WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC SENATE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

September 24, 2018

Present: L. Beale; P. Beavers; V. Dallas; r. hoogland; D. Kessel; C. Parrish; B. Roth;

N. Simon; W. Volz; K. Whitfield; A. Wisniewski

Guest: Darin Ellis, Associate Provost for Academic Programs and Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness

The item marked with an asterisk constitutes the Action of September 24, 2018.

1. Enrollment, Retention, and Graduation Rates: Mr. Ellis was invited to the meeting to provide information about the number of continuing students by level and the number of degrees awarded by level. The information provided by the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis covered the period from fall 2008 to fall 2017. The total degrees awarded in the 2008-09 academic year were 5508; in the 2016-17 academic year 6382 degrees were awarded. The increase was in baccalaureate degrees going from 2578 in 2008-09 to 3465 in 2016-17. The number of doctoral degrees awarded was 321 in 2008-09 and 384 in 2016-17. About 2200 masters degrees were awarded in both academic years. Mr. Ellis said that over the past four years the average number of credits earned per year by students is moving up slightly by .1 or .2 credits on average. A number of years ago students earned 10 credits per semester; now the average is 12.5 or 13 credits. Compared to many traditional four-year universities, we still have a large number of students who take 7, 8, or 9 years to complete their undergraduate degrees. Ms. Beale suggested that the Administration have superimposed graphs from year to year that show the number of students in a cohort who have completed their degrees and the number who continue. Mr. Ellis said that the University does not have a firm definition of either “student” or “dropout” so that it is difficult to know when to start counting someone as a dropout. If students graduate but then return to take another class, they are treated as continuing students. That is unusual compared to many other schools and best practices. Enrollment Services is considering putting a limit on the number of years that a person in that category would be considered a student. All we know is whether or not someone is enrolled. We don’t have leave of absence procedures. One step is to have a rigorous residency requirement for graduate students so that we know whether they are actually continuing or dropping out. For example, master’s students may not enroll for a semester or more even though all they lack is their thesis and they intend to finish it. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences established a maintenance class (essentially, a less expensive residency credit) for students who only lack a thesis, and this is being considered by the Graduate School for all master’s students. In developing the budget, we need to know the number of continuing students in a cohort minus those who have graduated. The Provost’s Office is developing a flow-in flow-out model.

Proceedings of the Policy Committee – September 24, 2018 Page 2

There was discussion about the problems students encounter and the personal situations that may delay their completing their degrees. Mr. Ellis offered to return when the new enrollment dashboard is up and running.

[Mr. Ellis left the meeting.]

Provost Whitfield would like to have predictive analytics so that as we approach registration we know how many students we’ll have and we are able to determine the number of classes needed. He would like to know when students stop out and whether it is possible to predict that a student will drop out based on the number of times a student stops out. If we can intervene when they stop out we might be able to help them continue. Ms. Simon mentioned that at one time there was a clearinghouse that tracked students and could tell whether they transferred to another institution.

1. Report from the Chair:
2. The Big Data workshop was held last week at the auditorium at the Mike Ilitch School of Business. Ninety people attended. A higher number did RCP.
3. The College of Education is beginning the search for a Dean. The slate for the search committee is ready. The College will elect the members of the committee on September 26.

3. Report from the Senate President:

a. The Board of Governors met September 21. As the faculty representative to the Budget and Finance Committee of the Board, Ms. Beale raised a concern about the change to the working capital investment. Although she agreed with the proposal to allow more risk, and hence more income, through a less restrictive “tier 3” of working capital funds, she thought the Board should maintain some control by imposing term limits and concentration limits, more generous than for the cash equivalents and fixed income investments but still ensuring that the Tier 3 equities or hedge funds are not too concentrated in a single endeavor that could lead to loss of independence, flexibility and added risk.

b. Ms. Beale is trying to schedule informal meetings with Board members to talk about the concerns of faculty related to issues that arise.

c. A Student Success Summit will be scheduled later in the fall term. Faculty are encouraged to participate.

d. A joint meeting of the Budget Committee and the Policy Committee has been scheduled for October 15 for a detailed presentation on RCM. Ms. Beale also plans to invite the leads of the RCM task forces to Policy Committee meetings to ask about their areas of responsibility.

e. At the Graduate Council meeting of September 12, Dean Mathur discussed the ways the Graduate School has taken on new responsibilities to work with the Schools and Colleges to enrich the graduate programs. One problem discussed was that the Graduate School had been left out of the RCM discussions. The central functions such as grants, training programs, and graduate assistants will need to be understood for RCM. The Policy Committee and the Budget Committee should pay attention to these issues.

Proceedings of the Policy Committee, September 24, 2018 Page 3

f. We’ll try to schedule a joint meeting of the Policy and Budget Committees with Vice President for Development and Alumni Affairs Susan Burns in late November.

\*4. Approval of Proceedings: The Policy Committee approved the Proceedings of its meeting of September 17, 2018, as corrected.

1. Sesquicentennial Closing: The Academic Senate will participate in the closing of the Sesquicentennial celebration. We will put some of our reports and a photograph of the current Senate members in a time capsule to be opened in 50 years.
2. Budget Planning Council: Policy Committee selected Cathryn Bock (Oncology, Medicine) to serve on the Budget Planning Council. Richard Smith (Social Work), the Chair of the Senate’s Budget Committee, William Volz (Accounting, Business School), and Linda Beale (Law) also serve on the BPC.
3. Code of Conduct: In 2010, Carolyn Hafner, Associate Vice President and Chief Audit Executive, initiated a process whereby an administrative committee prepared a draft code of ethics for all employees, including faculty. The Policy Committee and the AAUP-AFT objected to the code because of numerous concerns about overreach and violation of due process and academic freedom rights. The AAUP-AFT filed a grievance citing the Administration’s violation of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Ms. Hafner has again proposed that a code of conduct be developed in order to comply with federal law. Ms. Beale discussed the history and concerns of faculty with Provost Whitfield, noting that we already have various Board and University policies dealing with the critical research and fiscal integrity issues, as required by the federal regulations. That said, Ms. Beale would like to see a modification of the research misconduct policy that was promulgated in 2010, because it does not allow someone accused of research misconduct to have input into the membership of the inquiry or investigation committees. Mr. Parrish added that the University’s current procedures are a clear violation of due process because the accused cannot question the witnesses at the investigative hearing. Ms. Beale, Ms. Hafner, Provost Whitfield, and Vice President for Finance and Business Operations William Decatur will meet to discuss these issues.
4. Report from the Liaison to the Curriculum and Instruction Committee (CIC): Mr. Beavers, the liaison to the CIC, reported that the Committee discussed the general education quantitative experience requirement. The CIC members identified the issues they will tackle this year. They will discuss the cost of textbooks and the model where the entire class uses an electronic book, which can be purchased at a large discount. Open textbooks will be discussed. The Higher Education Commission requires the University to develop a set of educational outcomes for the general Wayne State University student. Darin Ellis will provide samples of what other universities have done. Mr. Roth, who chairs the CIC, added that they would discuss RCM, with attention to the issue of colleges “poaching” courses that have been offered by other schools and the problem of electronic cheating.

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Approved as corrected at the Policy Committee meeting of October 8, 2018