

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC SENATE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE
November 22, 2021

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

1. Proceedings of the Policy Committee Meetings of November 8 and November 15. The committee approved the proceedings as presented.
2. President's Report.
 - a. December Commencement. The four members of Policy Committee who will address the graduates at the December commencement exercises had agreed to make their comments in person if the other speakers were in person. Linda Beale had received a communication about the faculty addressing the graduates virtually. The faculty agreed that they would prefer to address the graduates in person. Beale will notify the administration of the decision.
 - b. Winter Enrollment. The weekly report of enrollment shows that as of November 22, 2021, undergraduate enrollment for the winter term 2022 is higher than for the same period for winter term 2021. Graduate enrollment is down.
 - c. Student Data Privacy Concerns. Beale has asked the Student Senate to appoint two representatives to the ad hoc student data privacy committee that Policy Committee is forming.
 - d. 2 Day Fall Break. Beale has not yet contacted the individuals PC had nominated for the committee to consider if the university should give students a break from classes in the fall because she is waiting for the committee charge.
 - e. Student Evaluation of Teaching. The forms for students to complete are only online this year and are being presented to faculty as an administrative decision to offer SETs henceforward wholly online. Various faculty and Senate discussions have concluded that online evaluations do not work well pedagogically. Policy Committee met with staff in the Testing and Evaluation Office several times about online evaluations, but the staff have obviously continued to push for what is administratively convenient even if not pedagogically sound. This just adds to the underlying problem that the SETs represent essentially a student popularity evaluation. Many students will not fill out the form. Students cannot fully evaluate what constitutes good teaching. After a class fills out a paper form faculty can discuss how the class went with the students, but online distribution makes that impossible. Online forms attract negative comments, and they create problems for cross-listed courses. Online is particularly problematic because the instructor does not control when the evaluations are done, and in some courses, that can be quite problematic. The AAUP-AFT now has two committees addressing issues about online student evaluations, which will make consultation more difficult.
 - f. Graduate School. The Graduate School is rewriting the bylaws of the Graduate Council. When the council approves degree programs they go directly to the Board of Governors for

approval. Other academic policy should come to the Senate after going through Council. Policy Committee will invite Dean of the Graduate School Amanda Bryant-Friedrich to a Policy meeting soon to discuss.

- g. Update on COVID-19. The positivity rate in Detroit has increased. There have been a number of emails about students not wearing masks properly and using false screeners because there are no building monitors in most cases and some faculty don't know that they can check them. Danielle Aubert noted that students and faculty who test positive for COVID should fill out the online screener even if they don't come to campus but most students may not do so. Faculty think there are likely more cases of COVID on campus than are reported.

A clinic for the booster shot will be held on campus on December 14, 15, and 16.

3. Agenda for Plenary Session. The committee reviewed the agenda for the meeting of December. The chairs of the Senate committees will be asked to give a 2-to 3-minute review of their committees' upcoming report on the future of higher education. Further discussion concluded that it would be best to remove the Student Code of Conduct item and hold that until the 2022 plenary session, to allow time for discussion and review with Office of Legal Counsel.
4. Age-Friendly University. An Age-Friendly University (AFU) steering committee is being formed to develop a proposal on how Wayne State could become an Age-Friendly University. AFUs are a network of higher education institutions working to promote age-inclusive programs and practices on campus and in the community. Policy Committee appointed Stella Resko, Associate Professor, Social Work, to serve as the Senate representative to the committee and she accepted.
5. Law School Review. The 5-year review of the Law School is slated to take place this year. Provost Kornbluh asked Policy Committee to appoint a faculty member to serve on the review committee. William Volz, Distinguished Service Professor of Business Law and Ethics, agreed to serve.
6. DEI Senate Committee Co-Chair. The Policy Committee selected Scott Tainsky to replace Kelly Dormer, who is resigning the Senate to take a position in the Provost's Office.
7. Information about All Committees with Senate Appointees. The Policy Committee discussed an issue raised by a Senate member that it would be helpful if there were a website with all committees appointed by the Senate, including the Article XXX committees. Members agreed that it would be helpful if the committees were posted, though wondered if the Article XXX Committees should also be posted on the Provost's website. Beale will work with the Senate's student assistant to see if the Senate website can be expanded to include the final lists of all the ad hoc and standing committees to which Senate appoints members, whether alone or in consultation with the Provost's Office.
8. Student Senate Access to a Student Listserv. The Policy Committee continued its discussion of the problem of administrative discretionary decisions based on content regarding Student Senate access to a student listserv. There was an article in the South End that suggested that the Student Senate had been denied any access whatsoever to a student listserv. Beale will doublecheck this with the president of the Student Senate. Members noted that the Student Senate, like the Academic Senate, is a representative group elected by a broad constituency—in the Student Senate's case, all students at the university. It is necessary for a representative

group to be able to communicate to its constituencies. Brad Roth pointed out that the right of a representative group to communicate to constituencies is quite different from the desire of other types of student organizations to communicate with their own members. The Office of Legal Counsel's apparent position that the Student Senate should have no broader rights of communication with students than other student organizations have seems to misunderstand the nature of a representative group compared to a member organization. Policy will continue this discussion, and Roth will attempt to gain some clarification about the current position from Office of Legal Counsel.

Approved by the Policy Committee via email December 1, 2021.