

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC SENATE
PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

June 1, 2020

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

The item marked with an asterisk constitutes the Action of June 1, 2020.

- *1. Approval of Proceedings: The committee approved the Proceedings of its meeting of May 18, 2020.
2. Report from the Chair:
 - a. Amanda Bryant-Friedrich will join the university as the Dean of the Graduate School on August 1.
 - b. The Provost suggested that Policy Committee invite the new president of the Student Senate, Riya Chhabra, and the Vice President, Marcella Eid, to a meeting.
3. Report from the Senate President:
 - a. The Budget Committee met several times recently. Rebecca Cooke, the Vice President for Finance and Business Operations and Chief Financial Officer, has provided helpful information to the committee. Today they discussed how the strategic initiative funds were spent this year to understand how much money is needed for strategic initiatives in the future.
 - b. Media reported that the Mike Ilitch School of Business has guaranteed scholarships to all graduate business students who were financially impacted by COVID-19 in addition to the scholarships that are normally available. Provost Whitfield said the money was raised through philanthropy. All business graduate students will receive some funds to cover a portion of their tuition and fees.
 - c. Undergraduate enrollment for the fall continues to increase. Graduate enrollment has decreased compared with this time last year. The difference in tuition for undergraduate students and graduate and professional students may result in a revenue wash. Newspaper articles report that some students are not sure they will enter college this year as they take a “gap year” to wait out the pandemic. It appears, however, that Wayne State may benefit by attracting students who want to stay close to home and would otherwise have gone to schools outside the metro area.
 - d. At the recent meeting of the University Foundation it was announced that Matthew Roling, the current Chair of the Department of Accounting, would become the Interim Director of the Office of Business Innovation (OBI). He indicated that the staff would include a program person and a lawyer, to help expedite the work. Mr. Volz added that when he was the director of the Blackstone Launch Pad, they worked with a business clinic in the Law School that was a critical help to the Blackstone project and meant the project did not need to have an attorney on staff. Ms. Beale noted that the clinic still exists, with a small business and community engagement focus, and can work with campus innovators. The clinic, however, is not operating for fall while the director is on leave.
 - e. Some entering freshmen were not able to take the SAT or ACT because testing was cancelled due to the coronavirus. Late-applying students who were unable to take the tests—probably fewer than 100—can nonetheless be admitted for Fall 2020 through a holistic review.

The Curriculum and Instruction Committee met last week to discuss the likely need to extend the suspension of the requirement for undergraduate admissions through the 2021-22 academic year. All members of the Senate were invited to the meeting. The university has a grid that looks at cohorts by ethnicity, gender, first time in any college, and other criteria and tracks retention rates from year to year and predicts graduation rates. Ms. Beale had suggested that Institutional Research add SAT/ACT scores and high school grade point average to assess the relationship with retention and graduation rates. The data could be important in considering needs for those admitted this fall (and next fall, assuming extended one year) who did not take the SAT or ACT. Ms. Beale was informed that Monica Brockmeyer had requested some of that data and it was considered “proprietary” to her office. The Provost agreed that this information should be provided to the Policy Committee.

- f. Ms. Beale had been informed that Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences Stephanie Hartwell had changed the contracts awarded to CLAS lecturers to provide only 1-year contracts. Provost Whitfield said that colleges always have had the ability to do that for particular lecturers, usually based on concerns about the person’s performance, which he reviewed. Mr. Parrish said that the Dean of CLAS only issued one-year contracts for all lecturers whose contracts had expired this year. Another PC member said that her Chair did not know that only one-year contracts were approved until she received the contracts. This is a problem because the Chairs have to schedule the instructors of courses. Mr. Parrish stressed that the decision was based on the Dean wanting budget flexibility and not on the lecturers’ performance. The Provost indicated he would look into this.
 - g. Policy Committee, represented by Brad Roth, has worked with the General Counsel’s office to revise the university’s statute on sexual harassment. On May 6, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos issued new regulations for universities to follow when charges of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or unlawful sex discrimination are made. The regulations go into effect August 14. That is not enough time for the university to write a policy. The General Counsel likely will write an interim policy and later will write the final policy. Mr. Roth will consult on the issue.
 - h. During the pandemic, mail is apparently being delivered to schools or departments but it is not automatically forwarded to the home addresses of faculty and staff. Ms. Beale asked that mail be forwarded to homes for those who will be working remotely long term. Provost Whitfield will check on the situation.
 - i. Ms. Beale will meet with President Wilson on Wednesday to discuss academic governance issues.
4. Suspension or Cessation of the Use of the ACT/SAT: Provost Whitfield said there is uncertainty when the next tests will be offered. A member of the Board of Governors had learned that other universities made the tests optional for fall 2020 and fall 2021. She asked why Wayne State didn’t do the same. For the fall term, the university suspended the requirement that first-time-in-any-college (FTIAC) students submit an ACT or SAT score since later tests were cancelled because of the pandemic. This affects about 50 or 60 students. It appears likely that the university will need to also make the tests optional for Fall 2021, because that decision has to be reached in July 2020. The question arose whether we should discontinue using standardized tests permanently. As noted in the President’s Report, the CIC meeting concluded that more information is needed before supporting a permanent suspension. The faculty want to see results of the suspension. Although most see problems with the tests, they provide quantitative evidence that is used in various ways beyond admissions, to complement GPA data from high schools.

Some universities use essays to decide who should be admitted. With 20,000 applications per year, we would need many people to evaluate essays. Where would we find qualified people to evaluate them? Students who apply for the APEX Scholars program submit essays but that is a very small number of students. It was suggested that the departments could be more involved in admissions decisions, both via advisers and any faculty willing to volunteer to assist.

Ms. Dallas asked if the university had done a correlation between the SAT/ACT scores and student success rates. In the early 2000s we had that information. Provost Whitfield said that we have not been doing that. The ACT and SAT are not good predictors of success. Composition and communication are predictive of graduating in six years. The Provost said we should look at multiple types of information to aid in predicting success. Ms. Beale thinks we should look at students' high school GPA in addition to their SAT or ACT score. It will be important to look at several years' cohorts to see how GPA and ACT/SAT numbers correlate with retention and graduation, perhaps adding the specific high school and information about family (independent students versus dependent students) if that data is available.

Mr. Roth pointed out that nationwide there are two different kinds of admissions processes that make two different uses of these tests. Elite schools use them in competitive processes to admit their most desired class. Wayne State looks for students who have the requisite skills to graduate. We have to look at comparable institutions. The CIC will continue to look for predictors of success. Ms. Dallas believes we need to look at our own data. The Provost will give CIC the data the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis has gathered about predictors of success.

Mr. Volz suggested that we look at household income as a predictive measure. Wayne State graduates have a substantially lower college debt than graduates from the other Michigan public universities. It appears that our students are averse to taking on debt to get a degree so they take fewer credit hours and extend the length of time to complete their program. Provost Whitfield noted that for every additional year to complete a degree, the person loses \$20,000 in income. He agreed that in this region there are people who are very loan averse. A *New York Times* article about social mobility ranked Wayne State as the top university in Michigan for students moving from lower to upper mobility. The Provost will consider the recommendations of the CIC how to best determine if applicants are likely to succeed and graduate.

5. Fall New Faculty Orientation: Plans are underway for the orientation of the new faculty who will join the university in the fall term. Ms. Beale presented issues that Policy Committee might bring to their attention: the importance of the Academic Senate in shared governance, how it functions and what it tries to accomplish. PC could inform them about the elections and how faculty and academic staff are chosen to serve on committees. The chairs of the Senate committees could discuss the issues that come before their committees, how we gather information about issues of concern and how we deal with the issues. The question was when and how the meetings would be held. Ms. Beale asked PC members to send their comments to her. Ms. Dallas asked if there are opportunities for new members of the academic staff to be introduced to the university. Ms. Simon said that the Academic Staff Steering Committee of the AAUP-AFT holds meetings where members of the organizations the academic staff are involved with give presentations. Ms. Beale thinks it might be good to have a meeting to talk to the staff members about the Senate's committees and to let them know who the Senate leaders are and that they may contact them.

6. Project to Replace the National Survey of Student Engagement: The NSSE collects information from entering freshmen and graduating seniors about the characteristics and quality of their undergraduate experience. The data are used by faculty, administrators, researchers, and others for institutional improvement, public reporting, and related purposes. It is an expensive survey. It is not done every year but we get a history of answers. It is costly but an advantage is that, being a national survey, we get information from schools across the U.S. and can compare our students' responses with other institutions and we are able to see the trends. Wayne State conducts many small surveys. We get fairly good data from the NSSE, but having our own survey would save money. Can we replace the NSSE with a survey of our own? Having longer-term trends that NSSE provides gives us historical data that we would not have unless we had similar questions to the NSSE. Ms. Simon said that we participated in the winter 2019 survey but we did not get enough responses so our data were not used. Institutional Research was to repeat the survey in winter 2020, but it was not done because of the COVID-19 pandemic. A lot of freshmen complete the survey but we do not have enough graduating seniors from that entering class to complete the survey. Ms. Simon was appointed as a representative of the administration. Policy Committee also appointed her to serve as the Senate representative. She will report back after the introductory meeting. Ms. Beale will attend the first meeting, but Policy should consider appointing a faculty member to participate regularly.
7. Academic Transparency Committee: The Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Transparency recommended "That a faculty oversight committee be appointed (by the Academic Senate) and granted access to the Academic Analytics and Academic Performance Solutions platforms, on par with that granted to deans, chairs, and administrators, to monitor the databases/algorithms for errors and completeness. This committee (with staggered terms of two years) would report to the Academic Senate at least once per year regarding issues that may relate to the databases/algorithms." Policy Committee reviewed the faculty who were nominated at its last meeting, and approved the list of potential members. Serving on the committee will be: Senate President Linda Beale, Professor, Law; Vice Chair of the Senate renée hoogland, Professor, English, CLAS; Juliann Binienda, Associate Professor, Family Medicine and Public Health, Medicine; Allen Goodman, Professor, Economics, CLAS; Elizabeth Stoycheff, Associate Professor, Communication, CFPCA; Scott Tainsky, Associate Professor, Management, Mike Ilitch School of Business.
8. Inclusive Access Pilot Committee: The Inclusive Access Pilot Committee is charged with establishing a small pilot program to test the Barnes & Noble proposed "Inclusive Access" system for providing new texts to students at below market price. Policy Committee reviewed the members of the committee who had accepted service on the committee. The members are: Tim Michael, Associate Vice President for Auxiliary Services, Co-Chair; Paul Beavers, Librarian IV, Assessment Coordinator, Policy Committee, Co-Chair; Veronica Bielat, Librarian IV, Student Access Librarian; Joshua Neds-Fox, Librarian IV, Digital Publishing Coordinator; Richard Pineau, Senior Lecturer, Mathematics, CLAS; Jeffrey Grynviski, Associate Professor, Political Science, CLAS; Judith Moldenhauer, Professor, Communication, CFPCA; Jane Fitzgibbon, Lecturer, Communication, CFPCA; Jodi Young, B&N Bookstore Manager, non-voting ex officio.
9. Fall Student Engagement Planning Committee: Dean of Students David Strauss and Associate Vice President for Student Auxiliary Services Tim Michael have convened a committee to develop a fall student engagement plan and calendar for fall semester to foster and perpetuate student connectedness, student involvement, and Warrior Pride. The Committee members will draw on operational plans from their respective areas, best practices from their professional associations,

and coalesce ideas into innovative programs. At the request of the Provost, Policy appointed David Merolla, Associate Professor, Sociology, CLAS; Michele Najor, Senior Lecturer, Communication, CFPCA; and Rachel Pawlowski, Academic Advisor III, Honors College.

10. Restart Update: Ms. Beale mentioned several issues that were brought to her attention to be addressed before people return to campus: how medical researchers will move between hospitals and their laboratories; how faculty will move between their offices and classroom buildings; and child care for faculty, employees, and students. Provost Whitfield said that options for childcare and signage that directs people through the hallways are being discussed. Also under discussion is the need to inform members of the community about regulations in buildings.

Approved on June 17, 2020, as corrected.