

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY  
ACADEMIC SENATE  
PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

April 29, 2019

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

Guests: Nick DeNardis, Director of Digital Communications and Interim Web Accessibility Coordinator; Randie Kruman, Director, Student Disability Services

1. Course Materials Accessibility Issues: Ms. Kruman spoke about the need for the university to comply with federal law and our commitment to be accessible and inclusive for all students and their different learning styles, backgrounds, and abilities. That is a commitment to student retention and success.

Mr. DeNardis said that most of the oversight in his office is about interfacing content. The work began about October 2017 when the Office of Civil Rights lodged a number of complaints against the university about access to information on our website. (Other Michigan public universities also received similar complaints.) Images on public pages should have an audio narrative that tells the non-sighted users what is displayed. Audio content should be captioned for people who are deaf. The university has over 1,500,000 public pages, and complaints can originate if as few as four pages are not accessible. Complaints go to the Office of the President, the Office of Equal Opportunity, and the Office of the General Counsel.

The university is implementing a response plan. Our policy on web accessible content has been published, and training is provided for people publishing public web content. Every six months published content will be reviewed and pages that do not conform will be remediated. The Office of Civil Rights requires the university to include a statement in the policy acknowledging that the university is aware that intranet and private content (such as the log-in site Academics) should also follow the policy. The university also must assure that all faculty and staff are aware of the policy. That has been communicated in two emails. Web pages, PDFs, and documents must be available to the widest audience possible. The Disability Office ensures that students have reasonable and appropriate accommodations and currently has 1500 active cases.

Ms. Beale asked what the faculty's role is in making information accessible. The policy provides a short list of instructions of which faculty should be aware when designing content for classes.

Policy Committee members expressed concern about faculty needing to be trained to meet the requirements. It is not reasonable to expect faculty to know how to add captions to their webpages or to expect them to have time to do that work. The university needs software that can caption the information or have an institutional method of creating what is needed. Ms. Kruman said that the university has a fund for captioning websites, and the Office of Disabilities will help faculty accommodate students with special needs.

A member pointed out that screen readers cannot be used if an instructor scans material from a book or other printed content. Ms. Kruman and Mr. DeNardis agreed that it was a problem. Mr.

DeNardis mentioned all videos the university has on YouTube are captioned. They can see how many people are watching the videos with audio on and how many are watching them with audio off and with captions. Seventy percent of our social media are watched with captions on. The first material for the website that is being captioned relates to student enrollment: admissions, financial aid, and the bulletin.

[Ms. Kruman and Mr. DeNardis left the meeting.]

2. Report from the Chair:

- a. At a later date Provost Whitfield will consult with the Policy Committee about increasing the number of paid internships for students.
- b. The number of students in the master's programs has dropped. We need a university-wide project to promote the masters programs. Ms. Dallas suggested that the undergraduate advisors talk to students about pursuing advanced degrees.

3. Report from the Senate President:

- a. The search committee for the Vice President for Health Affairs and Dean of the School continues its work. The position description is still under development, with the goal of having a clear description of the joint role as a member of the President's cabinet and Dean of the School of Medicine.
- b. Ms. Beale attended the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Faculty Assembly meeting. They discussed the budget and the Budget Planning Committee. They talked about RCM, internal audit issues, and the resolution before the Senate regarding the practices of the Office of Internal Audit. There was considerable interest in the proposed changes in the funding of the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program: CLAS faculty agreed that it was important to determine which students formerly eligible would be excluded under the revised program (information that Monica Brockmeyer had not reviewed) and to make adjustments so that one good program was not destroyed to create another good program that served a different group.

4. Board of Governors Meeting: Policy Committee discussed some of the items on the agenda of the Board of Governors Budget and Finance Committee meeting of May 1. The Board is being asked to authorize the spending of \$3.5 million for the second phase of the renovation of the School of Social Work Building and \$4.5 million to improve the elevator in State Hall. These are both needed projects. Also before the Board is notice of the Corvias partnership decision to increase room rates for FY 2020 by the 3% permitted under the contract. Meal plans will also increase at about 3% or slightly more. The Medical School is requesting a tuition increase of 3.9% for students in the M.D. program to generate some funding to cover the costs of curriculum adjustments required for accreditation. The report on major capital and real estate projects is going to the Board of Governors for information. One of the items on the list of purchasing exceptions is a consulting service to develop and implement Slate (CRM) software the university purchased and to create and maintain 2019 student recruitment campaigns for the Office of Undergraduate Admissions.

5. Search Committee for the Director of the Office of Business Innovation: William Volz, Professor of Accounting in the Mike Ilitch School of Business, volunteered to serve on the committee.

6. Search Committee for the Dean of the Graduate School: Policy Committee nominated three faculty from which Provost Whitfield will select at least one to serve on the search committee for the Dean of the Graduate School.
7. Ad Hoc Task Force on Transparency: The Policy Committee has established an Ad Hoc Task Force on Transparency, in large part because of the significant concerns expressed by faculty about the potential for misuse of the Academic Analytics database in salary, promotion and tenure processes but also because of broader concerns about the dependency on data, which is always subject to the judgments of the persons utilizing the data. PC appointed the following to the task force: Allen Goodman, Professor, Economics, Liberal Arts and Sciences; Michael Kral, Associate Professor, Social Work; Richard Lerman, Director, Computing Services and Part-time Faculty in Information Systems Management, Mike Ilitch School of Business; John Rothchild, Professor, Law; Loren Schwiebert, Chair and Associate Professor, Computer Science, Engineering; Elizabeth Stoycheff, Associate Professor, Communication, Fine, Performing and Communication Arts; James Van Loon, Librarian, Collection and Scholarly Communication, University Libraries. PC will select a chair and send the charge to the committee after the June 3d meeting.
- \*8. Agenda for the Senate Meeting: Policy Committee reviewed and approved the agenda for the May 8 Senate meeting.
- \*9. Senate Meetings for the 2019-2020 Academic Year: The committee scheduled the meetings for the next academic year.
10. Summer Meetings: Policy Committee members will send their summer schedules to the secretary so Ms. Beale can schedule the meetings.
11. Reports from Committee Chairs and Liaisons:
  - a. Curriculum and Instruction Committee: Mr. Roth reported that the committee discussed the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP) at its April 24 meeting. Monica Brockmeyer, Senior Associate Provost for Student Success, and Henry Robinson, Senior Director, Office of Federal Trio, attended the meeting. The Provost's Office had switched from directly funding undergraduate research to a new partnership with the McNair Scholars Program and other Research Experience for Undergraduates programs. Two students attended the CIC meeting and provided testimonials from three other students about their experiences in the UROP. Two students will address the Board about the issue.

Mr. Beavers noted that there has now been acknowledgement that reassigning the funds to the McNair program does not meet the university's goals. Ms. Brockmeyer has now indicated that she plans to add funds to continue the UROP as it has functioned in the past. Ms. Beale said that Dean of the Honors College John Corvino is also attempting to raise additional money for the program within Honors, but that is a long-term effort. Mr. Volz suggested that the Research Office should help fund the program to support undergraduate research. Another member said that the university should seek support from alumni and other members of the community as a way to emphasize the importance of undergraduate research. Provost Whitfield believes undergraduate research is central to undergraduate

education, and he will pursue more support for it. The university needs to support research in the broadest sense. Deans are supportive of undergraduate research.

Ms. Beale noted that the Policy Committee asked Ms. Brockmeyer to provide information about the groups of students who would be excluded from participating in the revised UROP. The Provost will follow up with the request.

CIC also discussed with Darin Ellis, Associate Provost for Academic Programs and Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness, the possibility that, under the RCM budget model, colleges might duplicate courses that are taught in other colleges in order to acquire credit hours and more revenue allocation. Mr. Ellis discussed with CIC having a group to consider undergraduate course proposals. The CIC was supportive of setting up a group to assist in the review on a provisional basis if questions arose until an institutional structure could be established. Provost Whitfield urged the forming of such a group for individual courses and when new programs are proposed. Ms. Beale suggested that the Senate might amend its bylaws to formalize a review procedure.

- b. Student Success Committee: Ms. Simon reported that the committee looked at the FTIAC/transfer/stop-out rate of undergraduate students from 2011 to 2016. Sixty-two percent of the students who stop out or drop out are freshmen, 19% are sophomores, 12% are juniors and 8% are seniors. Pell students stop out and transfer more than non-Pell students. More Pell students transfer to a community college than to a four-year college. Pell students had a 44% success rate and non-Pell students had a 56% success rate.
- c. Facilities, Support Services and Technology Committee: Ms. Simon said that Ashley Flintoff, Director of Planning and Space Management in the Division of Facilities Planning and Management, and Harry Wyatt, Associate Director for FP&M, updated the committee on the master plan. They recommend that Keast Commons be a green space and that the university plan to develop campus “gateways”, with the south gateway being the University Towers designated a junior-senior residence hall and the north gateway being a residence hall for graduate and professional students. They are considering asking the city to decrease the number of traffic lanes on Warren Avenue to make crossing the street easier.
- d. Budget Committee: The Budget Committee met on April 29. Ms. Dallas reported that they reviewed the materials for the May 1 Board of Governors Budget and Finance Committee meeting. Even with a tuition increase of a little over 3% and a small increase in enrollment, the deficit for fiscal year 2020 is predicted to be \$14 million. Support staff will generally be cut to reduce the deficit. Mr. Volz added that the corollary is more debt for the university. The issuance of bonds of more than \$100 million results in \$6 million or \$7 million of debt service for 27 years. However, the physical plant is old and repairs are necessary.