

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC SENATE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

September 26, 2016

Present: L. Beale; V. Dallas; D. Kessel; C. Parrish; L. Romano; B. Roth; A. Rothe; N. Simon; W. Volz; K. Whitfield; A. Wisniewski

Guests: John Vander Weg, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs; Catherine Barrette, Director of Assessment, Provost's Office; Darin Ellis, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs

The items marked with an asterisk constitute the Actions of September 26, 2016.

- *1. Selection of a Replacement for the General Education Oversight Committee: A member of the GEOC resigned from the Committee because he now has an administrative appointment. Provost Whitfield and the Policy Committee jointly selected a replacement whose term will expire in August 2018. Associate Provost Vander Weg participated in the selection.

[Mr. Vander Weg left the meeting.]

2. Program Assessment: Ms. Barrette and Mr. Ellis updated the Policy Committee on the progress units have made in developing plans to assess student learning. Program assessment is to be a systematic process whereby we collect evidence of student learning at the program level. Cumulative learning is assessed across courses or across activities in a program rather than an individual course, a faculty member, or a student. It is program-level focused and evidence based. The purpose of collecting the evidence is to find the areas of strength and weakness in the program to improve student learning and improve the program. The assessment is to be faculty led because faculty are the experts in their disciplines. They should decide what to assess, how to assess it, how to interpret the data, and what to do with the information. The process should be ongoing and systematic, which means that it has to be something that can be done on a regular basis to measure student growth.

Ms. Barrette gave the Policy Committee examples of how some departments are assessing their programs. Large programs use a sampling procedure. The faculty are not adding a lot of activity to what they normally do so the processes are sustainable. They integrated assessment into their teaching practices. Most departments have a curricular or assessment committee.

As of September 1, 80% of the programs in Liberal Arts and Sciences had submitted their mission statement, learning outcomes, curriculum map, and assessment method. Fifty-seven percent also submitted the data from their assessment, their action plan, and the timeline for implementing their action plan.

Academic departments and co-curricular programs, such as Counseling and Psychological Services, student housing, and disability services are to have an assessment program.

The University Assessment Council (UAC) reads a random sample of the programs. They evaluate the quality of the assessment process; they are not looking at the quality of the program. Thirty-seven programs were reviewed by the UAC. The members of the UAC are appointed by the Provost from the names of persons suggested by the Deans. Faculty, associate deans, and some departmental assessment and accreditation officers serve on the Council. Policy Committee asked for the list of members.

The system is set up so that the Department Chair has to agree to the release of his or her unit's report. Mr. Ellis and the Provost explained that the need for permission may have been set up because departments have just begun to develop assessment processes. Some Chairs fear that assessment will be tied to the budget. Members of the Policy Committee spoke to the need for transparency. It is possible to make the website open to the entire campus. A member pointed out that the reasons given for not having the information available protect the administrators. The assessment process is to be faculty led. In general, faculty believe in being open in what they do.

Ms. Barrette continued her report. The reviewers looked at the quality of the mission statement, whether it contained a statement of the program's purpose, whether it mentioned the stakeholders and the offerings of the program, and whether the program improved over the last year. The reviewers check if the program has an assessment method that provides valid information about the learning outcomes they are measuring. With only a few faculty on the UAC, a Policy Committee member questioned how the UAC could know if a program were successful.

Another member of PC talked about the benefits of assessing curriculum, such as evaluating how the undergraduate and graduate programs work together and how individual courses build on each other. Other members noted that faculty have done this type of assessment throughout their careers.

A third member was concerned that the faculty who assess programs are the ones who set the guidelines. It is in their best interest to set the standard low so it appears students are successful. There has to be pressure to set standards correctly. He would like to have independent standards by which to judge the programs.

Ms. Barrette has seen improvement from program assessment. The University has 358 programs to assess. This number includes academic programs and the co-curricular programs such as student services. Seventy-two percent of all programs have full assessment plans.

Some members of Policy Committee do not believe the bureaucracy that is being set up is necessary, that most faculty assess their programs by nature, looking at their teaching method and if students are successful. They also talked about final

examinations and grades providing the information about student success. This led to a discussion whether grades are a direct or indirect measure of what a student learns.

[Ms. Barrette and Mr. Ellis left the meeting.]

3. **Math Competency Project:** Provost Whitfield distributed to the Policy Committee the background information that was developed to assist the General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC) develop a proposal for a math competency quantitative reasoning requirement. Ms. Beale reviewed the scenario that played out over the past two years around the math competency requirement and the suspension of the requirement. Provost Whitfield charged the GEOC with designing ways to demonstrate math competency or quantitative literacy. The General Education Reform Committee (GERC) is looking at the overall construction of the gen ed program. Their work will continue for a longer time period. Provost Whitfield asked the GEOC to submit its recommendation in December.

A Policy Committee member said the only thing we needed to do was to fix the hurdles that students had to go through to demonstrate competency under the old requirement. Another member believes that solving the problem would require a large budget or changing the way in which the courses are taught. Full-time faculty in the Math Department do not teach the courses. The Committee discussed what information should be taught in a math competency quantitative literacy course. Policy Committee asked to see the final exam for MAT 1000 or the textbook and syllabus. Students will have more than one way of meeting the requirement if demonstrating proficiency in quantitative literacy is an option.

4. **Family Educational Rights and Privacy:** The Provost provided a draft of the policy the University follows to comply with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. The University has been following the law but has not had a written policy. Policy Committee had no comment for revision.
5. **Report from the Senate President:**
 - a. Mr. Romano reported that three people addressed the Board of Governors at its September 23 meeting about the \$25,000 bonus the Board gave to President Wilson. The Board members responded to the comments.
 - b. Last week Mr. Romano participated in the forum sponsored by the AAUP-AFT.
 - c. Mr. Romano reminded the Committee that the Provost's town hall is September 27.
 - d. The search for the Associate Vice President for Budgets and Planning has been re-opened. The firm Brill Neumann Executive Search Consultants, which had assisted in the search, has dissolved. Neumann Executive Search partners is assisting in the new search.
 - e. Apparently Provost Whitfield had been misinformed about the response of the members of the Academic Senate to the draft general education program that was presented to the Academic Senate on May 4. Mr. Romano will forward to the Provost the Proceedings of the May meeting.

- f. The Policy Committee recommended that the Board of Governors Statute “Student Code of Conduct” be revised to include as academic misbehavior the unauthorized reuse of work product from one course for a subsequent course without the permission of the instructor. Mr. Romano asked the Provost about the status of the recommendation. Provost Whitfield will check.
- *6. Proceedings of the Policy Committee Meeting: The Policy Committee approved the Proceedings of its meeting of September 19, 2016, as submitted.
- 7. Graduate Council Meeting: The Policy Committee received the agenda and the supporting documents for the Council’s meeting of September 28, 2016. Mr. Romano is the liaison from the Senate to the Graduate Council.
- *8. Agenda for the Senate Meeting: The Policy Committee approved the agenda for the Senate meeting of October 5, 2016.
- 9. Student Survey Committee: The University will conduct a survey of students in 2017 to learn their views of Wayne State’s reputation and customer service. Ms. Simon and Lyke Thompson, the Director of the Center for Urban Studies, co-chair the Student Survey Committee. Policy Committee nominated faculty to serve on the Committee.
- 10. Non-Academic Misbehavior Committee Panel: Members of the faculty and academic staff serve on this Panel. Two of the people who were asked last week accepted the position. An additional member was selected at today’s meeting.
- 11. Report from the Liaison to the Student Affairs Committee: Mr. Roth reported that the Committee reviewed a list of activities for the year. There were a range of topics, including issues related to parking, financial aid, student debt, housing, the student survey, and evaluation of advising.
- 12. Meeting with Michael Wright: Mr. Roth reported that four members of the Policy Committee met with Mr. Wright, the Vice President for Marketing and Communications and Chief of Staff, and Matthew Lockwood, Director of University Communications, to discuss the Division’s getting input from faculty. One idea was to have a group meet periodically to address and develop plans for increasing the input of faculty in the communications about the University. The Division of Marketing will develop a proposal for faculty input. Provost Whitfield said that Mr. Wright is pleased to have faculty working with them. Mr. Romano suggested that the Policy Committee members recommend that Mr. Wright form an official committee comprised of staff in Marketing, faculty, and specialists in enrollment services, to look at how they market the University.