

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY  
ACADEMIC SENATE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE  
April 4, 2022

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

I. Proceedings of the March 21 Policy Committee Meeting.

The proceedings were approved as revised.

II. Report from the Chair.

Decanal Candidates. Provost Mark Kornbluh noted that the business dean candidate on-campus interviews are in process, with Policy having met with two of the four candidates. He stated that he was eager to hear the Policy Committee's views on the candidates and invited members to write him personally. There are five candidates for the engineering dean scheduled to follow in the next two and a half weeks, so he recognizes the time commitment that Policy members are making. Kornbluh meets with the candidates three times during the visit. These first two candidates have spoken highly of their meeting with the Policy Committee members and were impressed that a committee representing the university at large is so engaged, interested and caring.

There had been a technology problem in the conference room during the first interview, so Beale shared her notes of the interview with Policy. Beale asked Kornbluh not to interpret the notes as Policy's thinking on that candidate because the process is to develop a consensus memo if at all possible, highlighting each candidate's relative strengths or weaknesses. Jennifer Lewis and Noreen Rossi expressed their appreciation for the helpfulness of the notes.

COVID. Beale asked Kornbluh if the university will need to respond to the slight uptick in COVID cases. Kornbluh noted that the Health Committee was tracking such upticks and tends to take prudently conservative positions on responses. The Detroit/Wayne County area is doing much better than elsewhere in Michigan. Washtenaw County has had a significant uptick in cases. Beale wondered if there was likely to be an impact on commencement, and Kornbluh replied that it remains to be seen. There was a cluster of cases in the Theatre department. Beale pointed out that several students in her class were out with COVID, more than any other time during the pandemic.

III. Report for the Senate President.

Chegg, Course Hero and BartlebyLearn Letter. Beale informed the committee that the letter went out and that Kornbluh shared with her a thank you letter from David Strauss, Dean of Students. Beale noted that she also received several emails of appreciation from various faculty members. Lewis added that the Curriculum and Instruction Committee was pleased with the letter. Naida Simon noted that academic staff did not receive the letter. The group agreed that the letter should also be sent to Academic Staff.

Stephen Lanier as Guest for Next Policy Meeting. Beale was finally able to confirm a time for Stephen Lanier, VP of Academic Student & Global Exchange to come to Policy to discuss core facilities. She also requested a "sources and uses" presentation discussing all the different sources of money and how they have been used to support and stimulate research, ideally in a clear and concise format. Kornbluh suggested asking Lanier what type of committee or group helps set priorities and evaluations for these expenditures within his

division. Rossi recommended one of the questions be about bridge funding and other funding mechanisms handled by his office and what the processes are for requesting that funding and deciding among requests. Beale suggested Policy be prepared to ask Lanier questions at the meeting, and she will follow-up if it appears needed to get clarity.

School of Medicine Town Hall. Beale noted that a recording is now available for the recent School of Medicine Town Hall with the president and interim dean. Rossi expressed her disappointment, since it was all in very broad strokes: even with questions given in advance, the answers were less substantive than one would have wanted. For example, a question whether students need to quarantine for 14 days if they get COVID-19 was never answered. The meeting did serve a purpose in allaying peoples' fears and anxieties about the changes made recently, but it indicated that things would continue to be difficult. What was not addressed was the large number of openings in directorships for medical student training, as well as the chairmanships in several of the departments in the School of Medicine. The committee members agreed with Rossi's concerns.

Central Michigan University Article. Beale shared with the committee (and Kornbluh, with the deans) an item from *Bridge Michigan* focusing on CMU's enrollment declines and concerns about lack of adequate attention to the issue. Brad Roth noted misinformation in a linked article providing 'tips' to high school students about college planning, such as a statement that taking six years instead of four years to complete a degree will cost 50% more tuition and the advice to parents to consider the graduation rate when deciding where to send your kids to school. He pointed out the disconnect between the real world of higher education and this kind of commentary, since a school's graduation rate does not really predict a particular student's likely success: much more depends on the student's particular circumstances. Most students who do not go straight through in four years are taking fewer credits per semester throughout, often because of finances or family responsibilities. Even though inflation may increase costs each year, such students are not likely to have 150% the cost over six years compared to four years. Simon agreed, noting that a past survey revealed our students work an average of 30+ hours per week. They cannot reasonably take 15 credits a semester to complete their degrees in four years: if they try to do so, they will likely have lower GPAs than if they took fewer credits over a longer period. Beale suggested that our admissions and enrollment staff should likely highlight this issue. Jane Fitzgibbon wondered whether Central Michigan's poor enrollments would affect their viability.

Kornbluh said it was unusual to have such candor from a new head of enrollment management at CMU, since most regional institutions are having trouble. He noted that we are in fact in relatively good shape, in that we have more applications and admissions than last year (the latter up about 6.5%): if we can keep our yield near our past yield rate, we may be able to increase undergraduate enrollment. It will take a few more weeks until we have an answer, but we have invested more money to reach more students and increase applications, and we have streamlined the admission process. Our biggest economic hole from enrollment declines is at the graduate level: the business school has not paid the kind of attention to graduate education needed, the market has fallen out of social work and education, and the med school is not growing its master's programs. Only the law school is growing its graduate programs.

Villarosa suggested that the university has done better with messaging than the regionals during the pandemic. Because of the consultative process, the university did not have to reverse as many decisions, noting that Eastern Michigan University flooded the market with advertising, making early decisions that they thought were going to get people to come in but that required reversal later. Beale agreed that our restart process was a positive factor during these two years.

Rossi pointed out that graduate enrollment in the School of Medicine has seen a big decline, noting that her physiology class is half the size it was pre-pandemic. Regarding CMU and the subsequent articles about their viability, she reiterated that our pediatric department and emergency medicine department decided to

clinically defect to CMU. Where that leaves them, if that happens, may be interesting. Kornbluh responded that they are state institutions and state chartered, so they are not going to go away. Rossi added that over a period of 10 years Michigan went from three med schools to six without a rationale for doing that.

Lewis noted that the Academic Senate can have some impact on the 6-year graduation rate. Our prior efforts on getting the math department to understand the hurdles that it had created were worthwhile, but it continues to block students from graduating so she is reviewing those numbers with them to consider how teaching itself may contribute to the problem. Kornbluh added that the Gen Ed reform done several years ago had an enormous impact. What it took to graduate here before was not reasonable, with students averaging 160 credits to graduate. The graduation rate has gone up for several factors, including the Academic Senate's efforts on math competency and Gen Ed reform. Our graduation rate is on track for 59.5 %. He pointed out that the real goal is closer to 70 rather than 60.

#### IV. Communications and Required Actions.

##### A. Senate Speakers at May Commencement Ceremonies

The Policy Committee decided on May Commencement speakers as follows:

Ceremony I, Friday at 5 pm—Jennifer Lewis  
Ceremony II, Saturday at 9 am—Brad Roth  
Ceremony III, Saturday at 1 pm—Linda Beale  
Ceremony IV, Saturday at 4 pm—Linda Beale  
Ceremony V, Saturday at 7 pm—Naida Simon  
Ceremony VI, Sunday at 1 pm—Jane Fitzgibbon  
Ceremony VII, Sunday at 4 pm—Noreen Rossi

Beale will provide this information to Jackie so that she can communicate with each Senate speaker about specific arrangement for those ceremonies.

##### B. Selection of Alternate Appointees to University Academic Staff P&T Committee

Beale announced that three members selected in the early fall are retiring, leaving WSU or up for promotion and cannot serve on the P&T committee. This is an Article XXX committee, so if possible, Policy should choose substitutes for the three from the original spreadsheet used for choosing committee members. Three substitutes were chosen: Deanna Cavanaugh, Academic Advisor III, CLAS; Fawne Allossery, Academic Services Officer IV, Education; Simone Brennan, Academic Advisor IV, Medicine. Beale will let Jake Wilson know so that letters can go out from the Provost's office and Senate President.

##### C. Graduate Faculty Status Proposal at Graduate Council

The proposal provided to Policy members is the latest iteration from the last Graduate Council. Policy has long thought that the process should allow as much flexibility as possible at the departmental level, so that students can choose faculty in their fields of interest that they are comfortable having as mentors and advisers. In the past, there has seemed to be more of a focus on making graduate faculty status an exclusionary privilege and less on inclusiveness. This version is a clear improvement in that regard over past versions, though it still requires renewals and approval by a Graduate Council process. It is likely acceptable, since it would allow, for example, somebody from law to serve on a doctoral committee for somebody in CLAS in the department of economics. Rossi questioned whether people who currently have graduate faculty status will all be required to be reviewed because of the new categories. Beale said she did not recall the question of how the initial appointment would work being discussed: it could be that it would happen only when the

renewal came up. Rossi suggested that waiting until renewal could lead to a lot of confusion if there are different categories. Beale did not believe that had been discussed and can raise the issue at the next meeting. Perhaps those with existing graduate status that allows them to be on doctoral dissertation committees would automatically be in that status, but others would have to apply for the appropriate status when the policy is approved. Lewis noted that the proposal does allow each unit to come up with its own metrics. Beale said this is supposed to be more inclusive because in the past they have not allowed that, explaining there was a single prescribed metric and everybody had to conform to it, unless the graduate dean granted a waiver of the prescribed metric. This is an attempt to be more inclusive. Roth agreed that the current version is a significant improvement over past procedures, but he remains concerned with the Graduate School control and review processes. Kornbluh thought it would be helpful if the proposal included a preamble about deference to the department/discipline level. He also wondered whether newly minted PhD faculty are able to serve as chairs of committees. Lewis said they are automatically included because the dissertation counts as recent research work. It is faculty who have been here long-term but have not published recently that will be cut off from graduate faculty status. Beale added that the process is rather strict, requiring application and approval up the chair from department chair to dean to Graduate School, and the Graduate School has been enforcing the need for 5-year reviews.

Kornbluh raised the question about next steps. Beale explained it was a policy of the Graduate Dean that may be approved at the next Graduate Council meeting and, as an educational policy, it should come from there to the Senate. Roth spoke in favor of establishing the principle that the Academic Senate has the authority to pass on this, since it is clearly educational policy. Kornbluh and Beale agreed.

Beale stated that it would be preferable to have appropriate consideration at the Graduate Council level rather than rejecting their ultimate proposal. Clearly, this is an improvement over the past, and is an attempt to be more inclusionary and make clear that it is paying more attention to what departmental faculty think, the unit where the student is, and the work being done. Roth and Beale both questioned why graduate faculty status cannot be decided at the department level: if a department believes a faculty member is qualified to chair a student's thesis and the student has picked that person and has talked to other people, that should be sufficient. Kornbluh suggested that he meet with the Graduate Dean to discuss this proposal further, and it can be put back on Policy's agenda after that discussion takes place.

#### D. Making the Center Review Process More Substantive

Kornbluh said he understood that Policy has been concerned about centers not being reviewed on a regular basis and that work was now being done. He also pointed out that the Board's policy lacks an important step in such reviews. Under the current policy, a center does a self-study, the self-study goes to the appropriate CIAC-I or CIAC-II generic university committee, then that committee's recommendation comes to the Provost and Academic Senate for review. Expertise from within the discipline is missing in that process: the self-study, in many cases, is written by the person who runs the center. There is no opportunity to appoint people internal to the university, much less external to it, to add that expert evaluation. As provost, he is able to insert that middle step if Policy approves. Lewis added that her grant-funded work requires external evaluators and agreed that somebody should be looking at how we are spending this money and whether we fulfill our obligation. Beale agreed that we should have some expert perspective external to the center under review. She noted that Policy had been working around the margins on this issue, trying to effect some change for greater substance to the process for several years. Another question is whether Kornbluh's policy would apply only to the centers under the Provost's Office or also to those under the Office of the Vice President for Research. Lewis suggested we ask Lanier about this when he comes to Policy next week.

Kornbluh was concerned that various centers (e.g., Center for Urban Studies, Center for Peace and Conflict Studies and the Humanities Center) do not appear to have active boards that engage in this kind of oversight, and often have only one faculty member controlling all their activities. Roth said the centers do have advisory

boards, but Beale pointed out that there is only limited input from such advisory boards. She asked the provost if he was thinking of inviting either an internal reviewer or an external reviewer. Kornbluh believes our own faculty can provide useful feedback on a center's self-study before the self-study goes to the applicable CIAC committee. Beale suggested that it would be good for the full Senate to state support for this, and Kornbluh agreed to prepare a written proposal. Lewis added that it is important not to suggest criticism of any center so people do not view the proposal with suspicion. Danielle Aubert stated it was more of a departmental review and a good opportunity to see what else is going on in university.

#### E. Charter for the Center for Emerging and Infectious Diseases

Given the length of the report and the lack of time for a full review, the committee agreed to postpone discussion of this topic to the next Policy meeting.

### V. Reports from Liaisons.

#### A. Research Committee

Rossi discussed the Research Committee's report on research misconduct and the recommendations to amend the policy. The final decisions, other than those that went outside the university to the Office of Research Integrity in Washington D. C., resided entirely with the office of VP for Research and there did not seem to be any oversight to ensure the process is followed fairly. The committee recommends that there be a faculty body to review the process at various steps, to ensure that there is no bias or unfairness. Rossi will resend the report to Policy to be discussed at the next meeting. Kornbluh asked Rossi if the committee has considered recommending a common process for date-stamping, locking down and documenting research notes. Rossi responded that the VA encrypts everything, but (as far as she knows) the university does not have such a requirement in place. Beale and Rossi agreed that this should be discussed in the meeting with Lanier.

Another issue at the committee concerns C&IT's desire to have sole proprietary operations for security purposes. This has created some problems for researchers. The committee will invite James Wurm, Senior Director of Academic Research Technology, to speak on this issue. Kornbluh asked Rossi to provide specific examples and suggested that Rob Thompson, Associate VP Chief Information Officer, also be invited to that meeting.

#### B. Curriculum & Instruction Committee

Darin Ellis and Kelly Dormer presented the Provost's Office initiative for block scheduling for first-year students for input from the CIC. Beale pointed out the difficulties in students and their families finding appropriate information on the university's websites: it will be important to set this up in a way that allows students to explore the opportunities and possibilities. Lewis noted that much of the work will be through advising. Fitzgibbon added that our registration system adds additional hurdles: at this point, students will not recognize the block-scheduled classes as a special class. Perhaps they need to be marked with a different number or in some other way have a special class indicator. Kornbluh responded that the seats for those classes will be assigned to student so they should show as "full" for the regular registration process.

The CIC members were excited about the first-year freshman cohort and social experiences. Beyond having classes together, they included experiences such as planning trips and building interest-based activities that would make the group more cohesive. Kornbluh thinks the value of doing this should not be underestimated and Policy members agreed.

Aubert suggested there is a similar need among transfer students. Lewis agreed that this issue is a really important tension. Kornbluh informed the committee that Ahmad Ezzeddine, VP of Academic Student &

Global Engagement would like to do more for transfer students so there will be ongoing discussions there. Simon noted that Michael Quattro, Director of Educational Outreach & Transfer Initiative, came to student affairs to announce a transfer club for transfer students.

Another contribution from C&IC is the academic integrity work that Richard Pineau has taken on. Policy had said last year that it would be helpful to have an academic unit that could be used with freshmen students, perhaps in the context of the Wayne Experience course. Pineau has worked with an ad hoc group and joined forces with the library to develop a unit on academic integrity to figure out what they can offer and how that can go into the Wayne Experience course. Pineau has made the lesson available to reviewed. Beale added that this started with Roth's suggestions about the importance of talking about ethics, cheating, and plagiarism early on in the Wayne Experience course. Roth added that Pineau deserves great praise for how much he has done.

Finally, Lewis commented that the CIC is eager to try something with the Senate to set this shared culture around teaching and learning and how to build a shared vision on campus.

### C. FSST

Fitzgibbon reported on FSST's meeting with Nathan Chavez, Associate Director of Academic Applications, regarding Unicheck. She described the meeting as interesting and informative, though she was not convinced that Unicheck is the best plagiarism checker. The FSST Committee also plans to invite Jon Frederick, Director of Parking & Transportation, to the April meeting for an update on parking. Kornbluh recommended also inviting David Massaron, Senior Vice President of VP Finance & Business Operations so he can hear the concerns about parking on campus. He stated that the Board has approved various parking garage repairs as well as the sale of some existing parking areas.

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*Approved as revised at the April 11, 2022 Policy Committee meeting.*