

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY  
ACADEMIC SENATE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE  
August 30, 2021

Present: L. Beale; P. Beavers; J. Fitzgibbon; M. Kornbluh; C. Parrish; N. Rossi; N. Simon;  
R. Villarosa; A. Wisniewski

Guest: Danielle Aubert who will serve as the liaison from the AAUP-AFT Local 6075 to the Policy Committee when she assumes the presidency of the AAUP-AFT on September 1.

1. Approval of Proceedings.

The committee approved the proceedings of August 2 and of August 23 as drafted.

2. Report from the Chair.

- a. Provost Kornbluh reported that a record number of proofs of vaccination are pouring into the university. Instructions on how to get one's proof of vaccination from the state are on the university's website. Every advisor and every person in information technology can tell people how to get the information and to upload it. The faculty and academic staff have done well in submitting their proof of vaccination. Non-academic staff have not done as well. Supervisors are reaching out to their staffs to give them the information to submit their records. For the first two weeks of the semester, masks (courtesy of Ford Motor Company) will be available at the five larger teaching buildings and in every department and major office.
- b. Previously when students owed the university more than \$1500 they were unable to register for classes. The debt limit was raised to \$4000 for the fall term. If students file a FAFSA there will be additional financial aid available to them. The university will use money from the American Recovery Act to reduce the debt owed. More than 400 students registered as a result of the change. The undergraduate class has moved from 6% below projected to only 3.5% below what was projected. The administration is also considering using money from the American Recovery Act in a debt forgiveness plan for the winter term to encourage more students to return.

In response to a question from Villarosa, Kornbluh said that the funds to reduce the debt are from the student allocation, not the institutional allocation. Later in the year the administration will use some of the institutional allocation. The university cannot tell the students how to use the money they receive from the government. Rossi asked how the university was assisting graduate students. The Provost said the same offer was made to graduate students.

Roth asked if there were contingency plans in place for in-person classes if infections rise. Kornbluh said that the established university triggers will apply if infections increase. If necessary, all classes would be moved online. However, he noted that the infection rates in Michigan and in Wayne County are not now increasing. We will have to see what happens when large numbers of students return to campus.

- c. The Provost noted that the STEM building will be used this semester and expects that the building will help in recruiting students. A portion of the space has been assigned to chemistry, physics, and engineering. Some space has also been assigned to the art

department because of the flooding and other problems in the art building. Beale suggested that the Provost arrange the long-delayed tour of the STEM building for Policy so that we have a better understanding of the space's potential.

3. Report from the Senate President.

- a. At a recent meeting the University Foundation changed the fee structure on endowment funds. In the past, 4.05% was distributed to the particular sponsored activity and 0.45% to Development and Alumni Affairs. The change distributes 4% to the sponsored activity and 1% to Development, providing \$2.3 million for the new capital campaign. Beale supported the change. She thought it reasonable that Development funding should include a fee to provide part of the incentive for fundraising. The Senate's Budget Committee had discussed such a change as funding for the Development Office beginning several years ago.
- b. The Barnes & Noble Bookstore is asking students to buy their textbooks online. Low staffing at the bookstore affects their ability to serve students. The students will get their books more quickly purchasing them online. Kornbluh mentioned that there are similar staffing problems all over campus. There are fewer students on campus available to work, since only about 50% of classes take place in person on campus. There are also supply-chain problems.
- c. Beale also reported that it is now possible for students, faculty and staff to post their preferred pronouns, if they so desire.
- d. Beale mentioned the ongoing interest in having a university-wide ombudsperson. The ombudsperson for students resigned some time ago. Naida Simon in the Office of the Provost and David Strauss, Dean of Students, are sharing the responsibilities on a temporary basis. Beale sees some problem in that arrangement, since the ombudsperson should be truly independent of administration (other than for-cause termination of service) to provide the kind of advocacy and assistance needed. Members of the Faculty Affairs Committee and various faculty who contact the Senate office have suggested that the university have an ombudsperson for faculty to whom faculty could talk in confidence about their concerns. It should not be someone in their departments or an associate dean or someone in human resources who has little understanding of faculty issues. Ultimately, most on Policy believe we need a university ombudsperson, not just a student ombudsperson. The Provost believes the current approach for students is working but is willing to discuss the issue in the spring. In establishing such an office, the administration would have to work with the AAUP-AFT to avoid any overlap on wage, hour and working condition provisions in the contract agreement.
- e. Questions have risen again about policies for centers and institutes at the university level and within the schools and colleges and whether they are properly chartered under the Board of Governors statutes with clear budgets outlining the budgetary support received from the university. Beale noted the oddity of 6 centers being listed on the OVPR website and the OVPR claim that only the 4 that have charters require charters because they are the only ones with any budgetary support from the university. Parrish pointed out that all activities on campus receive financial support from the university. Kornbluh said that the deans are in support of bringing the issue into order. This issue will come up for in-depth review at a later meeting of Policy.

4. Agenda for the September Plenary Session. Policy Committee members reviewed the agenda for the September 15 meeting and adjusted timing to permit sufficient time for the PC election and resolution.
5. Standing Committee Assignments. Policy Committee revised the draft of committee assignments. Senate members will be notified of their assignments with the mailing of the documents for the first September Senate meeting.
6. Anti-Bullying Committee Report. In April 2020, the Academic Senate established an Ad Hoc Anti-Bullying Committee charged with the task of developing an anti-bullying policy. Brad Roth and Ricardo Villarosa reported on the work of the ad hoc committee, which initially developed an anti-bullying definition to provide the basis for a university policy on bullying. However, General Counsel Louis Lessem does not believe the university should move forward with an anti-bullying policy based on his interpretation of the recent lawsuit on the issue at Michigan (even though, as Roth reported, the court case was decided on a procedural rather than substantive issue). The ad hoc committee responded by shifting from a statement of policy to a statement of values and is currently gathering feedback from stakeholders about the draft report. The final statement will be sent to the Policy Committee and subsequently will be taken to the full Senate for action. Rossi raised a question about the draft report's reference to "any" electronic communications since that would seem to include external communications such as Facebook or Instagram, and others suggested the language could be made clearer. Provost Kornbluh generally supported the concept of adoption of an anti-bullying statement.
7. Campus Safety Advisory Council. Prior to the creation of the Social Justice Action Committee, the Policy Committee discussed the fact that the Michigan statute on public safety officers at universities calls for the universities to have a public safety department oversight committee. The statute, adopted in 1990, states that:

The governing board of control of an institution of higher education shall not grant these kinds of powers and authority to public safety officers of the institution unless, before those powers and authorities are granted, the governing board provides the establishment of a public safety oversight committee comprised of individuals nominated and elected by the faculty, students and staff of the institution. It shall include two students, two members of the faculty and two members of the staff. The committee shall receive and address grievances by persons against the public officers or the public safety department and may recommend disciplinary measures be taken against a public safety officer who is found responsible for misconduct in office.

The Board of Governors responded to the statute by treating the Campus Safety Advisory Council (CSAC) that was in existence when Michigan adopted the statutory requirement as satisfying the requirement. However, the CSAC does not meet the specifics of the law or perform the functions specified. It is a body that shares information, which is a good function, but Michigan law requires an oversight body with a particular makeup and charge. The Social Justice Action Committee on Policing made a number of recommendations that the Policy Committee and Senate should consider supporting. Recently, Jennifer Wareham and renée hoogland wrote to the Policy Committee asking the Committee to advocate for changes to the Board Statute to include oversight procedures that would fulfill the requirements of the law. Policy Committee will develop a statement to take to the full Senate for action at a future plenary session. It might suggest

that a subcommittee of CSAC satisfying the election requirements of the Michigan statute be created that will have a clear oversight function in accordance with the statute and would meet without Michael Wright (current chair of the CSAC) or Chief Holt (ex officio presenter at CSAC) or other non-statutorily required members.

8. Juneteenth. The academic calendar for the spring/summer term identifies June 20 as a holiday when no classes will be held. Simon asked if that meant staff members would have to work as had been done years ago before Martin Luther King, Jr. was a holiday for employees as well as students. Kornbluh understood that the Board of Governors made Juneteenth a holiday for all employees, but he will confirm if that is correct.

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*As Approved by the Policy Committee September 13, 2021*