

**WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY  
ACADEMIC SENATE  
PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE**

April 19, 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; Amanda Powe

1. Test-Optional Admissions Extension.

Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management Dawn Medley and Director of Undergraduate Admissions Erika Jackson joined Policy to discuss the proposal to extend test-option to the Fall, 2022 admissions period. The test-optional approach originated when students were not able to take the standardized tests such as the ACT and SAT that are ordinarily used in admissions decisions. In 2020, the request was made to lift the test requirement to pursue test optional admissions for fall 2020 and fall 2021. There were only a handful of students admitted test optional in fall 2020.

Beale had asked for more information on how students are referred to Apex and Warrior VIP, so Jackson noted that additional information had been added beyond those slides shared at the Student Affairs meeting. Because of the pandemic disruption of the testing process, the admissions group created a holistic review process with nontraditional metrics. Traditional metrics include high school GPA and ACT/SAT scores as well as information about skills and experiences that allow assessment of desirable attributes that are more difficult to quantify with just a test score and a GPA. The factors are based on William Sedlacek's research measuring noncognitive variables for student success and retention, which suggests that a holistic process can improve retention outcomes. The most common tools for assessing noncognitive variables include letters of recommendation, personal essays, and interviews.

Medley and Jackson noted that their offices consulted nationally with other institutions using holistic evaluation about best practices, as well as peer and near-peer public institutions in Michigan. Admissions directors for the 15 Michigan public universities have been meeting every two weeks. Admissions also met earlier with the Senate's Curriculum & Instruction committee regarding the academic evaluation form. Student success is important, but a critical issue is retention into the second year. Admissions considered realistic self-appraisal, long-term goals, and evidence of leadership and community engagement as critical, as well as the availability of a strong support person or educational champion. Admissions has adopted Landscape, a College Board platform, to help provide context information regarding students based on their neighborhoods and schools attended.

The process begins with transcript review, followed by assessment of the short answer essays, academic evaluations, and review of the list of leadership activities, work experience, and extracurricular activities. These tasks are handled by admissions counselors who are members of the academic staff with undergraduate degrees (and often masters) and most with at least 10 years of experience. After the application is complete, the student is either admitted, denied, or referred to Student Success for further evaluation, which includes an interview. Those referred are considered for conditional admission through APEX, the eight-week summer bridge program. Students must successfully complete 2 college courses to continue to the fall semester. Another group of students are referred to the Warrior VIP program that provides additional support through peer mentors, faculty mentors, and a learning community but does not require conditional admission.

Beale asked how Admissions ensures that the process is completed in a standardized way, to ensure student success. Jackson answered that it is a holistic admission process based on reading an applicant's essay and letters of recommendation to determine if a student can succeed, adding in the academic evaluation and other factors. The holistic process allows the counselor to look at the entire application. Medley added that there was extensive training to prepare admissions counselors and Student Success personnel. Consistency is important, and staff are encouraged to bring a questionable application to their supervisor's attention. Counselors apply rubrics and they will review how test-optional students perform on placement tests, as a way to gain granular information. The students enrolling for fall will be followed to gain more insight.

Beale asked if they set up placement tests for all students and whether there is a fee for that process. Medley replied that the entire group of tests would cost students \$87. Although that adds to student costs (under discussion within the Provost's Office), the Testing Office is a revenue-driven operation. Fees for low-income students, based on the FAFSA determination of the expected family contribution (EFC), are waived along with their deposits. This is a concern.

Jackson indicated that only about 60% of all Michigan seniors submitted test scores, and that paralleled the applicant pool at the university, where about 45% of the current applicants are test-optional students. Traditionally, students may submit ACT and SAT "sub" scores or take the placement exams if they prefer and wish to pay for this option. The Testing Office is concerned that the disruption in learning may mean that those SAT and ACT sub scores may not be useful in placing students, so all students will be encouraged to take a placement exam.

Medley added that first generation and low-income students are disproportionately unable to take the standardized tests. These students are our primary market, along with students from the Detroit Public Schools and the Detroit metro area. Admissions does not want its processes to create barriers. Jackson added that the test-optional policy will allow all students to submit their test scores for use during the process. The one-on-one help provided by some of the schools in the past is not currently available, so applications are arriving at slower rates for these students. This is also true with FAFSA completion. Test-optional students who submit scores will only be advantaged by the scores, by providing additional context. The score will not be used against them.

Jackson stated that they would like to continue the test-optional policy for fall 2022. Most other public universities in Michigan have indicated they will continue test-option, with the exception of University of Michigan Ann Arbor and University of Michigan Dearborn. University of Michigan Ann Arbor will announce by the end of the month. Different schools use different terms (test-blind, for example), which has been confusing for parents and students.

There has been a decline in applications for fall because some of the families did not trust the process. Total applications (14,415) are down 13%. 45% of the applications are test-optional. Completed applications are down 28%. Test-optional admits are 35% of the total admits. Orientation reservations are up 3%. The office is encouraging students who have been admitted to take the next steps and register for orientation.

Beale asked if the office is working to encourage more transfers. Jackson indicated they work closely with Educational Outreach, and the Student Success Center has two dedicated transfer admissions counselors who have good relationships with local community colleges. The problem is that the community colleges were hit hard with the pandemic and their enrollment is also down. Students already at four-year institutions are not interested in adding to their disruption by transferring to another institution, so there is a decline in this area as well.

Rossi asked if the decision to remove the tests as a requirement still allows test scores that are submitted to be considered. Jackson said the office may use scores to help with course placement, but not for admission, for which the decision would be made based on their short answer essays, academic evaluation, transcripts and those kinds of things. The test scores would only be used to their advantage even if known at the time the admissions decision is made.

Roth suggested that the calculations being used seem confusing. Medley explained that they would usually consider the number of admitted students divided by the total number of applications received. (These are not necessarily complete applications.) These are competitive admissions with multiple steps in the admissions process. Every student who applied, every student who submitted a secondary application, everyone interviewed would be considered. Wayne has not had a large number to reach an appropriate calculation. Michigan and Michigan State have, which has skewed the entire state's number of applicants because there are many out-of-state students applying to those two institutions without a test score. Wayne's goal is not to open the floodgates, but to make sure that students can come here and be successful.

Policy members thanked the presenters, and Medley and Jackson left the meeting.

2. Report from the Chair:

a. Campus Virus and Vaccine Status.

Provost Clabo reported that the positivity rate on campus is at about 5%, down about 0.3%. The number of tests conducted on campus is also down as a result of being largely remote. The City of Detroit is improving, as the positivity rate has plateaued for about 5 days at 19.7%. Hospitalizations and mortality are, however, still increasing. Larger systems have reimplemented triage locations and visitor restrictions. Elective procedures may also be limited.

The decision to stay remote through the end of the semester was the right one, but vaccines will continue to be offered on campus. There will be 1100 vaccinations offered on campus this week. There will also be some incentives to encourage students to get vaccinated early. There has not yet been a decision on whether the vaccine will be mandatory for fall.

b. Enrollments.

It is early to be looking at numbers for fall at this time, but they are essentially holding about the same or slightly better than last year at this point.

3. Report from the Senate President:

a. Budget Planning Council.

The Council should finish the presentations by the end of the week and there will be two or three meetings left to arrive at our recommendations. The budget planning presentations have on the whole been better than past years. Some of the larger schools like Medicine and CLAS are particularly difficult to evaluate, as is the Provost Office budget and OVPR.

b. Dean Update.

Beale noted that a new Dean has been appointed for the Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. Provost Clabo said Brian Cummings will assume responsibility as Dean on August 1<sup>st</sup>. He is a Wayne State alumni who has been most recently at the University of Georgia. Cummings has already joined in discussions about interprofessional education in the health professions.

c. Juneteenth Committee.

Beale noted that Juneteenth celebrations are approaching and asked Roth to say something about the events. There is an event about health outcomes on Tuesday night and then a number of different events leading up to Juneteenth. Roth has organized an event commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa Black Wall Street massacre and there will be more to come.

d. Plenary Session May 5.

Beale explained that Shirley Stancato, who had previously indicated that she would be able to attend the plenary session, had written that another “must do” event had been scheduled at the same time and she could not join us after all. She hopes a meeting with all the Board members can be planned later this summer or fall. The group agreed to invite Rob Davenport to provide a brief (10 minute) presentation on the various efficiency measures being put in place in FP&M since neither Governor can attend the meeting.

e. Pass/ No Credit Grading Statement.

The group discussed the draft announcement. Although the members agreed that it was reasonable to extent the pass/no credit grading policy for spring/summer, they were concerned that the statement included regarding the fall term was too definitive. Given the uncertainties about the state of the pandemic in the fall, Beale will let Daren Ellis know that Policy would prefer to see a less certain statement along the lines of “although uncertain, the university does not expect to offer this policy in the fall.”

f. Medicine Dean Mark Schweitzer's Request to Reschedule the Senate Plenary Sessions.

Beale had shared Schweitzer’s email with the group, in which he requested that meetings be rescheduled to facilitate participation by clinical faculty in the medical school. The group discussed the issue and considered that the current schedule has been in place for some time without complaints from members from Medicine. Additionally, the schedule has already been announced to the deans for the next academic year, so it would not be possible to change it at this point. Beale indicated she would respond to Schweitzer about the committee’s discussion.

g. SETs Policy.

Beale had shared a letter sent to all Law faculty stating that the university had adopted an online-only policy for SETs. The email provided no opportunity for faculty to determine the timing of the SETs for their classes or to add additional questions as desired for their particular classes. Clabo stated that this was in error and that it would be clarified centrally.

h. Liaison Reports.

a. Subcommittee on Code of Conduct revision.

Roth shared the document that was finalized. He explained that this first report deals with recommendations on educational approaches that will help prevent these kinds of academic misconduct, such as including modules on plagiarism and ethics in the Wayne Experience (WE) courses for fall. Members discussed the next steps. Beale suggested that members read the text and send any comments or suggestions for edits directly to Roth, with copy to her. If there are none, we will consider this report approved by the Policy Committee. A reasonable next step would be to discuss how to expand the WE course to include these topics with Angela Sickler from the Academic Success Center.

Members continue to be concerned about the various online systems that promote cheating, such as the BarnabyLearn software that the bookstore promoted before it came to the attention of Policy. This should likely be mentioned specifically in the report.

b. Research Committee.

Rossi gave an update on the committee's working groups on higher education topics. They will be meeting in the small groups to develop recommendations. Beale noted that President Wilson set a strategic planning finalization date of November 1<sup>st</sup>. Although she will ask that the final date be delayed, she expects he will consider it fixed. The Senate committees need to arrive at a recommendation on the issues possibly even before the mid-October date that is in the original higher education topic memorandum. There will need to be meetings of working groups during the summer to achieve this.

---

*Approved via email on April 28, 2021*