

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC SENATE
PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE
February 8, 2021

Present: L. Beale; P. Beavers; L. Lauzon Clabo; J. Fitzgibbon; r. hoogland; C. Parrish; N. Rossi; B. Roth; N. Simon; R. Villarosa; Rohan E.V. Kumar

1. PC Proceedings February 1, 2021

The proceedings for February 1, 2021 were approved as amended.

2. Report from the Chair:

- a. Wilson Announcement about Student Death. Provost Clabo noted that the announcement to notify the campus of a student's death was a sensitive issue and reflected an attempt to be respectful of family's wishes. The announcement was necessary to correct inaccurate chatter on social media. Beale noted that she had intended to mention this in her report, because it seemed very poorly handled: it came across as the university trying to excuse itself rather than a simple announcement of death and condolences for the family. Roth stated that he understood the intent, but that it did not work; in fact, it would have been better to have a statement of condolences. It did not actually correct the record because it could not, but it fed speculation about rumors that most people had not heard in an attempt to state that the university is not at fault. It was a PR failure, and not the first time in a similar situation.
- b. Classes. Clabo noted that the university has now had limited in-person classes for a week with the positivity rate remaining low, at 0.54%. The university is conducting mandatory random testing across all of those sections, for both faculty and students. The city of Detroit has a 3.8% positivity rate. There remain concerns about the two variant strains.
- c. Vaccine. Meanwhile, the Campus Health Center is providing second doses of the Moderna vaccine this week but has no new doses to offer. Beale asked why the Michigan Department is not providing any vaccine to the campus. Clabo responded that they believe they can manage mass vaccination efforts in the large centers. She suggested that people should register wherever they can as soon as they can, since the supply is unpredictable for everyone. The situation may be better when the J&J vaccine is approved, since it is a single shot that need not be kept super cold.
- d. Centers. Clabo indicated that she is working on producing a list of the university-and school/college-chartered centers and institutes, along with a historical record of reviews. Beale said that would be helpful: there were no CIAC I or CIAC II reviews in the last year, and there are some centers that appear not to have undergone the appropriate charter process.

3. Report from the Senate President:

- a. Childcare Update. Beale indicated that Loreleigh Keashley will likely be scheduled for 2/22, given some conflicts in arranging it earlier.
- b. One Health Call for Proposals. Beale noted that she was surprised to see this, since it is one of the Bold Moves items. OVPR has sent out a call for pilot proposals, but it is unclear where the funding is coming from. Clabo suggested an inquiry to Steve Lanier at OVPR to find out the status.

4. Fall 2021 Class Scheduling. The Policy Committee held an extensive discussion about the information that has been shared with schedulers and faculty about scheduling classes for the Fall 2021 term. Some departments are telling faculty that the schedule must be set up as in Fall 2019, with most classes as “traditional” and no consideration of social distancing in assigning rooms. Other departments tell faculty that the schedule should be set up as traditional, but only where the class can appropriately be socially distanced if need be. Some faculty are being told that they must teach face-to-face even if they feel that it is inappropriate for them. Provost Clabo insisted that the plans are clear that we expect to have more in-person classes but that they may be moved to remote classes. The terminology is “traditional, conditions permitting” and the “conditions permitting” language covers the lack of availability of an appropriate classroom space if socially distanced classrooms are required. Many members of Policy expressed frustration with this approach, since it will actually make it harder to plan, if there are circumstances (which the increasing evidence of variants of the virus suggest there could be) in which social distancing is necessary. Many faculty are expressing concern, since their class sizes have been increased (often doubled) in the remote setting, and if they are expected to handle the same class sizes in person that may not be possible with current classroom availability, especially given State Hall construction.
5. Senate March 3 Agenda. Beale noted some uncertainty regarding appropriate items for the March 3 plenary session. She suggested that we invite the Graduate Dean to talk about the challenges and opportunities for the Graduate School. Policy has met her and gotten a sense of her vision for the Graduate School, but the full Senate has not. Policy members were agreeable that Beale should reach out to the Graduate Dean to see if she would be willing to talk to the plenary session. Beale also suggested that it may be a good idea to have Loreleigh Keashley present on the childcare committee’s ideas. We will hopefully have a chance to talk with her in an upcoming meeting and can decide at that point.
6. Lecturer Non-Renewals. Beale noted that this topic is primarily a Union one, but worth having some discussion here regarding the seemingly punitive use of non-renewal notices. The CLAS dean intends to issue non-renewal notices to all lecturers. Last year, we discussed this problem with Provost Whitfield, and he took action to ensure that there were limited non-renewals rather than a blanket approach intended to give more leverage and more flexibility, which is an inappropriate way to deal with lecturers, since the non-renewal notice in the contract is intended as a protection, not a hammer. Non-renewals should only go out to those that may be let go if there are not enough registrations. They should not go to every single lecturer, including key personnel who consistently do a good deal of administrative work (including over the summer) and are essentially guaranteed to have substantial students. Provost Clabo disagreed, saying that the contract requires notice if the university is not going to renew and that the university “cannot predict with great certainty who will not be renewed.” She supported the practice as normative for various schools such as CFPCA and CLAS. Parrish reinforced the idea that this is a bankrupt personnel policy. Beale noted that these schools have data and they have a sense of the regular need: accordingly, it looks like administrative laziness not to do the work they should do to predict enrollments and limit the need for non-renewal notices, while blaming the Union for their inequitable approach. Clabo objected that it isn’t blaming the union since the process is described in the contract. Beale countered that the contractual process is intended as a protection to ensure that people get sufficient notice to find another job. But if notice is given automatically to everyone, it merely serves as a threat to get free work and be able to fire whoever you want later. Clabo disagreed. Parrish noted that this will clearly be a topic of negotiation in this contract renewal cycle, since it is being used primarily for budget flexibility.
7. Charge to Standing Committees on the Future of Higher Education. Beale had distributed for the meeting a revision to the charge incorporating comments from Senate members after the plenary session discussion. Beavers indicated that he was in the process of determining whether the library could provide the Chronicle of Higher Ed item mentioned in the charge, rather than having individuals pay \$129 for it. Clabo indicated that the Provost’s Office could support funding if needed. Beale suggested that she send the charge to the chairs so that they can begin considering, with their

committees, how they want to approach the issues, which might include working groups that would continue over the summer. At some point after first meetings have taken place, it might be advisable for the chairs to meet to discuss how to proceed in areas where there is overlap in interests.

8. Ad Hoc DEI Committee Charge. Beale noted that the chairs of the standing committees should seek volunteers to serve on the ad hoc DEI committee. Perhaps if each committee provides two nominees, then Policy can select the ad hoc committee from that group in order to ensure diversity of perspectives, ethnicity, gender, status, etc. Committees can also go outside Senate membership for ad hoc committees, if needed to ensure adequate diversity and representation. We will have to work on the bylaws amendment draft later. Hoogland suggested that chairs may want to volunteer, which would be fine.
9. Liaison Reports.
 - a. Student Code of Conduct Revision. Roth will meet with the office of General Counsel tomorrow and report back to us soon about that meeting.
 - b. UROP. Roth noted that the existing funding was sufficient for all of the applications this time so that apparently Lanier was not pressed to contribute more funding. Beale mentioned that she had noticed a STEM-only research funding proposal for undergraduates that came out from UROP in the last few days. It appeared quite ambitious in terms of requirements for rigorous studies.