

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY  
ACADEMIC SENATE  
PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

August 24, 2020

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

The items marked with an asterisk constitute the Actions of August 24, 2020.

- \*1. Approval of the Agenda: Provost Clabo opened the meeting asking if there were changes to the agenda as distributed. There were none and she declared the agenda approved.
- \*2. Proceedings of the Policy Committee of August 3: Policy Committee approved the Proceedings of its meeting of August 3 as distributed.
- \*3. Proceedings of the Policy Committee of August 17: Policy Committee approved the Proceedings of its meeting of August 17 as corrected.
4. Report from the Chair:
  - a. Distribution of Mail: Last week Policy Committee asked about the distribution of mail. Mailroom personnel are not delivering to the buildings. Provost Clabo asked the deans to develop a plan for handling mail in their individual schools and colleges and provide notice to faculty and staff for their information.
  - b. Academic Restart: The Provost thanked Associate Provost for Academic Programs and Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness Darin Ellis, who chaired the Academics/Teaching and Learning Subcommittee, for his work in moving the courses that do not absolutely have to be on campus to remote delivery. As of today, about 8% of classes will be taught face-to-face. Most of the on-campus courses are off-campus clinical courses in the health professions. Some performing arts and laboratory classes will also be F2F. Mr. Parrish asked if there was a printed policy that could be given to students about holding classes remotely. Ms. Beale noted that the Academic Restart Subcommittee produced a set of guidelines (issued as individual flyers) that covered this and other subjects. Provost Clabo will check and send it to Mr. Parrish.
  - c. Student Move-in: About 1500 students, who will be tested for COVID-19 beforehand, will move into the dorms this week. Occupancy will be about 40%. Students who were living on campus in the summer (about 400) were also tested for the virus. The university has not met the occupancy rate that Corvias expected, but we will not change the processes that have been put in place. The housing committee is also liberal with late requests of students to void their housing contracts: about 100 per week have done so. Wayne State and Michigan State University are following very similar processes for providing instruction, with the vast majority of classes online or hybrid. Like MSU, the main classes on campus are in the health professions. The biggest difference is that MSU's housing capacity is 16,000 and ours is about 1600.
5. Report from the Senate President:
  - a. President Wilson is holding a town hall about campus restart on August 27.

- b. In a message to the university community, the Provost announced that she appointed Rob Thompson as Interim Chief Information Officer and Associate Vice President for Computing and Information Technology.
  - c. Additional faculty and staff have expressed concerns about the somewhat vague parking announcement. It is not clear why the same “opt in” arrangement is not being used as done in the winter term, since that allows individuals to retain their tags but suspends payments until we have most on-campus again. The Provost will ask about Parking and Transportation Services for fall. She agreed it would be more convenient if the suspension instituted after classes and work were moved off campus was extended for all faculty and staff who will not be on campus in the fall rather than having them have to cancel their parking.
  - d. In a message to the university community, Provost Clabo announced that Dr. Ramon Benkert would serve as the Interim Dean of the College of Nursing. Dr. Benkert is a nurse practitioner who has served as the Associate Dean of Academic and Clinical Affairs in the College of Nursing. She is a fellow of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners who does a lot of community-based work. She is the co-principal investigator on the Michigan Area Health Education Center (AHEC). Although each state has an AHEC, Michigan is the only AHEC in the country jointly awarded to a medical school and a college of nursing. As the president of the Nursing Practice Corporation, Dr. Benkert oversees the Campus Health Center.
  - e. As in the past, Policy Committee would like to invite Dean Benkert and Mr. Thompson to meetings to discuss their work. We’ll consider dates after the first couple of weeks of classes.
  - f. There was also an announcement about tech tools available for faculty and staff. Provost Clabo noted the kits were ordered months ago but the university has not received all of the order. The Campus Health Center will also have thermometers available for students, staff, and faculty.
  - g. This week’s report on applications and admissions for the term showed numbers in all areas were down, but the enrollment report nonetheless showed increases in undergraduate enrollment. Enrollment in most graduate and professional programs continues to be down. Overall enrollment is up 0.21% over last fall at this time. Ms. Beale asked whether the students who participated in the Heart of Detroit and the Kick-Start programs registered for the fall term. PC members also requested census figures for both spring/summer terms and information regarding how many students entering in the fall will not have taken the SAT or ACT exams. The Provost indicated she would ask for this data.
6. Review of Standing Committee Assignments: Policy Committee reviewed the assignments of members to the standing committees and made some changes to balance the committees.
- \*7. Flu Shot Mandate: Provost Clabo sought the Policy Committee’s support for an administrative statement mandating that employees be vaccinated against the seasonal influenza unless they have a religious or medical exemption. The university has already required all students to receive the flu vaccine: students in the health professions have always been required to have the vaccination to work at clinical sites. Mandating only for students does not effectively serve the function needed. The concern is that influenza makes a person more susceptible to the serious effects of COVID-19 if there is simultaneous co-infection. Further, an individual who presents with a respiratory infection creates a public health problem requiring quick determination of the cause since it could be either seasonal flu or COVID-19. Since only 43.5% of people over 18 in Michigan had the flu vaccine last season, the Public Health Subcommittee and administration strongly recommend that we mandate flu vaccination for all faculty and staff. The mandate would be worded to allow exemptions for anyone with religious objections to receiving the vaccine or anyone who has documentation from their primary care provider that they should not receive the vaccine. The degree to which the university can or will police the mandate has not been determined. The administration would appreciate the support of the Academic Senate in

this recommendation. The vaccine will be available at the Campus Health Center through a socially distant appointment process and there will be outreach in a variety of buildings.

The wording would be as follows:

*In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the specific risk to campus health by potential dual outbreaks of respiratory illnesses occurring concurrently, it is prudent that all faculty and staff who wish to be on campus during the 2020-21 academic year receive the seasonal flu vaccine by October 15 of 2020. Exceptions to this mandate will include those with religious exemption and those with documentation from their primary care provider.*

Some Policy Committee members were supportive of people receiving the flu vaccine but were concerned about a mandate, suggesting that the words “strong recommendation” replace “mandate.” Other members stressed the need for everyone on campus to be vaccinated to protect faculty, staff, and students and the proven efficacy of the flu vaccine in protecting people, especially those who are more vulnerable. It was noted that an 80-90% vaccination rate would be highly helpful, and that a religious exemption covers a broad range of personal views.

It was moved and seconded that the Policy Committee support the administration’s statement mandating that all members of the university community be vaccinated except for those with religious exemptions or documentation from their primary health care provider. The motion passed.

8. Provost Search Committee: In the discussion with President Wilson, he noted that he would have Ms. Beale serve on the search committee in her role as president of the Senate, as well as the president of the Student Senate. He agreed to appoint three other Senate-selected representatives. Policy decided to appoint two faculty members and one academic staff member. Policy Committee nominated individuals to serve. After the meeting, PC members ranked the nominees and Ms. Beale contacted the people selected. Serving on the committee will be Christine Chow, Professor of Chemistry; Naida Simon, Extension Program Coordinator III, Academic Affairs; and Ljiljana Progovac, Professor, English.
9. Agenda for the Academic Senate Plenary Session: Policy Committee reviewed the draft agenda for the September 9 Senate meeting. They discussed the procedure for electing the Policy Committee using Zoom. Some members disagreed with the phrasing of the statement on public speakers. PC and the Provost also discussed whether Zoom’s polling feature will allow only Senate members to vote.
10. Agenda for the September 23 meeting with the President’s Committee: Policy Committee reviewed the agenda items for the September 23 meeting. They will revisit the question at their next meeting.
11. Admissions Data: Some members of the Curriculum and Instruction Committee, the Student Affairs Committee, and the Policy Committee met with Meihua Zhai, Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research and Analysis, to view admissions data. The committees are interested in data that pertain to the relationship between admissions practices and student success. The questions arose with the suspension of ACT and SAC scores to determine if a student should be admitted. The suspension is temporary, but some have suggested it should be made permanent. It is important to see cohort retention and graduation data over at least 5 years by ethnicity, gender, HS GPA, high school, and SAT/ACT score to understand what factors are most likely to correlate with success or failure at the university. The compiled data currently available did not provide the information the committees sought. The committees would have to

develop questions that IR could use to pull together the data they need. The committees are looking for indicators other than the ACT and SAT to identify students who could succeed. For example, Mr. Roth said it is important to know if there is a correlation between high school grade point averages from particular schools and students' ability to successfully progress from freshmen to sophomores onward and to graduation. IR has the underlying information to answer these sorts of questions, but the staff have not put it together in a way that helps to evaluate these issues. Mr. Roth noted there was clearly institutional resistance to the idea of using the data to filter out students, yet without the test scores the university will need to determine what data does correlate with success in order to admit students who can actually succeed here. The committees are looking for data that would indicate that students' skill levels are such that they can or generally cannot succeed in the university.

Ms. Beale said that some committee members seem to think the university should have open enrollments and do whatever necessary to make it possible for the students to succeed. That would be the ideal situation, but requires understanding of the actual obstacles, a plan for addressing them, and the resources to carry out the plan—which are likely to be substantial. In the recent past we admitted students with very low ACT scores. They attended for a semester or for a few semesters and had to drop out. That came at high cost to them, without achieving a degree. Most of our increased graduation rate is not because we are shepherding people through the system better, but because we have reduced the number of students entering who could not succeed. Information by cohorts would show us if we are admitting students who have a chance to succeed with support we actually provide, but as Professor Roth indicated, the IR staff spoke against using that data to filter students. If we don't, though, we'll again admit students who are not prepared, and after a couple of semesters they will drop out.

Ms. Simon said another problem with the IR dashboard as currently designed is that the data is aggregated from 2005 to 2019. That aggregation muddles the data: the academic performance of students in a particular high school may have changed over the years. The data should be aggregated by cohort rather than across 15 years, in order to get the information the committees need.

Mr. Parrish spoke to the need for resources to provide remedial work. If the financial aid the university receives for students who need remedial work were used to support the students, we might have the money needed to support students with lower skill levels on entry. However, he said, the university has never truly supported such a broad-scale remedial program.

Provost Clabo asked how many of these issues are generalizable across campus or by the sciences versus the humanities versus the professions. We have very good data on programs that support success in students in some fields who are from underrepresented groups.

Ms. Beale mentioned that remedial programs have succeeded with small groups of students. She understands that it cost about \$100,000 per semester to support 77 students. There is talk about increasing the number of students supported to 1,000. That would cost \$1 million or more per semester because more counselors, more teachers, and more tutors would have to be hired. The most important thing we have done to help students graduate that shows in our improved graduation rate was Provost Ron Brown's initiative to hire 45 additional academic advisors over a three-year period (completed under Provost Whitfield).

Mr. Volz thought students might have less of a chance of graduating because of programmatic differences. Are there programs where students needing remediation have a higher potential for success? Are there niches that are worth trying?

Ms. Beale noted that we have a university-wide enrollment admissions process for undergraduates except for a few schools that now admit students as freshmen. That means it is difficult for the specialized knowledge about assessment and needs that Provost Clabo mentioned to be applied. In the past, most universities like Wayne State had a school of general studies to which students who were less prepared to pursue a college education could apply directly. The schools would educate students so they could be hired for better positions, such as managers, if they had a degree.

Ms. Simon told of her experience with admissions to the College of Nursing when she worked in the college. The college would admit about 900 pre-nursing students each year. They also would admit any presidential scholar who completed the pre-requisites for nursing in a two-year time frame. In the seven to eight years Ms. Simon work in Nursing, they never had an automatic admission of a pre-nursing presidential scholar, but they admitted engineering students and pre-med students who were presidential scholars. The pre-nursing presidential scholars did not have the science background in high school so their grades in college science courses were not high enough to get into the nursing program. The high schools that students attend and what they learn prior to coming to the university is important. That is the data we should look at by cohort.

Ms. Beale agreed with Mr. Roth that CIC and SAC should ask specific questions. We need information by cohort, by high school, by GPA, and by retention and success here. If there are too few in a class, we count those numbers as statistically insignificant. It is very hard to help people succeed if we don't know the hurdles to success. We have to determine what resources we need and whether we have the funds to provide the support.

Provost Clabo agreed that we have to ask the right questions to get the data we need. We have to build in supports. The supports are not generic. The solution is to find the right fit for the students. The Provost said there is evidence in her discipline that peer mentoring, supplemental instruction, and tutoring increase the graduation rate.

Ms. Dallas noted that we have had success with the Warrior VIP program but a very small group of students participate in the program. We would have more success if we could scale up the program. The students in the program form community, which is very beneficial for them. She also said we need someone who would know the problems students experience, who has the needed resources, and who is able to involve the right people to assist the students. We need a variety of approaches to assist students.

The Provost said we need to find out what it would cost to bring the Warrior VIP program or a version of it up to scale. There are success skills we do not measure in deciding whom to admit. That is why holistic admissions are becoming popular.

Mr. Roth said that nonetheless, we need to find a way to exclude students who cannot be successful unless we have an open admissions process and help everyone who seeks admission. He is not optimist about the open-ended questions that will be on the admissions form. The people seeking admission may have someone else answer the questions. How do we interpret the answers? People who are self-effacing might not be admitted.

Ms. Beale said the CIC and the SAC needed to pay attention to the questions that have been raised. We need to continue the process and provide what information we can to Senior Associate Provost Monica Brockmeyer and to Associate Vice President for Enrollment

Management Dawn Medley for the purpose of improving the admissions process. Getting better data is a first step. Considering what level of resources are needed to scale up support for students is an important question. Mr. Beavers agreed, noting that it is essential that we do not return to the past practice of admitting students who were not prepared for college. If a great deal of remediation is necessary, we have to consider the cost. A clear, sensible measure of students seeking admission is the first step.

Mr. Roth and Ms. Simon will coordinate with Ewa Golebiowska, the chair of CIC, about how to move forward. Ms. Beale suggested that they talk with Ms. Zhai about getting the cohort information.

12. University Research Opportunities Program: Mr. Roth reported that the UROP subcommittee will meet with Darryl Gardner, Director, Operational Excellence, Student Success, and Matthew Orr, Program Coordinator, Undergraduate Research, on September 9 to discuss the status of funding for the program and to review what was done the last time the program was funded. Some students who continued their applications for the spring/summer term received financing. Many students withdrew their applications for the spring/summer term because they were unable to do the work due to the pandemic. The Office of the Vice President for Research agreed to support the program financially this year but that has not been done and it is not clear that he will carry through with the commitment.

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Approved as submitted at the Policy Committee meeting of August 31, 2020