

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY  
ACADEMIC SENATE  
PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

November 11, 2019

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

Absent with notice: V. Dallas; K. Whitfield

Guests: Timothy Michael, Associate Vice President for Student Auxiliary Services; Jodi Young,  
Bookstore Manager

The item marked with an asterisk constitutes the Action of November 11, 2019.

1. Bartleby Learn: Mr. Michael and Ms. Young were invited to talk about Bartleby Learn, a service the campus Barnes & Noble Bookstore has made available for students. The Bookstore has offered \$5000 in incentives to entice students to sign up for the service. Ms. Beale noted a deep concern of faculty that the bookstore is promoting a service that purports to answer homework questions and write essays for students, without any consultation with the Academic Senate Faculty Affairs, Curriculum & Instruction or Policy Committees about this matter that directly impacts teaching and learning on campus.

Ms. Young explained that Barnes & Noble College is different from Barnes & Noble, Inc. Barnes & Noble College offers a service, Bartleby Learn, that the bookstore personnel see students as eager to use. They have promoted it with a variety of cash incentives; if students sign up, the cost is \$10 per month. The service is optional; students do not have to purchase it.

Mr. Michael explained that Barnes & Noble is integral to the course material process that is part of the contract the university has with the company. It is the clearinghouse for the materials faculty use in their courses through the registration process. B&N creates the database that students use to find their course material. The federal Higher Education Opportunity Act lays out the relationships to students and the kind of access students need to make a choice. Every year B&N conducts a nationwide survey of 6,000,000 students to find out what motivates their behavior, influences their purchasing decisions, and helps them learn best. The bookstore also surveyed WSU students about the overall climate at the university and student success initiatives. Eight hundred seven students completed the survey. Mr. Michael said that the survey provides information about the bookstore's customers and what they want. The textbook division is closely connected with all departments on campus.

Bartleby Learn is connected closely with other campus resources. Several times over the past ten years, the bookstore has engaged with other resources on campus, such as student success. The Student Success Center provides peer advising and supplemental support mainly for 1000 and 2000 level courses. Michelle Bruner is the Senior Director of Student Academic Success. The Student Success Center has been very supportive of the use of Bartleby Learn. Ms. Beale and others on the committee responded that they found this

shocking, since no one from Student Success has talked with the Senate committees about such for-profit services designed to answer students' homework questions.

Ms. Young said that students are looking for resources to improve their course work. Over 50% of students nationwide work either part-time or full-time. Almost half of those students are caregivers of their children or of an adult. Nationwide, students do their homework when resources are not available. The number one time when students do their writing is at 2:00 a.m. Sunday night. The bookstore's concern is that students, including those at Wayne State, use online resources that are not necessarily credible. The role of the bookstore is to support students and the university by providing an option that they know has the correct information. The content in Bartleby is directly from authors and publishers who are educators in their fields. Bartleby does not have peer-to-peer tutors. It is a credible way to find information. Students live in a world of subscriptions. It is not the only way to access Bartleby, but this generation of students expects that method of delivery. When students connect with Bartleby Learn, they have to acknowledge in the computer system with a signature that it is a subscription and that they will be charged \$9.99 for each additional month. The first month of Bartleby Learn is free. They can cancel the service at any time. Students are encouraged to put a 28-day reminder in their phones to alert them that they can cancel the service before the first monthly charge if they want to do so. Students who receive financial aid and are required to buy their textbooks at the bookstore or students who do not have credit cards can purchase 4-month and 9-month subscriptions. The Bookstore is offering a service that tutoring cannot and the Bookstore personnel believe it is a good service for students.

Ms. Beale objected to the Bookstore offering the service without consulting the Academic Senate. Agreement from the staff in the Student Success Center is not sufficient. They are not faculty but are administrators. Offering this "service" for students is clearly educational policy. She also objected to the bookstore offering incentives to students to sign up for the service. Students will pay over \$100 per year for a service they may not be able to afford and that may provide the illusion of learning by providing answers to homework, only to have the students show up at exams without any understanding.

Mr. Michael said that students asked for this type of service. It is not mandatory. Ms. Young said that students need the service. When students don't know the answer to a question or don't understand a concept, they go to the Internet. They are given step-by-step instructions to solve a problem. PC members are concerned that the next time students are stumped they will take the easy way to get the answer and not try to solve the problem themselves. Ms. Beale suggested that the bookstore and student success centers should instead be advising students to seek help from their faculty instructors, not from online resources. That way, faculty will know the problems that students are having and be better prepared to help them figure out the answers for themselves, rather than having answers handed to them by an app.

Students, Ms. Hoogland said, are not using the material instructors give them. Bartleby encourages students to take short cuts. Encouraging such services makes students even more afraid to do their own thinking. They need to think and persevere. Ms. Hoogland is concerned about the ethics of such a service that does not give students something that increases their confidence in their own thinking and what they can do. The service plays to their profound anxiety about failing and getting poor grades.

Ms. Young said Bartleby checks spelling, punctuation, and grammar choices. There is a thesaurus. It runs through two systems checking for plagiarism.

Mr. Roth is concerned that students coming out of high school don't understand what cheating is and thus do not even know when they are cheating. Mr. Michael responded that you cannot ask a question in Bartleby and get the solution and you cannot buy an exam or get an exam from last year's course.

Ms. Young will send a link to the Bartleby Learn website so Policy members can see what students see. Ms. Beale asked that PC be given the credentials of the people who respond to students' questions. Mr. Volz asked for a list of the subject areas that are covered and those that refer them to the Success Center.

Ms. Young apologized for not informing the Policy Committee about this initiative before it was promulgated. She will contact the Policy Committee in the future when new initiatives are contemplated. The bookstore's primary purpose in offering Bartleby Learn is to support student success.

Ms. Beale will invite Michelle Bruner to attend the December 2 PC meeting to talk more about Bartleby Learn and its promotion by the Student Academic Success Center.

[Ms. Young and Mr. Michael left the meeting.]

[Note: Policy met with Ms. Bruner on December 2 and received a different accounting of the Academic Success Center's view of Bartleby Learn.]

2. Title IX: Policy Committee has been working with Linda Galante, Associate General Counsel, to revise the university's policies covering Title IX, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Educational Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance. She offered three drafts of policies to govern consensual romantic/sexual relationships between faculty and students and between supervisors and subordinate employees. Policy discussed possible revisions. Mr. Roth will make changes and return the revision to the committee for approval before responding to Ms. Galante.
3. Report from the Senate President:
  - a. The Foundation Board meeting scheduled for November 6 was cancelled.
  - b. As reported in *The Detroit News*, the Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education withdrew accreditation from the university's neurosurgery program for medical residents.
- \*4. Approval of Proceedings: The Proceedings of the Policy Committee meeting of November 4, 2019, were approved as submitted.
5. Budget Planning Council: Policy Committee selected faculty to serve on the Budget Planning Council (BPC), an advisory body of representatives of faculty, administrators, and students. The BPC reviews proposed budgets submitted by the units that are supported by the general fund. The Council's recommendations are submitted to the President. Ms. Beale will contact the selected faculty to verify whether they will serve and forward their names to Provost Whitfield.

- \*6. Non-Academic Student Hearing Committee Panel: Policy Committee selected William Ortman, Law School, to serve on the panel in the vacant slot. Douglas Barnett, Psychology, Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Heather Sandlin, Pharmacy and Health Sciences, were re-appointed earlier this term.
  
  - 7. Pay Gap Analysis Subcommittee Report: Policy Committee reviewed the report of the Gender Pay Gap Analysis Subcommittee of the Gender Equity Working Group and sent extensive comments to the subcommittee. (See the attached memo dated November 21.)
  
  - \*8. Selection of the Chair of the Centers and Institutes Advisory Committee-II: Policy Committee selected Stephanie Brock (Chemistry, Liberal Arts and Sciences) to chair the committee. Vice President for Research Stephen Lanier agreed with the selection.
  
  - 9. December Meetings: Policy Committee members scheduled their meetings through December.
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As revised on December 3, 2019