WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC SENATE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

October 7, 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: Stuart Baum, President, Student Senate

The item marked with an asterisk constitutes the Action of October 7, 2019.

1. Conversation with Stuart Baum: Policy Committee invited Mr. Baum to the meeting to discuss the issues on which the Student Senate is focusing this year. Provost Whitfield thinks it is important that the Student Senate and the Policy Committee communicate about issues. Both have the goal of improving the university. Mr. Baum agreed that it is important to work together to advocate for initiatives and to be aware of each other’s activities. He explained that the Student Senate does not have committees but instead has loosely defined project groups. Mr. Baum reviewed the issues with which the Student Senate is focusing this year.

Black student success has been a major priority for the past several years, with a goal of achieving greater equity and closing achievement gaps.

The Student Senate wants a sustainable long-term solution to problems students have with transportation to campus. One initiative has provided passes to students and created a unified payment system for DDOT, SMART and QLine. Students would like to see student discounts for those services. Ms. Beale suggested that data be collected to show how many students need/use bus and other transportation passes.

The students also ask to be consulted on priorities in addressing the university’s deferred maintenance backlog of $1 billion. Students complain most about State Hall and the elevators throughout campus, but particularly in the parking structures. They are circulating a petition about the cleanliness of bathrooms and supplies in bathrooms.

The Student Senate is trying to identify financial barriers that students face and potential remedies. For example, the Student Senate purchased 180 clickers that students can borrow at no cost for a semester. Another problem is the cost of printing materials relevant for classes. Some institutions let students print a certain number of pages free at the public printers. Students have suggested that departments bear more of the cost of student printing, but a Policy member pointed out that departments face significant constraints on their budgets and class sizes differ significantly, so departmental or faculty approaches would probably be unfair. A university-wide arrangement would be a better option.

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The Student Senate is involved in local, state, and national policy making. Their efforts resulted in establishing a polling station in the Damon Keith Center for Civil Rights in the Law School. One of their initiatives is lobbying representatives for student-centered policy changes. Ms. Beale suggested that it might be preferable to state a focus on education-centered policy change. Mr. Baum agreed and said that was included in the initiative. It was suggested that if the faculty and academic staff work with students, lobbying efforts might be more effective. Ms. Beale suggested that the Student Senate and the Academic Senate work on this effort.

The Student Senate, Mr. Baum said, has talked with members of the Board of Governors, the administration, and faculty about having election day be a holiday on campus. While everyone would like to see this, it would affect the academic calendar, so it will be important for Academic Senate committees and administrative units to discuss the issue and consider potential impacts.

Mr. Baum noted that graduate students have not had much of a voice within student government. A seat for graduate students was added to the membership of the Senate. The Student Senate has 30 members with half of the members serving at-large and half representing the schools and colleges, which include Medicine, Law, and Pharmacy. Any unit member and any at-large member could be a graduate student. The senate would like to have the 30% spring/summer discount tuition, currently available only to undergraduates, extended to graduate students. Ms. Beale noted that there are significant differences in graduate and undergraduate tuition rates, because of smaller classes and more research-intensive work. The summer tuition discount for undergraduates was designed to encourage more undergraduates to complete needed course work in order to be able to graduate in a timely fashion.

Under housing and dining initiatives, the senate would like to see improvements in on-campus housing policies, the quality of food and its availability, and options for meal plans.

The Student Senate is working to include the designation of Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) on admission applications to acknowledge how students identify. The federal government doesn’t recognize those designations so the university would have to create two data sets, one for its internal use and one for the report to the government. Other universities have done this. Provost Whitfield talked about the difficulties.

The Senate is working with the Advising Council to develop a survey to find out the students’ experiences with advising. It would cover their entire advising experience. Ms. Beale recommended that the student liaisons talk with the faculty on the Faculty Affairs Committee and the Curriculum and Instruction Committee about the issues students have with advising, their desire to expand the number of courses with peer mentors, making syllabi available before registration begins, and supporting the adoption of open education resources. It’s important on these issues to consider the faculty perspective rather than pushing forward with only the students’ views.

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Provost Whitfield suggested that the Student Senate prepare a list of their actions with a little of the discussion and the person to contact to facilitate communication. If the liaisons are not attending meetings, Mr. Baum asked that he be notified. Ms. hoogland commented that sometimes students do not understand what is best in relation to pedagogy. Faculty change the pedagogy in relation to the student population. It would generally be more helpful to discuss issues with the FAC and CIC before the students submit a resolution. The Provost mentioned that change occurs when the students and faculty agree on initiatives.

Ms. hoogland is in favor of the sustainability issues on which the students are working. Students are interested in courses that deal with gender and identity.

[Mr. Baum left the meeting.]

1. Report from the Chair:
2. The director of the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies and the director of the Center for Latino/a and Latin American Studies are stepping down from their positions at the end of the next academic year. The Provost has talked with the directors of the centers and institutes that report to him about succession plans so that when they leave their positions as director, some plans will be in place.
3. The search committee for the Dean of the Graduate School will begin meeting soon. Ms. Beale asked if representatives from the Academic Senate and other groups had been selected.
4. There are two finalists for the position of Associate Vice President for Facilities Planning and Management.
5. The Vice President for Health Affairs and Dean of the Medical School search is moving forward, having selected four candidates for on-campus interviews.
6. Report from the Senate President:
7. The search committee, Ms. Beale said, is working well. In response to questions, she said that it has not been discussed yet, but it is her understanding that when the candidates visit campus, there would be campus-wide interviews. The Vice President for Health Affairs will have oversight of the clinical practices in School of Medicine, the College of Nursing, and the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, and will be the dean of Medicine.
8. Ms. Beale has received messages from some people that department chairs are aware of the actions passed by the Senate on October 2 and have told their faculty to respect academic freedom and not to squelch discussion of controversial issues. That is a positive outcome of this difficult situation.
9. Ms. Beale distributed a list of the members of the Capital Funding and Priorities Committee (CFPC). The makeup of the committee has been under discussion with an attempt to downsize the committee to make it a good intermediate recommending group. Mr. Parrish suggested it should have another faculty member. Ms. Beale noted that the plan is to ensure that discussion comes to the Budget Committee and the Facilities, Support Services and Technology Committee, as well as Policy, early in the process so that there is full consultation.

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\*4. Proceedings of the Policy Committee: The committee approved the Proceedings of its meeting of September 30, 2019, as corrected.

1. Members of the Student Non-Academic Misconduct Hearing Committee Panel: Nine members of the faculty and academic staff serve three-year staggered terms on the panel. The terms of three members have expired. Ms. Beale will contact the Dean of Students Office for information about the number and disposition of cases that come before the panel. PC will re-visit the issue at a later meeting.
2. Charges to the Senate Committees: With the aid of the chairs, Ms. Beale distributed draft lists of matters for the attention of the standing committees this year. Policy revised and added to the lists. When finalized they will be distributed to the committees. If there are additional issues that committees want to discuss, they may add them.
3. Follow-up to the October 2 Academic Senate Meeting: Policy Committee briefly reviewed a draft cover letter to transmit the gag order and the whistleblowing email deletion motions passed by the Senate on October 2 to President Wilson and the Board of Governors. Policy Committee will finalize the letter via email discussion.

Members expressed their reactions to the statements from Associate Vice President for Enrollment Services Dawn Medley and Chief Information Officer and Associate Vice President for Computing and Information Technology Daren Hubbard. Mr. Hubbard spoke positively about working together to rewrite the university policy governing the use of information technology to address the academic freedom concerns. Ms. Medley spoke as if the motion deleting the email was a personal attack on her and did not seem to understand the gravity of the censorship issue. Various members expressed shock at AVP Medley’s remarks. One noted dismay that someone who spoke so unprofessionally is the face of enrollment management and a self-professed agent of radical hospitality. Another stated how stunned he was at her remarks and the attempts to shift blame to others. A third member compared the administration’s handling of this situation with a case of scientific misconduct in which the university did such a thorough investigation that the National Institutes of Health did not levy fines or discipline the university even though it could have: the administrative reaction here would likely encourage people not to report misconduct. A fourth member noted that Ms. Medley defended herself at the expense of others, an approach made appallingly bad by her public comment revealing private medical information about the former employee. Several indicated there was a moral issue at stake here.

In response to questions, Provost Whitfield said that he had talked with Ms. Medley about what happened at the Senate meeting to tell her that her statement was not appropriate to the context, but added, as he said on the floor of the Senate meeting, that there is information not shared about this situation. In response, one member noted that those in the administration who look to AVP Medley for leadership should assess how people under her are treated--her attitude toward the rank and file is almost contemptuous in some cases. Another member was disturbed by Ms. Medley’s claim that an EEOC investigation fully exonerated her staff, when in fact

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one of the staff members was suspended for a month for anti-gay slurs. Another member responded that while there may be factors not fully revealed, there are certain lines that cannot be crossed. Provost Whitfield declined to comment on the issues raised.

1. University Research Opportunities Program: Mr. Roth chairs the UROP Committee created in consultation with Provost Whitfield and Monica Brockmeyer and charged with making recommendations for funding increases and new funding sources for the program in collaboration with Senior Associate Provost for Student Success Monica Brockmeyer. Unexpectedly, Ms. Brockmeyer has put together her own task force even though she had agreed to work through the subcommittee formed by the Policy Committee.

Ms. Brockmeyer invited members of the UROP committee to attend the meetings she is conducting. It was reported that another competition would be held in the winter term for UROP scholarships for the spring/summer term. The UROP committee will meet with Catherine Kay, Senior Director of Financial Aid, to learn how the UROP funds affect financial aid.

Mr. Roth said that he understands the overall goal is to coordinate the various funding programs that support students for pursuing undergraduate research. Ms. Beale found it problematic that Ms. Brockmeyer would establish her own committee after having explicitly agreed to the formation of the UROP committee as the method for determining any changes to the UROP program. The Provost said that Ms. Brockmeyer’s forming a team does not mean that she would not work with the faculty committee. Provost Whitfield will clarify the reason for the task force. Ms. Beale will invite Ms. Brockmeyer to a Policy Committee meeting to discuss the work of the UROP committee and her task force. [*Following the meeting, Provost Whitfield indicated to Ms. Beale that the Brockmeyer group was intended only to gather documentation and data supportive of the Roth group’s efforts to develop an enhanced UROP. Ms. Brockmeyer will provide a statement describing how she envisions the process to develop an expanded program working*.]

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Approved as submitted at the Policy Committee meeting of October 14, 2019