Ask if any of WSU faculty have contributed to the OTN.

In a meeting of the Faculty Affairs Committee with a librarian, the liaison from the Student Senate said that students prefer textbooks. The Library provides printing and binding services for which students pay about $20.00. The FAC had several questions. Would the Library continue to provide that service? How will the OTN affect publishers because the network takes business away from the publishers? If the University adopts open textbook, in ten years will students be able to buy textbooks?

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Mr. Neds-Fox summarized what the Policy Committee wanted. Faculty want to know how the review process protected the academic quality of the material. How does the OTN validate the academic quality of the materials in its Library and the academic review process and how the books are produced?

The cost for the University to join the OTN is miniscule. It is a resource-sharing network. We participate in the activities that try to raise awareness on campus.

Policy Committee will have Mr. Neds-Fox make a presentation on the subject to the Senate in the fall.

[Mr. Neds-Fox left the meeting.]

1. Report from the Chair:
2. Approximately 4100 students received degrees at last week’s commencement ceremonies.
3. The Board of Governors Budget and Finance Committee and the full Board will meet May 17 to set the tuition increase for the 2018-19 academic year for the School of Medicine. The proposal would increase tuition 2.9% for the first, second, and third year resident and non-resident students. The tuition for fourth year students would not increase.

3. Report from the Senate President:

1. Enrollment for the spring/summer term is about the same as last year.
2. Enrollment for the fall term as of May 7, 2018, is up 3.87% over the same period for fall 2017. However, this might be due to students’ enrolling earlier. Mr. Romano thinks our enrollment specialists should target recruiting students in liberal arts and in fine, performing and communication arts. There is a lot of completion for these students.
3. The return on the investments in the University’s endowment are down.
4. Proceedings of the April 30 Meeting: A quorum was not present so action could not be taken on the Proceedings. Several changes were made in the draft that was presented. The changes will be made and re-submitted to the Committee.

5. Master Planning Committee: Vice President for Finance and Business Operations William Decatur asked the Policy Committee for three faculty/academic staff members to serve on the Master Planning Committee. Linda Beale and Victoria Dallas will serve. An additional faculty member will be selected.

1. SET Committee Re-start: Provost Whitfield will check on the re-activation of the Student Evaluation of Teaching Committee. The purpose is to prepare guidelines for college salary committees regarding the existing research on biases that are inherent in the SET and the difficulty of the course.
2. Summer Meetings: Policy Committee scheduled its summer meetings.

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1. Faculty Alternate to the BOG Budget and Finance Committee: Policy Committee selected renee hoogland to replace Mr. Romano as the faculty alternate for the meeting of May 17.
2. RaiseMe: Wayne State is a partner in the RaiseMe microscholarship organization. Ms. Simon explained that students would not receive money from RaiseMe; the organization has no funds. Wayne State’s website states “The total scholarship amount will **include** the microscholarship. It **will not** be in addition to the micro-scholarship.” Merit awards and/or need-based financial aid would come from the college or university the student attends. Other Policy Committee members had checked the RaiseMe website but could not find out how students would declare which college or university they wanted to attend and what Wayne State’s obligations would be in applying the microscholarships. Provost Whitfield mentioned benefits to the program. Students commit early a college or university and to needing financial aid. Students do not have to attend the school they identify early. The Provost will get more information for the Committee.
3. Report from the Liaison to the Facilities, Support Services and Technology Committee: Ms. Simon, the liaison to the FSST Committee, reported that Daryl Pierson from the Office of Sustainability, met with the Committee. He showed the Committee the new containers for recyclable material. His office’s slogan is reduce, reuse, recycle. Mr. Pierson suggested that he might come to a Senate meeting. Policy Committee members talked about ways to reduce the use of plastic containers. Supplies will no longer be delivered in cardboard boxes but in re-usable totes. Mr. Pierson thinks we need to improve the communication process. In 2017, the University had 580 tons of recyclable material. Jon Frederick told the Committee that there would be a modest increase in parking fees in some categories. The fee for students will not increase. He said the walk from parking facilities to the Mike Ilitch School of Business would take eight minutes. Ms. Simon told him that women would not walk in the dark unaccompanied. The Parking Office is considering adding a shuttle service.

Approved as submitted at the Policy Committee meeting of June 4. 2018