

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC SENATE
PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

March 1, 2021

Present: L. Beale; P. Beavers; L. Lauzon Clabo; J. Fitzgibbon; r. hoogland; C. Parrish; N. Rossi; B. Roth; N. Simon; R. Villarosa; Rohan E.V. Kumar

1. PC Proceedings February 22, 2021

The proceedings for February 22, 2021 were approved as amended.

2. Report from the Chair:

- a. Campus Virus and Vaccine Status. Provost Clabo said that the campus positivity rate is quite low while testing between 1200 and 1300 per week. There were five confirmed cases this week with another seven presumed. There has not been a significant increase even with the movement of lab courses back to campus. On the vaccine front, it appears that there will be a vaccine supply, a diversion of about 300 doses from the TCF allocation. She still encourages everyone to get vaccinated wherever possible.
- b. Student Mental Health Stress. Clabo said that she continues to get increasing information about students suffering ongoing mental health stress. It is not clear whether it is just fatigue, concern regarding the remote and variable workloads, or added work compared to normal times. The staff will continue to monitor this issue. Beale mentioned that during the pre-class chats with students, one noted that he is tired of being in a 10X12 room in his parents' house under his parents' 'nose' all day. He feels frustrated and stressed by being on Zoom and not being able to work outside the home. Without work, there is not enough money to move out, so it is a vicious cycle. Clabo added that she has heard many students say that they are experiencing exactly those kinds of situations. If they live on campus and have mental health issues, they can easily reach out to CAPS or drop in there. But if they are in a family home with limited privacy, it is more difficult to do so. Beale asked about Clabo's statement that perhaps faculty were giving more work to students and whether the deans were aware of this concern. Clabo indicated she had asked chairs to try to find out the situation. Hoogland noted that her asynchronous part of her synchronous class has to do short written assignments and they may not realize the assignment time is substituting for the class meeting time.
- c. Commencement. Students have let it be known that they are disappointed to have a virtual commencement. They do not understand that we cannot book a venue now because of uncertainty and cannot book a venue later because of insufficient lead time. There is a plan to have a 2022 spring ceremony at which people who would have walked in earlier commencements can participate as well as that year's group. It would likely be at Ford Field and less formal than commencements in the past.

3. Report from the Senate President:

- a. Budget Planning Council (BPC). Beale indicated that the Senate representatives have asked why there has been no notice of an initial meeting of the Budget Planning Council. This is concerning, since that initial meeting is the point at which the BPC can have input into the template and scheduling of meetings. Clabo responded that Rebecca Cooke is scheduling two meetings, one of which will be the Provost and CFO with the BPC and the

other for the two with deans and division heads. She also indicated that the two had an initial discussion about the template since it is unlikely that there will be any increase in state appropriations this year. The template will focus on the financials.

- b. Ombuds Committee. This is another committee for which Senate representatives have been named but no meeting has been called. Clabo indicated that the meeting to charge the committee will be scheduled soon.
- c. Bold Moves. Beale stated that there have been several meetings of the Bold Moves steering committee, resulting in a list of between 20 and 25 that will likely move on to the second stage. The finalists will be asked for deeper proposals, based on feedback from the review of the steering committee. There are 4-6 in that group of 25 that are rather sketchy. There will be some time before the full proposals are then reviewed for inclusion in the campaign. Other proposals are not necessarily dead but will likely be used at the school/college/ division level for fundraising rather than as university-wide Bold Moves targets.
- d. Foundation. Beale reported on the Foundation's meeting in the week prior, in which a principal topic was the appropriate type of investment advisor. The one selected three years ago has underperformed its benchmark for essentially the entire three years. Some of the members of the Board (myself included) supported going with a less active manager but it appears that we are going to go through the same process of trying to emulate the huge funds like Harvard et al. The question remaining is how fast can we move. The proposal before the Board was to hire a consultant to review our investments for six months and then help us pick a possible new manager. Beale indicated she had raised a concern about that at the meeting—that timeline seems somewhat absurd for this small an endowment and set of investments. The group pushed for a shorter timeframe so that the bids could be in much earlier.
- e. National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education. Beale announced that there are a number of interesting panels that will be a part of the conference in mid-May and suggested that committee chairs consider attending on their own if at all possible, as part of the strategic planning charge on higher education. Those topics have relevance for shared governance.
- f. School of Medicine. Beale reported that she had met with the School of Medicine's Executive Committee last week to talk about shared governance. She encouraged the Committee to facilitate a better reciprocal flow of information—from the Med School people who are on the Senate back to their peers in the Med School and from the Med School peers up to the Senate leadership. It was a helpful discussion as far as it went, but obviously we need to reach out more directly to Senate representatives to encourage them to see their roles as acting as a conduit from their units to the Senate and from the Senate back to their units.

Parrish commented that the Dean of Medicine held a town hall at which he announced a plan to have a new building to replace Scott Hall at the corner of Woodward and Warren across from the Welcome Center. Parrish considered this a 'pie in the sky' idea, saying that he had not heard that discussed at any point and that it was not part of the strategic plan.

Beale countered that the recently completed Master Plan process included an extensive discussion of a replacement building for Scott Hall: the final plan pointed to several potential sites for a new building, including the Warren and Woodward site. The Dean also spoke at the Foundation Board meeting mentioned earlier to say that the President and Board had approved the Warren/Woodward site for a replacement building. As you know, the President and Board treat those types of decisions on real estate development as Executive Session matters, so presumably that was a result of one of those sessions. Clearly the current building situation is untenable: either Scott Hall must be completely renovated—likely at a

higher cost than building anew—or a new building must be constructed. As mentioned at the Executive Committee meeting at the Med School that Beale recently attended, some folks like the convenience of walking between DMC patient visits and Scott Hall labs; however, given the current relationship with the DMC, it isn't clear that convenience should drive the location of the Med School's research and office building. Having it closer to the main campus could also be a positive development in terms of interactions among the researchers in medicine and researchers in engineering, chemistry or other STEM sciences. Beale noted that it would be ideal if this were something that Roy acknowledged should be brought to the Senate for consultation, but he has made explicit statements at BOG meetings against that process. Clabo added that Dean Schweitzer has also talked about having the first floor of the new building be a student-run clinic, so the possibility of bringing it closer to the main campus will increase opportunities for interprofessional education and contemporary healthcare delivery education.

Noreen Rossi added that a problem beyond the cost of renovating Scott Hall is the way Scott Hall is built—it is not an ideal structure. Even if it were renovated, the Med School would require a temporary place to put people and that could put a stop to research, which no one supports. It seems that, more than anything, the announcement at the town hall caught people by surprise because they were not expecting the move. Ultimately, the building in the proposed position would easily be within walking distance and not so remote as i-Bio, for example. Parrish continued to object to the plan and suggested that it is unlikely the dean will be able to do the fundraising necessary to make it possible. Beale suggested we should wish him luck because we do need the building.

Rossi added that the design alone would likely take a year, especially if it includes both research and a first-floor clinic. It will be important to ensure that the needs of the investigators are taken into account: the open lab format of i-Bio is unworkable for many types of research. Beale suggested that at some point we might again invite the dean to Policy and suggest an advisory committee somewhat like the one we established for State Hall devoted to that design question. She asked Noreen to alert the group when it might be appropriate to invite Mark back for that purpose.

4. Mid-Term Grading Policy. renee hoogland noted that there had been a change in policy without discussion at the Senate to require all faculty to enter midterm grades for all students rather than just those students who were in danger of failing. That is considerable additional labor, and the demand came with no explanation. For faculty with large classes, it is a huge demand on time and fraught with potential for error. Naida Simon added that the switch to Banner 9 removed many of the customized systems that had been developed before. The notifications that have been done in the past were eliminated. The saving grace was that faculty were supposed to be able to download a gradebook to excel and then upload it to the system. Parrish noted that faculty were told they could upload their grades, but it was not easily done and the instructions were not clear. Simon added that another problem is that the default in Academica is to enter final grades. Brad Roth added that he had considerable trouble finding the right link for entering the mid-term grades. Beale suggested that when there is this kind of an update or change to the way we handle these sorts of processes, it would be helpful if (i) the information came to Policy for discussion well before it was announced and (ii) an announcement from the Provost's Office explained to faculty both why the change is necessary and how to navigate the change. Clabo indicated she wasn't clear whether people just didn't read the instructions or the instructions themselves were not sufficiently clear. Beale responded that sometimes people who are very agile with computers are not so good at writing instruction on how to use a computer system for those who are not into computer

programming. This is an example of some of the ways that the Academic Restart Committee in the past has been able to improve the way things work, with just a bit of consultation.

hoogland asked whether a customized patch as existed in the past could be developed. Beale noted that the move to Banner 9 was intended to use the off-the-shelf version of the system as much as possible. But if it is not meeting the university's needs, then there may need to be a customized bolt-on for the system. Simon added that this problem is supposed to be resolved by Fall 2021 when the updates are fully online, according to Monica Brockmeyer. Beale asked whether FSST or ISMC has discussed this, and Jane Fitzgibbon indicated that there had been no update in the last three months. What they tend to say is that there is no major change, but then when faculty learn of what has been changed, it is significant. Beale suggested that the changes that had been made to ISMC were not working as well as they should be and that there was less consulting now. She urged Fitzgibbon to be somewhat more aggressive in pushing the C&IT folks to consult with faculty about how things are going to work. Beale said that Policy should see PowerPoints and information they are using to describe what is happening.

5. Statement on the DEI Council. Beale noted that drafts of the proposed resolution had been shared via email and asked if everyone was now comfortable with the final version for putting before the Senate on Wednesday. There was consensus in support. Beale asked Roth if he would present it, and he agreed to do so.

6. Liaison Reports.

- a. FSST. Simon reported that the committee met on the seventh to discuss various items.
 - 1) The *waitlist process* was piloted in the fall with Library and Information Science and Social Work and then applied in full for Winter 21 for any class that wanted to use it. Problems included the ability of a single student to waitlist on every single section. Beale suggested limiting the number of different sections in which you can be waitlisted would be important—possibly to no more than 2, in order to allow everyone to settle on a schedule within a timely framework. Ricardo suggested that deleting a successful student out of other waitlists once accepted onto one might work better. Beale noted that the problem is that some students will be reasonable by signing onto a waitlist only for the class they really need, while others will sign onto every single section in order to game the system. It seems unfair not to limit all to no more than a small number of section waitlists. Ricardo argued that it would be better not to limit the number of sections on which a student is waitlisted, but Fitzgibbon noted that each department decides how many students can be on its waitlists. She had used 10 for the winter term but will reduce that to 5 in the next term because of these problems. Parrish noted that he just admits students as needed, since there is little difference for a remote synchronous class with TA support between 150 or 200. Beale suggested that might work for some classes, but not for others. Simon added that there was also a vendor problem, in that there were students on a waitlist who were notified that they were eligible to register who could not actually register. Apparently they were 'kicked off the list' before they could register and then prevented from registering. [*After the meeting, Jane Fitzgibbon confirmed that the Registrar's Office was able to get those students into a class.*] The university will work with the vendor on that for future semesters. Simon also noted that students in their last semester can 'jump' the waitlist with an override by either the faculty member or an advisor.

- 2) The *strategic planning post-pandemic higher education charge* was also discussed. The group considers that online teaching takes more work but that more online education is clearly expected in the future. The student member noted that students do not like the discussion boards, because they don't find them engaging. They do like videos. Medicine uses synchronous classes with a chat function as well.
 - 3) Daryl Pearson from *Sustainability* also spoke to the committee. They are considering ways to improve the amount of recycling. Pre-pandemic, the university had 1476 tons of waste annually, so they want to make the recycling program more visible. In the fall there will be two learning communities on sustainability, a regular one and a living-learning community.
- b. CIC. Roth noted that CIC discussed the State Hall renovations with Ashley Flintoff and Shaun Campbell. There was discussion about smart classroom technology and how to configure accessibility. The estimate, which they acknowledge is not precise, is that a full shutdown of State Hall will be only 9-12 months, which is more optimistic than earlier statements. The CAPS director also visited. Nationally, about 30% of college students have diagnosable disorders. Wayne's statistics are slightly higher, though we have fewer instances of drug abuse. The drop-off in use of CAPs here has not been as much as at comparable institutions. By 2018, CAPS was seeing about 1400 clients per academic year and now it is still seeing about 1200 whereas other schools have dropped by 30%. Beale asked what the reason is for that difference, assuming it was likely more outreach. Roth indicated it was not clear. Being a commuter rather than a residential campus may be a factor. He added that the service has been handling demand fairly well, with alternatives such as Education's clinic and the Psychology Department clinic. Although there remain waiting lists, people whose situations deteriorate can jump the queue. There is a hotline available, and now there is a website which has all the different resources in one easy-to-find place, something that Roth had pushed for.
- c. SAC. Fitzgibbon noted that Student Affairs had expected to have Monica Brockmeyer but she postponed. The committee held a first discussion about the strategic planning for post-pandemic education. Many of the concerns mentioned elsewhere came up here. Student frustrations are a real issue, in particular.

Beale raised a concern that none of the committees seemed to have done anything further than have a general discussion of the post-pandemic education issues. At some point, the committees need to determine the topics that they want to pursue and set up working groups on each of the topics. Initial discussion is good, but the chairs need to take an active role in pushing this forward to establish working groups on the topics. Probably each committee should have at least three or more topics, each with a working group of 2-4 people. This is really a way to participate in strategic planning. It is a cumbersome process, but it is important that we do it. The chairs need to take the lead, since otherwise there will be nothing really done to progress on the topics. It will be necessary to have working groups and continue working over the summer, like the Restart and Social Justice Action committees did last summer. This should be viewed as a piece of strategic planning that needs to take place.

Clabo agreed that the sooner we address these issues, the sooner we can start to make progress. This is a significant undertaking, and so it might be useful for the committees to also consider which of the topics are more short term and which are longer term, in prioritizing what they want to consider. Beale agreed, but reiterated that the chairs will have to take a real leadership role in ensuring that this happens. She asked Noreen

Rossi if the research committee was now ready to meet. Rossi noted that she was arranging a meeting for the week of the 15th of March.