

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC SENATE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

October 26, 2020

Present: L. Beale; P. Beavers; L. Lauzon Clabo; J. Fitzgibbon; r. hoogland; D. Kessel; C. Parrish; B. Roth; N. Simon; R. Villarosa; A. Wisniewski

Guests: Dawn Medley, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management; Cathy Kay, Senior Director, Office of Financial Aid; Rebecca Cooke, Vice President for Finance and Business Operations; Robert Thompson, Interim Chief Information Officer and Associate Vice President for Computing and Information Technology; Melissa Crabtree, Senior Director, Campus and Classroom Technology Services

The item marked with an asterisk constitutes the Action of October 26, 2020.

1. Wayne Med-Direct Program: Policy Committee invited Ms. Medley, Ms. Cooke, and Ms. Kay to discuss how the Med-Direct Program is working and its cost. The Med Start program, the forerunner of the Med-Direct Program, began in 2005 for the purpose of recruiting talented pre-medical students as undergraduates at WSU with the expectation that upon graduation they would enroll in our medical school, but there was no requirement for them to do so. The Med-Direct program includes a contractual agreement for admission to the Medical School for FTIAC (first-time-in-any-college) students who satisfy certain benchmarks. Med-Start was funded with merit scholarships and top-offs for undergraduates; Med-Direct uses the same discount model. Med-Direct undergraduates receive a free ride--full tuition, fees, and housing, but as medical students they receive only tuition and fees. The university does have some endowed money for the undergraduate tuition. There are endowed funds at this point for one cohort of medical students' tuition and fees, but not a sufficient amount to cover the four that will exist when the program is fully underway. Other financial aid is available for some medical students. Ms. Cooke suggested that if the endowment did not cover all the expenses the medical students would qualify for both merit and financial aid in the Medical School.

Ms. Beale believes the university needs a long-term plan for funding the program if the full endowment funding is not actualized. The current program admits 10 undergraduates a year, so that when the program is fully populated, there would be 40 undergraduate students and 40 med school students annually. If we do not get the funding expected, would the number of students admitted be reduced or are there other plans for funding the program? Ms. Cooke said since this a pipeline program for the Medical School, she expects the Dean of Medicine would determine the number of students who could participate in the program based on the school's resources.

Provost Clabo added that the Med-Direct program addresses a problem cited by the LCME on its most recent visit: the lack of student diversity. This program targets students from diverse backgrounds who face financial challenges. The first class of students in the school contributes significantly to the diversity of the school. PC asked Ms. Medley to provide data on gender, ethnicity and background of each of the existing cohorts of students and agreed to do so.

One category in the program budget was additional program costs, covering expenses such as courses MCAT exam preparation, undergraduate research opportunities, and other "student

success” programs. A coordinator now located in the Honors College handles these Med-Direct supplemental programs. PC members were supportive of the programs though concerned regarding adequate endowment funding.

Although the university recruits nationwide for the program, Ms. Medley noted that it is predominantly a Michigan program, with 16 of 50 applicants out of state, none international. While helping to prevent a ‘brain drain’ of good Michigan students, it also attracts top students from outside the state, such as one from Illinois who was successfully recruited. The Discover Detroit award requires a 3.5 GPA and a 24 ACT score and permits students to attend WSU at the in-state tuition rate. The Med-Direct students would have qualified for that program: the majority have ACTs above 30 (in the 38 - 39 range). The Medical School has a recruitment committee of vice deans on which Ericka Jackson, director of undergraduate admissions, serves. The vice deans of diversity, admissions, and education serve on the interview committee before the students enter as freshmen. They work with John Corvino, Dean of the Honors College, and faculty in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Recruitment focuses on STEM-oriented students.

Mr. Villarosa asked whether there was any remedy if Med-Direct undergraduates opted for another medical school. Ms. Medley responded that the issue would be referred to the provost but did not occur with this first class.

[Ms. Cooke, Ms. Kay, and Ms. Medley left the meeting. Mr. Robert Thompson and Ms. Melissa Crabtree joined the meeting.]

2. Restructuring of the Division of Computing and Information Technology: C&IT is centralizing all campus IT services. Mr. Thompson said the reorganization is designed to provide a consistent level of IT support throughout the campus so that everyone receives high quality IT support at a desktop or server level and for research. He believes the reorganization will enhance our infrastructure including cloud technologies and cloud storage, the agility of research teams, and the ability to deploy IT resources quickly and in ways that do not require a lot of initial planning for purchases. It requires expertise to do it right, which is a significant justification for the consolidation plan. C&IT was earlier charged with strategic planning for standardization of classrooms (after taking over the classroom technology coordination function from the Libraries). Mr. Thompson indicated that he believes the pandemic will change the way faculty teach in the long term, so this consolidation will plan for those changes, including strategic investments in virtual classroom technologies and a consistent level of support for in-person classrooms. He also sees a plus in developing a “common set of security standards” for campus technology rather than the current “silos” that make it hard to predict risks and vulnerabilities. Consolidation will ensure consistent patches for servers, desktops and software for anti-virus protection at the server level to prevent loss of data, a growth area for any IT organization that requires added investment to handle threats. An important part of the plan is to have multiple layers of department support and cross-training of tech support personnel, rather than one person for a department, especially in operational and research areas when that person is not available due to vacation or illness. Consolidation has been a topic of discussion with the administration for years, with the goal of more efficiency and better preparation for future demands by working in teams as opposed to working in silos.

Mr. Thompson reviewed the timeline for implementation of the changes. On April 22 President Wilson announced that IT would be consolidated. On September 16 Mr. Thompson held a town hall for all the campus IT staff and announced the timeline for restructuring changes. On October 19 he announced the new organizational chart, the reporting lines, and the Warrior

project page. On November 2 the changes in the reporting relationships will take place. An inventory and discovery phase will be conducted in the first quarter of 2021 and a phased alignment of centralized IT and school/college/division operations will begin, continuing over the next two years. Unanticipated issues will arise that will have to be addressed as the project is carried out.

Ms. Beale noted her poor experience in seeking help from the C&IT helpline and with service in the Academic Senate office compared with the Law School's IT staff. The response in the Law School is fast even at night and on weekends. She has found that often the centralized staff do not know how to correct problems and have to contact another person to resolve problems—this has certainly been her experience in calls to the C&IT helpdesk. Across-the-board standardization is not necessarily a plus, since it can have negative impact for units with specialized needs. Beale noted that there was no real consultation with the Senate (and, she has been informed by those involved, none with the deans) on the question of whether IT services should be consolidated. The former CIO Darren Hubbard mentioned it almost as an aside in his presentation to the Budget Planning Council in the spring, indicating that one school had agreed and that he foresaw a 'dotted line' relationship between C&IT and school personnel. There was no proposal for consolidation, no discussion, and no consensus that it should be implemented. The Policy Committee and the faculty who served on the Council were shocked when the President's announcement came out without any consultation whatsoever with FSST, Curriculum & Instruction, Faculty Affairs, and Policy. She agrees that some standardization of security requirements and cross training of people can be advantageous, but she worries that this complete centralized "restructuring," coupled with layoffs determined by the central office rather than individual units, can easily go awry (as it did in the case of Human Resources) and fail to serve the needs of individual faculty, departments, and research units or even take into account the well-laid plans within those units.

Mr. Thompson responded to the concerns raised and indicated that the purpose of the discovery and inventory process is to learn the unique needs of the departments and colleges. He does not want to be heavy-handed in the centralization of IT.

Ms. Beale does understand that virtual classrooms should be a central function and in fact had recommended the shift from Libraries to C&IT. Nonetheless, there is much overlap with academic issues, and C&IT is not staffed in any way by academics. Further, there is concern regarding budgeting of central C&IT services at C&IT. At the meeting of the Senate Budget Committee earlier in the day, Vice President Cooke said there would be 27 layoffs in C&IT (the only layoffs in the 2021 fiscal year). The worry, again, is that central administration does not fully understand the way the school/college IT employees work within the units or the way faculty—who do not want an entirely online university in the future—want to use technology in teaching.

Mr. Thompson views virtual classrooms as important and is prepared to make investments to meet the IT demands of delivering teaching and learning in the future. He believes there will be budgetary savings from consolidation, since we won't be "spending excess money on redundant services or areas where we have redundant licenses." The savings could be redirected to areas of growth or where security and virtual classrooms are needed.

Mr. Thompson stated that he does not know where the layoffs would be or what the targets would be. They will not make decisions to significantly hurt critical services. Ms. Beale questioned this, noting that Ms. Cooke's presentation at the Budget Committee meeting showed C&IT as the only area that would suffer layoffs. Mr. Villarosa said again that 27 positions are targeted. Mr. Thompson responded that part of any reorganization is assessing where there are

redundancies and where functions can be consolidated. He explained that some of the items in the inventory and discovery process are to reconcile multiple or redundant services.

C&IT is investing in virtual desktops for virtual classrooms. They are looking at research IT support and classroom technologies that will allow more virtual teaching and learning activities. These could be supported partially through savings as part of the restructuring, reducing license costs, looking at areas where we are not delivering services efficiently such as Centers. Other funding from the restructuring effort that enhances services is the money spent on hardware in departments. Having standardized desktops that are part of the desktop program that replaces the computers every four years reduces the hardware costs in departments.

Mr. Roth is concerned that the words “efficiency” and “redundancy” obfuscate the lowering of support to units that are considered to be too well served compared to the norms in order to redistribute the support to other units. That makes people especially nervous. Ms. Beale noted that those units have expended considerable effort to ensure they have the kind of IT support they need, but this will essentially decimate their careful plans in order to “standardize” across units that haven’t done good planning internally. Mr. Thompson acknowledged that consolidation levels the different schools/colleges, but he claimed that the university must consider the value of the services to make sure we’re doing the right thing for the institution as a whole. He stated that C&IT is trying to keep the staff who currently work in departments in those departments for the long term and does not want to cause unnecessary disruption to the individuals providing support in the units. Mr. Thompson has recurring meetings scheduled with every dean to make sure the consolidation accommodates needs.

Ms. Beale said that C&IT should update the Senate’s Facilities, Support Services and Technology Committee, for a while at every meeting, about the reorganization. Mr. Thompson appointed Melissa Crabtree to serve as the liaison from the administration to the committee. She will be able to do that.

Ms. Crabtree mentioned some recent changes as a result of reorganization and consolidation. When consolidation was carried out eight years ago, the academic side was explicitly left off. These examples support reorganization or consolidation so that units are not left behind. Primarily smaller academic units and centers within academic units did not get support from their local IT person. C&IT’s first goal is to make sure that the units know how to get appropriate support. She also responded to Mr. Roth’s comment. In the eight years that C&IT has been consolidating and standardizing support for academic and administrative units, their “customer satisfaction ratings” have never dipped below 95%. [*Comment added: Notably, only the pharmacy school had opted into IT centralization prior to President Wilson’s announcement. Administrative units were the primary users.*]

Mr. Villarosa questioned whether the effects from the pandemic have been taken into consideration relative to the layoffs, since it seems clear that the particular layoffs have been planned for some time. Those layoffs should be dramatically reduced given the external changes due to the pandemic. Ms. Beale added that it was clear at the Budget Committee meeting that the *only* layoffs are in C&IT and are set out with explicit numbers in the FY 2021 budget that will be presented to the Board of Governors at their October 30 meeting.

Mr. Thompson said the “inventory and discovery phase” should be completed in the first quarter of 2021, which is when the opportunities for savings and efficiencies and long-term re-alignments will take place. The alignment with centralized services will take a long time. He indicated that “thousands of desktops will have to be purchased, and C&IT employees will have to be trained to

provide the services the various units need.” All schools and colleges cannot be updated simultaneously.

Ms. Simon asked about the procedure for layoffs. Most of the technical staff are members of the Professional and Administrative union. Mr. Thompson said it is a seniority-based system whereby employees with least seniority are laid off first. A laid-off employee with high seniority would be able to bump an employee with less seniority to assume that person’s job. He noted that both management and union positions are targeted for layoff.

Ms. Simon also asked when the Canvas Learning Management system would be populated for the winter 2021 semester. Registration begins next Monday.

Ms. Fitzgibbon said that having unity on a platform would be very helpful for faculty who teach in different buildings. Some of the instruction in the College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts is not transferable. Will that be part of the consolidation? Mr. Thompson said that a major goal of the consolidation is to have a common set of standards that allows faculty to use the same procedure in classrooms across the university.

It seemed to Mr. Parrish that the consolidation would result in organizational glitches that would be very difficult to overcome. As a faculty member he wants a technician whom he knows. He has a technician whom he knows and who knows the equipment he uses. The technician knows his department and college, has always been available, and knows how to get things done. Consolidation has not always improved the functioning of a division. The consolidation in Human Resources has been problematic. The HR directors in the schools and colleges report to the dean but they are most responsive to the Associate Vice President for Human Resources. Mr. Parrish added that the employees who work at the C&IT Help Desk have been very responsive and helpful. He also commented that he does not use a desktop computer. He uses his laptop.

Mr. Thompson said they are not trying to eliminate local tech support but to have personnel who are cross trained so more than one person can support a unit. As Ms. Crabtree said, C&IT wants to ensure that they are responsive to the needs of faculty, staff, and students. He is confident that the changes will improve their ability to provide services.

Mr. Thompson displayed the organizational chart when services are consolidated. There is, he said, an opportunity to invest in academic research technology support. They want to energize research activities through strategic investments like classroom cloud technology that will make research faster and more efficient. Ms. Beale asked how budgetary support for research relates to the office of the Vice President for Research. Is the Vice President providing some of the support for research technology? Mr. Thompson said some of the research employees are helping broadly to support research technology on campus. Mr. Thompson is talking with Antonio Yancey, Assistant Vice President for Research Administration and Operations, about addressing redundancies such as multiple departments paying for memberships in organizations. They might be able to create an institutional membership. They talked about funding for IT as indirect cost recovery on grants.

Ms. Hoogland asked how extensively and to what detail this information is communicated to department chairs and deans. Mr. Thompson said there has been regular communication with the business affairs officers and with 160 IT employees at the town halls since the announcement. C&IT has about 220 employees. If department chairs want information about the consolidation they should contact Mr. Thompson.

[Mr. Thompson and Ms. Crabtree left the meeting.]

3. Report from the Chair:

- a. Provost Clabo met with the members of the Day Care Implementation Committee last week. The committee will submit a proposal to the Provost with short-term and long-term solutions during the pandemic and post pandemic. The administration will look at what proposals can be supported and where they can support the lower-cost options and those that meet immediate needs. As soon as the Provost gets the proposal she will bring it to the Policy Committee for consultation.
- b. The Provost thanked all who are supporting the mental health initiative. They have received considerable positive feedback from students. Many faculty who do not teach class on Friday will cancel class another day. Provost Clabo is very pleased with the support from faculty. Ms. Hoogland mentioned that students in her classes were very appreciative for the break. The Provost said this is an example of how Wayne State has led through the pandemic. The initiative was focused on the students, but faculty and staff are appreciative also. She thanked the Policy Committee for its rapid support of the initiative. A website is being built with resources and activities for the day.
- c. Last week the Campus Health Center tested 883 people for the coronavirus. That is more than 20% of the campus population. Our positivity rate is 1.13%. Some people have said the Campus Health Center is not doing a good job of testing and contact tracing. Her response is that the proof is in the results. If it was not doing an exceptional job we would have a positivity rate like other schools and colleges in this region. The results of the test are available in 48 hours. Provost Clabo received three complaints today. She reviewed the information with the clinicians. The complaints either lacked significant detail or the detail was incorrect. Provost Clabo asked that members send complaints related to the testing to her.

4. Budget Documents: The Senate Budget Committee met earlier today. As was previously stated, the committee was told that the only layoffs would be the 27 layoffs planned in C&IT. The committee was not given any detail on the budgets of the individual schools and colleges—unlike the members of the Board of Governors on the BOG finance committee, neither the Student Senate nor the Academic Senate were given the September 25 budget book with that detail, even when requested.

5. Student Success Collaborative: In response to the pandemic in March, Senior Associate Provost for Student Success formed the Student Success Continuity and Learn Anywhere project to coordinate the transition of many student academic support programs and academic advisors to the remote and online environment. Ms. Brockmeyer believes it was successful and is building on that project to support student success collaborations during the 2020-2021 academic year. She asked the PC to appoint two faculty to the committee. They nominated faculty whom Ms. Beale will contact to confirm their agreement to serve.

6. Student Non-Academic Misbehavior Hearing Committee Panel: Policy Committee appoints faculty and academic staff to this panel. They serve three-year terms. The workload is not onerous, and no cases are expected this academic year. Policy Committee asked Ms. Beale to contact the members whose terms are expiring to see if they are willing to continue for another three-year term. They also nominated a replacement if another member is needed.

7. Agenda for the November 4 Senate Meeting: Policy Committee reviewed the agenda. No changes were made.