

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC SENATE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE
September 27, 2021

Present: D. Aubert; L. Beale; P. Beavers; K. Dormer; M. Kornbluh; J. Lewis; N. Rossi;
B. Roth; N. Simon; R. Villarosa; A. Wisniewski

Guests: Heather Dillaway, Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; Marquita Chamblee, Associate Vice Provost and Chief Diversity Officer

1. School/College Proposal for Changes to Concurrent Degree Requirements.

Associate Dean Dillaway presented the proposal to eliminate the requirement that students have to complete 150 credits to receive a concurrent degree. The Board of Governors statute currently states that students who want a concurrent degree must complete 150 credits and all university, college, and major requirements. In some instances, that means taking additional 20 to 25 credits of electives merely to satisfy the high credit requirement. Under current rules, for example, students can get a B.A. and a B.S. degree only if they take 150 credits with many credits that are unrelated electives. The requirements thus block students from getting a double major in the subjects in which they want to get a double major. Sometimes students learn they need to take an additional 30 credits late in their course work, especially if they add the second major late in their time here. The schools/colleges want students to be able to complete two majors by taking the courses that satisfy the General Education, university and college requirements but without having to take additional costly credits that are not necessarily even in their fields of interest.

CLAS students encounter this problem fairly frequently. Sometimes they find out that they must take additional credits after they apply for graduation. Most of the time students decide to take the degree for which they have met the credits and forego the double major. Out of 494 student degree applications in fall 2020, 40 (about 8%) applied for double majors and another 7 (about 2%) applied for concurrent degrees. Out of 831 students who applied for graduation in winter 2021, 110 (13%) were double majors and another 20 (2%) were concurrent majors. People who are interested in health policy careers want a double major in public health and political science, but at this time that must be a concurrent degree, not a double major. Criminal justice is trying to pair with a range of other majors but because it is a specialized degree it can't easily do so. This proposal seeks to eliminate the inequity between the majors that students can choose for concurrent degrees and the credit requirements those majors trigger.

The CLAS Faculty Council and the Faculty Assembly overwhelmingly supported the proposal. It has also been approved by the faculty in the College of Education, the College of Engineering, and the College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts. The Dean's office in Social Work supported the proposal but has not yet taken it to their faculty council. The Mike Ilitch School of Business is in process of approving. Policy members suggested that the proposal be taken to the College of Nursing and to the Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences and that the proposers ask the School of Social Work and Business to take the proposal to their faculty councils as soon as possible.

In response to a question, Dillaway said that the proposal will not change any standard or requirement except for the total number of required credits. If a student's degree is across two colleges, the student is required to complete the requirements for both colleges as well as the

university's general education requirements. The student may have to complete 150 credits to do so; however, if the student completes all of the requirements with fewer than 150 credits but at least 120 credits, the student would be able to graduate. Transfer students would fulfill the same requirements.

Policy members supported the proposal and agreed to put it before the Senate for action at its plenary session on October 6.

Dillaway left the meeting.

2. Provost's Office Plans Regarding Certain Social Justice Action Committee (SJAC) Recommendations.

Provost Kornbluh is working with the deans to do cluster hires across departments and colleges that focus on topics around African American life and other diversity issues. The purpose is to build a more inclusive curriculum, more inclusive research, and more inclusive engagement. The university will seek people who are interested in and have a record of working with under-represented minorities. It is a cluster hire proposal, but the faculty will be hired at the departmental level. Kornbluh indicated that departments will be asked to identify the fields in which they would like to hire. If faculty recruits desire, they may also have an affiliation with African American Studies, but that is not required. We would hire across all levels. The proposal will take place over three years, funded by Provost strategic funding with \$1 million committed from President Wilson's strategic funds. This is permanent money. To encourage retention, the money will remain in the departmental budget if the new hire remains at least 5 years. If the faculty member leaves before 5 years, the money will be returned to the initiative. A large Chronicle of Higher Education ad, produced from information prepared by departmental faculty committees, will list the academic areas from which faculty will be hired.

The Department of African American Studies is one of those seeking faculty and will be treated like any other department in CLAS for the cluster hire proposal. Kornbluh said that they want people to feel welcome and that there are a lot of opportunities for them. Some hires will be interested in gender and women's studies or Latino/Latina and Latin American Studies, etc. Kornbluh would like to hire at least 30 faculty and maybe as many as 50 over the three-year initiative: the number will depend in part on the fields and level of the hires (entry versus lateral, etc.).

The deans also suggested hiring post-docs. Beale mentioned that some fields, such as law, do not have post-docs but do have visiting assistant professors (VAPs). In discussions with the Graduate School, the Provost would like to also consider 2- or 3-year post docs or VAPs, depending on the discipline. They would hire 5 per year, with no more than 2 allocated to STEM fields. These positions will be advertised through the Graduate School and available to any school/college/department. The post-doc/VAP would have to have an individual mentor in the school/college/department and the unit would have to buy in to the hire. These would be university-wide hires, but they must have local unit support.

Chamblee said the university needs to hire a director to oversee consistent training for faculty, staff, and students around issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. Beale asked that either Kelly Dormer or Pynthia Caffee, who co-chair the Senate's DEI committee, be included in the membership of the search committee for a director. Beale also noted the inadequacy of the online "training modules" the university has previously used—they can be somewhat insulting to those who are required to undergo such "training." Chamblee indicated she wants to have both

in-person educational programs and online modules. Certification or badging may also be useful in encouraging people to get involved. The university will likely outsource ally training for LGBTQ. Chamblee's office has a program budget, and she is looking for external funding to support some of the initiatives. Kornbluh prefers the word "workshop" to "training" as a way to facilitate discussion among the participants. Chamblee wants to leverage the expertise of faculty and staff who already have been involved in DEI issues for the educational programs.

Chamblee said that over the summer a task force created an educational and cultural initiative for African American students that mirrors the Center for Latino/a and Latin American Studies. The purpose is to meet the need students have expressed for an academic and a cultural space that is a part of the university community. It will be located on the 7th floor of the Student Center Building (SCB) which will become a multi-cultural engagement floor. There will be a place for students to hang out together and space to conduct programming. It will provide an opportunity for true engagement and a rich academic experience. The new space for the students will be open when the SCB is open, which is now until 1:00 a.m.

Roth expressed concern that faculty would have less access to the location on the 7th floor of the SCB. Kornbluh responded that the reason for moving Latin American Studies faculty is that their current space in the Faculty/Administration Building is inadequate for expansion of the program and does not encourage engagement. The African American Studies department will remain in its location at 5057 Woodward, but there will be advisers in the new 7th floor space. Chamblee added that they would have activities that would attract faculty to the center. Beale suggested that inviting faculty to make presentations might partially address that problem.

Chamblee reported that the DEI Council, which consists of 48 members, has been divided into 4 working groups, each engaged in detailed work around a particular area. One area is the hiring and retention of diverse employees, including both faculty and staff. There is also a student equity group, a strategic planning working group, and a metrics and evaluation group. The latter group will collect data to help schools and colleges determine if their work is getting the results they are seeking. The DEI strategic planning working group is to help schools and colleges develop a tool kit for their planning. The university strategic plan has a section on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The groups have to work together so that what happens in the working group aligns well with what is happening at the university strategic planning level so there is a conversation between the two in developing a DEI strategic plan.

Beale emphasized that the educational policy role of the Senate must not be overlooked in the process. Many of the issues under discussion at the DEI Council are educational policy recommendations, including any metrics or hiring procedures and many strategic planning and equity issues. There should be frequent communication between Chamblee's office and the Senate. Beale also asked that a liaison be appointed between the administration and the Senate's DEI ad hoc committee to keep clear the role of the Senate in educational issues. Recommendations should come to the Senate before they are finalized. The essential process is that these educational policy recommendations should come to the Senate's ad hoc DEI committee, then to the Policy Committee, and then to the full Senate for a vote before going to the President and Board of Governors, as President Wilson agreed at the May 2021 plenary session.

3. Approval of Proceedings.

The committee approved the proceedings of its meeting of September 13 as amended.

4. Report from the Chair.

a. Update on COVID-19 issues.

Kornbluh compared our response to the COVID pandemic to that of other state institutions. The University of Michigan is requiring faculty who are not teaching in person to go through their accommodation procedure and is denying accommodations to many, resulting in considerable faculty discontent. Wayne State has taken people at their word. Michigan State University has decided not to tell faculty when someone in their classroom has contacted COVID. Wayne State informs the faculty of any positive diagnosis of anyone in their classes. The student will tell their instructor, and the Campus Health Center will also contact the instructor. At this point, the university has had no clusters though there have been individual cases. We average 15,000 people on campus per day and have had 50 cases on campus. Four conduct cases have been filed against students. The positivity rate for Wayne County was 3.9%, but it has declined.

b. Winter Term Course Scheduling.

Kornbluh sent an email to deans and chairs about scheduling classes for the winter term. We are trying to do the same thing as for the fall term by encouraging departments to make decisions based on curricular needs, to make sure that freshmen and sophomores have some in-person classes, that labs that have to be in person are in person and at the same time accommodate the wishes of individuals. Kornbluh indicated he tried to assure deans and chairs that if they schedule in-person classes and the situation worsens, then we will have time to reconsider and will not force people to meet in person. The administration is also asking departments and colleges to increase their waitlists so it will be possible to identify areas of demand for online or in-person classes. The size of the classes will not be increased, but the information will provide information about student demand that will help us address student needs.

Many students who register for online classes nevertheless come to campus to participate in extra-curricular activities.

Roth said that hybrid classes is currently understood to be some in-person sessions and some asynchronous sessions, but some faculty have concluded that what students want is a combination of in-person sessions and online synchronous sessions. That requires getting an exception, which can be difficult. It was noted that the terms used to identify the different types of sessions are also confusing for students. Kornbluh suggested these issues be raised at the Academic Restart Committee so that Darin Ellis and the Registrar can address them.

The administration has not yet discussed the attendance requirements for faculty and staff on campus in the winter semester. The majority of non-academic staff have to spend some time on campus. Some employees have not complied with the vaccination requirement. At this point, faculty and academic staff who are working fully remotely are not disciplined if they have not complied with the requirements to be on campus. There are a few non-academic staff who have permission to work 100% at home and are not required to provide proof of vaccination. Naida Simon said that there is resentment among some academic staff because they are not allowed to work part-time in the office and part-time at home while others can work remotely 100% of the time. Members of Policy asked that such situations be clarified and clearly communicated to academic staff to address the sense that some staff are treated more carefully than others.

Kornbluh noted that faculty are 99% compliant with the vaccination requirement. Religious objections are under 5%. The administration is as serious about employees being vaccinated against the flu as they are about the COVID vaccination. The state legislature decided that if a university mandates that students be vaccinated they have to allow for religious objections or consistent objections to vaccinations, which means that they would not have received any type of vaccination in the past.

c. Student Disability Services Waiver Policy for Immunocompromised Students.

Kornbluh noted another issue that has arisen recently, in that the Office of Student Disability Services has suggested that students who are immunocompromised should automatically be allowed to take all classes online. Policy members discussed what was best for students and for the academic programs. The university must provide reasonable accommodations, but it is not clear that immunocompromised students should automatically be considered unable to participate in in-person classes. Rossi indicated that immunocompromised individuals, except in unusual circumstances, go shopping, go to concerts and other public events, and generally interact with people on a regular basis with proper precautions. It should not be necessary to provide a blanket waiver from in-person classes for every immunocompromised student. Policy members noted that in those relatively rare cases where a student is so severely immunocompromised that they cannot attend in person, technology can allow more people to participate in higher education. That does, however, create additional demands on faculty that must be understood.

5. Report from the Senate President.

a. LIS Review Committee Senate Representative.

Jaime Goodrich, Professor and Interim Associate Chair of English, accepted appointment to serve as the Academic Senate representative on the 5-year review committee of the Library System which includes the libraries, the School of Information Sciences, and the Reuther Archives.

b. Business School Dean Search Senate Representative.

Siobhan Gregory, Senior Lecturer, Art and Art History, accepted appointment to serve as the Academic Senate representative to the search committee for the dean of the Mike Ilitch School of Business.

c. Engineering School Dean Search Senate Representative.

Jennifer Stockdill, Associate Professor of Chemistry, accepted appointment as the Academic Senate representative to the search committee for the dean of the College of Engineering.

6. Policy Committee Liaisons to Senate Committees.

Policy members were appointed to serve as liaisons to the standing committees and to the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Committee. Patricia McCormick will be asked to take over as UROP chair in the winter term when Brad Roth is on sabbatical.

7. Information Systems Management Committee (ISMC).

Jane Fitzgibbon, Senior Lecturer, Department of Communication, College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts, and Robert Reynolds, Professor of Computer Science, College of Engineering, have agreed to continue serving as the Academic Senate representatives to ISMC.

7. Agenda for the October 6 Plenary Session.

Since Massaron does not wish to address the FY22 Budget at the plenary session, Beale will provide an update in her president's report. Included on the agenda is an amended resolution for essential workers to include by name various groups that were not named in the original, a resolution in support of the concurrent degree proposal that will be forwarded upon approval to the President and Board of Governors, and a report from Provost Kornbluh and AVP Chamblee on the planned actions on Social Justice Action Committee recommendations. The draft agenda was revised to show these changes and approved.

As Approved by Policy on October 4, 2021.