WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC SENATE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

March 16, 2020

Present:  L. Beale; P. Beavers; V. Dallas; r. hoogland; D. Kessel; C. Parrish; B. Roth; N. Simon; W. Volz; K. Whitfield; A. Wisniewski

Guests:  Darin Ellis, Associate Provost for Academic Programs and Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness; Kurt Kruschinska, Registrar

1.  Waitlisting Courses:  The University has not had a system that allows students to be waitlisted in courses and automatically moved into the class when another student drops the course.  As a result, students not on a waitlist can jump ahead of waitlisted students, and faculty cannot reasonably advise waitlisted students about the opportunity to move into the class.  Mr. Ellis and Mr. Kruschinska explained that they are piloting a program with the School of Social Work for spring/summer courses that has been successful.  Departments decide if they want to waitlist a particular section of a course and the number of students permitted to be waitlisted.  Students register as they would if they were registering for the course.  The student is added to the waitlist and the system checks if the student has fulfilled the pre-requisites.  If a student who is registered drops the class, the system checks if there is a waitlist and who the first person is.  That person is contacted and has 24 hours to decide to register.  If they choose not to register, they can remove themselves from the waitlist. The next person on the list can then register for the class and another student can be added to the waitlist. Students can see where they are on the waitlist as it changes. Departments can put in a closed section override as they do now.  There are waitlists for 29 sections in Social Work.  Forty students are on the waitlists.

Mr. Kruschinska said that we have had priority registration for several years where graduate students can register the first day registration is open, seniors the second day, juniors the third day, sophomores the fourth day, and freshmen the fifth day.  Mr. Ellis said that many departments have restrictions on courses and can override registration for students who are not majors.  Many courses are implicitly for majors because of the prerequisites.  If students who do not have the prerequisites they won't be added to the waitlist.  The system will follow the restrictions that have been placed on the course by the department.  The vendor advised Registration to turn off the waitlist function on the first day of classes for maintenance of the system.  When classes begin, Registration has to use a different registration code.  Policy Committee asked Mr. Kruschinska to ask the vendor how to configure the system to keep registration open for the first two classes so students who are still choosing classes would be able to register.

Ms. Beale asked if changes were being made when students call in to register.  Mr. Kruschinska did not have that information.  That is handled by the Student Service Center.

Students in the School of Information Sciences will be able to use the online system to register for the fall term.  Students in all schools and colleges will be able to use the system for winter classes.  Mr. Kruschinska will send the links to the website to Ms. Beale to see how the process works.  If there are many students on the waitlist for a class, the system would alert the department and a new section could be added.  Throughout the registration period the registrar's office can increase the size of the waitlist if departments want it increased.

[Mr. Ellis and Mr. Kruschinska left the meeting.]

2.  Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP):  The Academic Senate Advisory Subcommittee on Undergraduate Research Funding was formed in response to changes in the UROP that were announced in January 2019.  Mr. Roth, who chaired the subcommittee, reported that the announcement of the competition for research funding would be sent for the spring/summer term.  The office of the Senior Associate Provost for Student Success will involve the advisory subcommittee in the review and determination of projects to be funded.  The research experiences are very different in the different disciplines.  Hard sciences were the majority of the applications.  Ms. Beale said that one reason to enhance UROP is to make faculty in non-STEM programs aware of the competition and encourage them to engage their students in research.  Mr. Roth mentioned that while some departments are particularly focused on topics related to under-represented groups, there are under-represented groups in every area of research.  Asked how the program became focused on STEM and the sciences, Mr. Roth thought that the laboratory sciences lend themselves more naturally to research than the humanities.  It is important to inform faculty in the humanities about the program and that support is available.  The Provost is supportive of expanding research for undergraduates and has asked the Vice President for Research for funding.

3. Report from the Chair:  In moving classes online because of the restrictions to combat the spread of COVID-19, the expectation was that computers in the library would be available for student use.  However, public spaces, including libraries, will be closed.  Students who do not have a computer will not be able to engage in online instruction.  Provost Whitfield said that messages sent to students at this time would also be sent to faculty so they know what students are being told.  The plan is to keep the staff on campus to the minimum to reduce risk but keep the university open.  The administration wants as much as possible to have people work remotely.  They want to provide flexibility but make sure that areas are covered.  Ms. hoogland commented that students currently in in-person classes did not expect to move to online instruction and faculty did not design their instruction for online courses.  Some students do not have computers so we can expect some stress for both faculty and students.  The Provost said that campus buildings will be closed or semi-closed.  The university takes some direction from Governor Whitmer.  As a state institution, WSU may have to close on order of the Governor.

4. Senate Business:  It was decided that Policy Committee would meet every other Monday via Zoom unless there is no business.  The Senate meeting scheduled for April 1 will be cancelled.  Committees will meet remotely.  The election of the Faculty

Hearing Panel, the Academic Staff Hearing Panel, and the Senate President for the 2020-2021 academic year will be conducted with the Getinvolved electronic voting system.  The March Senate proceedings and recent proceedings of the Policy Committee will be sent to members electronically.

5. Anti-Bullying Committee:  Discussion of the establishment of the committee continued and it will be on the agenda for the next PC meeting.

6. Board of Governors Meeting:  Policy Committee reviewed the items on the agenda of the March 20 Board of Governors meeting to authorize contracts to improve parking structures #4, 5, and 8 for a total of $3.6 million and adopt a Board Code of Conduct and Statement of Commitment.  The Code is being pushed by the Higher Learning Commission (after lobbying) as necessary for accreditation.  Ms. Beale commented that the proposed code had several quite negative elements similar to provisions in a code proposed for faculty and rejected after strenuous criticism from various members of the Senate several years ago.  The Code states that no Board member can publicly criticize any other member of the Board or the President or any member of the administration.  It is hard to understand how an elected Board can perform its duties if it is not allowed to raise criticisms of the administration that it is responsible for.  Several law professors have suggested that the strictures in the document likely violate the First Amendment rights of the Board members as elected state officials.  The rewarding of secrecy and lack of transparency is worrisome, especially since President Wilson has shown disdain for shared governance in the last year.  A Policy member said that as elected officials the Board members should be able to publicly criticize university administrators for poor decision-making, else all accountability is lost.

7. Online Student Evaluation of Teaching:  PC members discussed the use of technology in teaching classes online.  The default for the student evaluation of teaching will be set to be completed online.  Instructors have to notify the Testing, Evaluation and Research Office by March 20 if they want to opt out of the online evaluation.  Faculty who are teaching a class that was moved online/remote will be able to waive any SET evaluations this semester even after the scores are shared with them.

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Approved as submitted at the Policy Committee meeting of April 6, 2020