

**WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**ACADEMIC SENATE**  
**Official Proceedings**  
September 6, 2023

**Members Present:** Mark Kornbluh, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs; Linda Beale, President, Academic Senate; Suresh Balasubramanian; Joan Beaudoin; Cathryn Bock; Maria Bykhovskaia; Pynthia Caffee; Stephen Calkins; Fernando Charro; Stephanie Chastain; Wei Chen; Stephen Chrisomalis; Daisy Cordero; Alan Dombkowski; Damecia Donahue; Paul Dubinsky; Sujay Dutta; David Edelman; Jessika Edgar; Ewa Golebiowska; Haidong Gu; Weilong Hao; Marisa Henderson; Lenuel Hernandez; Sean Hickey; reneé hoogland; Michael Horn; Arun Iyer; Christine Jackson; Kristen Kaszeta; Satinder Kaur; Pramod Khosla; Chris Kleithermes; Christine Knapp; Shelly Jo Kraft; Jennifer Lewis; Feng Lin; Cynthera McNeill; Cynthia Merritt; Georgia Michalopoulou; Bharati Mitra; Ramzi Mohammad; David Moss; Paul Neirink; Rachel Pawlowski; Richard Pineau; Kami Pothukuchi; Tamme Quinn-Grzebyk; Shauna Reeves; Robert Reynolds; Erika Robinson; Joseph Roche; Noreen Rossi; Brad Roth; Andrea Sankar; Gina Shreve; Naida Simon; Cheryl Somers; Elizabeth Stoycheff; Wassim Tarraf; Ellen Tisdale; Stephanie Tong; Le Yi Wang; Nicole Wheeler; Jeffery Withey; Hossein Yarandi; Dongxiao Zhu

**Members Absent with Notice:** Heather Abraham; Juliann Binienda; Erin Comartin; Brian Edwards; Erica Edwards; Lisa O'Donnell; Sean Peters; Ali Salamey

**Members Absent:** Chris Collins; Gamal Mostafa

**Guests:** Danielle Aubert; Amanda Bryant-Friedrich; Kimberly Espy; Ahmad Ezzeddine; David McGrann; Donyale Padgett; Mary Paquette-Abt; Tim Stemmler; Denise Taliaferro Baszile; Karin Tarpensing; Nancy Welter

I. WELCOME TO NEW SENATE MEMBERS

Provost Kornbluh welcomed everyone to the first Academic Senate meeting of the 2023-24 academic year. New Senate members were asked to stand as they were introduced and received a round of applause.

II. ELECTION OF THE 2023-24 POLICY COMMITTEE

Voting members of the Academic Senate elected the 2023-24 Policy Committee using the Zoom polling feature. (Members unable to connect to the poll cast paper ballots.) The 2023-24 Policy Committee members are: Linda Beale (Academic Senate President/Law), Stephen Chrisomalis (Liberal Arts and Sciences), reneé hoogland

(Liberal Arts and Sciences), Pramod Khosla (Liberal Arts and Sciences), Jennifer Lewis (Education), Noreen Rossi (Medicine). Brad Roth and Naida Simon are the two continuing members. Lewis was elected to the new three-year continuing term.

III. APPROVAL OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

It was MOVED and SECONDED to APPROVE the proceedings of the Academic Senate plenary session of May 3, 2023. PASSED.

IV. RESOLUTION AMENDING BYLAWS TO ADD THE STANDING DEI COMMITTEE

Beale noted under the Senate Bylaws, there must first be initial approval of a resolution at one meeting, and then the final approval at a following meeting. The initial approval of this resolution took place at the May 3, 2023 plenary session, and it is now up for formal approval. The Policy Committee treated the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee (DEIC) as though it would be formally approved in the way people were assigned to standing committees this year. Henderson (CLAS) is chairing the DEIC this year and is available to answer any questions about the DEIC's work. The resolution to make a permanent standing committee rather than an ad hoc committee of the Academic Senate was passed by show of hands.

V. REPORT FROM THE SENATE PRESIDENT

Beale welcomed new and returning Senate members. We have a new university president that brings a fresh perspective and a deep respect for shared governance. It is expected that she will be open, transparent and communicative in her dealings with the Senate throughout the year.

There was a great innovation to the Fall Opening in the faculty brunch that was held the last week of August. Faculty filled the Student Center ballroom, mingling and talking after the event; it was a good cross-disciplinary collaboration. This will be an ongoing event—a new tradition confirmed by the provost. If Senate faculty members did not make it to the faculty brunch, they are encouraged to come to the next one. It is an opportunity to get to know colleagues you may not otherwise meet. Additionally, there was a similarly successful academic staff get together and a more energetic New Faculty Orientation. For students, the Fall Opening seemed to build energy and enthusiasm as it went from event to event.

Start of the year academic traditions are taking place

today with the election of the Policy Committee, the State of the University message from the university president and a festive reception in the McGregor atrium after the Senate meeting. The reception is another good opportunity to interact with administrators and faculty colleagues and discuss what is coming up and what you see as challenges and opportunities.

Higher education is facing major negative forces in this country. In a sense, it has become a major political target of the right, as Lisa Corrigan noted in an August 16, 2023 piece in *The Nation*. This is clearly visible in what has gone on at West Virginia University, where tenured faculty are being fired and languages are being snuffed out as part of the curriculum, making it hard for the arts in the humanities to continue—a worrisome trend. At New College in Florida, the governor has essentially kicked the president and existing Board out in order to continue what he calls his "war on woke", which makes no sense at all because if a university is not an awake community, what good is it? The result is that academic expertise is denigrated as elitism and public money is funneled in some states in even larger amounts into religious and private schools. There are book bans, purges on area studies programs, elimination of DEI efforts and targeting of academics generally, which impacts the public's confidence in public higher education. Senate members are encouraged to be outspoken about these issues: from Beale's perspective, public higher education is critical to the future of democracy.

Beale noted the Policy Committee's proceedings provide a good example of the Senate activities that took place over the summer. Policy members have been involved in the decanal searches, most recently the new library dean, Paul Bracke, who will be joining the university October 15. One of the main functions of Policy is to serve as the Senate's committee on committees. The Policy Committee handles many committee appointments over the summer, including various university-wide committees, the Article XXX committees and the Senate standing committees. If a Senate member has an interest in particular areas of governance or would like to serve on a university-wide committee, please let a member of Policy know to keep you in mind as a potential appointee. Members must also be careful to avoid being overburdened with committee work. Beale noted appreciation to those who do a lot of committee work. In particular, she thanked Pineau (CLAS) for the work he's done with AI, noting that Policy is asking the ad hoc AI subcommittee that was created to continue its work through this year and to think more broadly about

university policies towards AI and issues that we need to be aware of so that we are all talking about this subject as the innovative, worrisome, positive process goes forward.

Another issue discussed was the IT security policy. Policy is working with C&IT and the provost to make sure that the wording is fair and understandable to faculty and academic staff, and the members have appreciated C&IT's willingness to listen to those concerns. The foreign influence and conflicts policy, already in effect in terms of required disclosure, needs some wordsmithing before it becomes a formal policy: it is important that faculty collegial relationships involving de minimis funding not be treated as something that must be disclosed. Another topic perennially under discussion is chartering and re-chartering of centers and institutes. Policy was delighted to approve the new Center for Gender and Sexuality, which came with a good proposal and an important purpose: members see that as bringing together research and resources on these issues from across the university. Two others have been before Policy and have not yet gotten Policy's approval to be chartered by the Board of Governors: the Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases (CEID) and the Levinson Institute for Brain Health. Beale expects the Levinson Institute will make a few revisions and be in a form that can be approved early this fall. Uncertainties continue regarding the CEID, so it has not resulted yet in a full-fledged proposal that can go forward as a charter.

Early this summer, Policy talked about the honorary degree process at Wayne State. At this point, there is a committee that makes these decisions that the Senate has no role in. Policy members would like to see more faculty involved and more of a shared governance process. This is perhaps a topic that some of the standing committees might want to take up, so that there is an enhanced opportunity for faculty to nominate potential honorary degree recipients.

There have been more and more cases of COVID recently, and Senate members might want to be thinking about protecting themselves with vaccine boosters, masks and carefulness rather than facing a surge of hospitalizations. The university's flu vaccine requirement stays but the COVID vaccine requirement has been removed.

Regarding the naming of the State Hall building, Beale pointed out that Policy was concerned that the Board of Governors (BOG) made a decision to name the building after our outgoing president without any attempts to

raise money in connection with that naming. That makes it hard for the university to seek funding in connection with the naming of buildings. An \$80 million renovation on an important building on campus that is named without any donor funding can be discouraging to new donors. Policy did urge the BOG to do a fundraising initiative or to name a smaller area such as a room in the Student Center, but they decided to go forward to name it the MRW State Hall.

Calkins (Law) commended Policy on the State Hall naming issue, which has been a longstanding problem here. On the topic of COVID, he commented that many faculty are dutiful in getting their COVID boosters. He asked whether the Campus Health Center (CHC) is carefully monitoring COVID status on campus and whether there will be an email advising when to get a fall booster. Provost Kornbluh confirmed an email regarding COVID and flu vaccines will be coming out this week. The new bivalent COVID vaccine will be in the CHC soon, as well as flu shots. At-home tests do not give accurate answers for many of the newer variants, so those who want a PCR test and/or the vaccine can make an appointment at the CHC. These will no longer be free, however, since the federal government is no longer supporting them. The policy is to charge faculty, staff and students' insurance, but no one's bills will be sent to collections.

## VI. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

### IT security.

As a follow up to Beale's point, Kornbluh noted on the continuing discussions around IT security. U-M, which has a very decentralized system, lost complete access to the internet for the first four days of the semester. Different parts of the university have resisted doing the type of security that we have done. We continue to face significant challenges from bad actors who are aiming at university computer systems, so this will remain a topic of discussion.

### Administrator introductions.

Kornbluh formally introduced interim Chief Diversity Officer Donyale Padgett, who knows the campus and has been deeply involved in these issues here. He also introduced Dean Denise Tailaferro Baszile from the College of Education. As Beale mentioned, Paul Bracke will be joining the university on October 15 as the dean of Libraries and Information Science. The interim dean is longtime Senate member Paul Beavers, who has been

doing a great job.

### State Hall.

State Hall passed fire inspection and will soon be receiving furniture. Before the month is out, classes will likely be moved into the newly renovated building. It was disappointing not to be able to start the semester there, but once faculty start teaching there, they will be thrilled. The delays were a result of General Electric supply chain issues on electrical and climate equipment: it was hard to finish the building using generators outside.

### Enrollment.

Kornbluh reported this year's class includes 3014 first-time students (FTIACs). This is the second largest class ever to the university, next to the 2020 class which brought in many students who came here rather than go to U-M, MSU or not start college because of the pandemic, resulting in a somewhat artificial number. This year's class is up 16% from the previous year. It is important to note that there was no compromise on admissions standards: 98% of these students had a high school 3.0 GPA or better. Those accepted with a lower GPA were considered carefully by the admissions staff. To measure the quality of the class, there are nearly 600 honor students, making nearly a 40% increase in that group. Honor students have a minimum high school GPA of 3.75 and most of them had over the 3.83 threshold for the extra Honors scholarship funding. The provost gave a shout out to both faculty and academic staff for their role in recruitment and getting students registered—it took teamwork to do this.

This is an incredibly diverse class with over 20% self-identified as Black compared to 14% last year. We are an increasingly attractive place for high performing students of color. In an environment that Beale characterized with attacks on affirmative action and what we do in universities, diverse student bodies want to come to a place where there are faculty and students like them, and we can see that in these numbers. Additionally, 10% of the entering class self-identified as Hispanic and 12% identified as Middle Eastern and North African (MENA)—the first time they were able to check this identity box. This represents a changing population in Detroit as well as significant effort to reach out to specific high schools. Our competitors for freshmen students are largely at MSU and U-M. We are pulling in a class of comparable quality to what MSU brings in, if not slightly better.

This class is taking advantage of block tuition; the first semester when a student is paying the same amount of money for taking 12 to 18 credits. Our new students came in understanding that. Many, as we hoped, registered for a full schedule to stay on path to a four-year graduation rate. First-year students are up 20% in terms of student credit hours. Transfer students are coming in with clear transfer pathways to graduate, taking a full schedule to graduate in two years. The provost thanked the faculty for making seats available in classes and for doing what was needed for a major transformation in how we charge students.

As a university of opportunity, we are especially proud of the number of Pell grant students we have. This year we can double down on that: over half of our new students will pay no money out of pocket for tuition and fees. The Michigan scholarship, combined with an increase in Pell grant money, has provided more economic resources. Our guarantee is that any family with an income of \$70,000 or less will pay no money out of pocket. Under the Heart of Detroit guarantee, applicants from the City of Detroit also do not pay out of pocket for tuition and fees. Remarkably, the university will make more money from this arrangement with this freshman class than it has in a long time because these students get more support from the state and federal government. The provost anticipates the discount rate going down to 31% from around 40%. The hired consultant who assisted us in making these changes was enthusiastic about the resulting trifecta: we outperformed our best expectations for numbers of freshman and transfer students, reduced what students are paying out of pocket dramatically, and yet increased what we are taking in to pay for the academic mission. That is truly an amazing story.

Finally, this first-year class is only about one-fifth of our undergraduate students. If we only grow the freshman class by 2-3 percent next year, there will be an even bigger increase because this freshman class replaces a much smaller outgoing senior class. Our yield rate demonstrated that many students last year did not realize they could come to Wayne State: they either chose a community college and paid more than they would have paid here or decided not to go anywhere. This year, there were changes (i) to admit students earlier that seemed to help increase the number of students from poorly resourced families and (ii) to eliminate an artificial cutoff by continuing to offer honors scholarships through June. If this is the baseline from which we continue to grow, the university faces a much better

situation over the next five years, with flat-rate tuition making it possible for more students to graduate in four years. The university had a 16% graduation rate 10 years ago, and we now have a pathway to a 70% graduation rate.

The provost indicated he would report to the Senate after Census Day to share student success numbers, but current indicators suggest we may be back up to 30,000 students.

As a public university, we owe a great deal to the Michigan state scholarship. At one time, Michigan was in the top 20 states in support of higher education, but the Snyder administration slashed higher education spending. The decision of the state this year to provide scholarships for students to go to college is a big deal: almost every Michigan university has increased enrollments. That is good for the state, the economy and for us in the long run.

#### Fall Opening.

The provost thanked Senate members who attended Festifall, particularly those who volunteered. It is exciting to see the energy that has come to campus. Approximately 270 faculty attended the brunch on Sunday morning, and we definitely will do more of that.

Kornbluh acknowledged the difficulty in moving in a large number of students in a short amount of time, but the comments on social media were overwhelmingly positive. There was considerable volunteer work from faculty and staff. Staff did an enormous amount of work over that week to make things work.

There were several social events for the students including a fire pit with s'mores on Friday night and a block party that included ethnic food trucks on Saturday night with over 2000 students in attendance—mostly freshmen who were excited to be at school. Not only was it a diverse crowd of students, but it was also an inclusive crowd of students—there was very little segregation by choice, a very different story than elsewhere in America. The University of Kentucky worked hard on DEI initiatives and recruitment of a more diverse class, but few Black students had gone to high school with white students, and only a fraction of white students had gone to high school with students of color—they all came from segregated schools. Our student body comes from the greater Detroit area, and a large number come from more diverse high schools than exist in much of the nation. Students choose to be here

because it is a place where they can be amongst people who are not the same as them. We really can be proud of the student body we have and why they chose to come here and the work they do here.

VII. DISCUSSION AND NEW BUSINESS

Due to a delay in the president's arrival to address the Senate, the provost took questions and comments from the floor.

*Member:* The university benefits when Midtown succeeds, helping to improve student and faculty recruitment. Faculty and students are encouraged to patronize area shops, restaurants and venues.

*Response:* There is a new brochure for Midtown put together by Midtown's non-profit organization that was given to all the new students. The provost will share an electronic version with the Senate.

*Question:* Is there an update on campus security, specifically door locks or an electronic system that would control doors for lock down procedures?

*Answer:* Campus police have the ability to lock down every building remotely, while still allowing doors to open from the inside. There is mixed benefit to this, and they have to weigh that decision carefully. We are now working with schools/colleges to determine the appropriate time to lock their doors: for example, Old Main now closes earlier than it did in the past. Most buildings on campus, outside of classroom buildings, are locked at 5 or 6 p.m., and most of those have card entries. Those that do not can be accessed by calling the campus police for access. Universities are required to report their crime statistics to the federal government, and the provost encouraged Senate members to visit the Cleary Act website to see how little crime takes place on this campus, especially compared to MSU and U-M.

*Question:* What is the plan to make sure everyone knows who their building coordinator is and what procedures are there for things like locked doors if you do not have a key and it is after hours?

*Answer:* We should likely bring Rob Davenport (AVP, FP&M) to address the Senate at an upcoming plenary. The police should be responsive if you are locked in or out of anything. Beale noted Davenport had agreed that having that information easily accessible is one of his must-do items. We are not there yet, so we will keep pressing on this issue.

*Kornbluh comment on updating the campus facilities plan:* Due to the high temperature in Bernath auditorium

during the meeting, Kornbluh raised the issue of building air conditioning systems. Because of the number of older buildings, progress on climate control is slow. Almost none of our systems do well in shoulder seasons: we have particular trouble with building temperatures in September and October. Once the switch from air conditioning to heat (or vice versa) is made, there is nothing that can be done in most buildings, with the winter season being the most frustrating. To help resolve some of these issues, more of the heat will be on the city's steam system, which is more reliable. Facilities will discuss this with the Senate as well as provide an update on the larger campus facilities plan developments. Clearly, the buildings with deferred maintenance have high bills for heating and cooling, so we need to find a solution. There will be a process with open faculty hearings and faculty representatives on those committees that will look at that. The goal is to have that update done by the end of this academic year.

The House committee on capital improvements recommended funding for a new law school building, and we expect that to be a \$30 million commitment. The university has committed to provide a \$15 million match from university funds as well as private money raised. There is a good chance that we may receive significant state money to help create a school of public health out of the fall budget operations. The state has pandemic relief money left that must be spent, so we have a request in for that.

*Comment:* There have been payroll issues with HR at the start of the semester. Many graduate employees (GTAs and GRAs) and part-time faculty were not processed into the system and did not receive paychecks. It is a crisis point for those who facilitate hiring new people.

*Response:* There is a systemic issue, in that we do not currently use enterprise-level software when we hire people. The departments send an Excel spreadsheet to HR, and HR manually enters data by hand so there is no way for the department to know the status. Both the provost and CFO Dave Massaron are committed to move to enterprise-level software so that anybody can check the hiring status at any time. That is a clear goal for this year.

*Comment:* International graduate students and GTAs in the department of art have a difficult time because \$20,000 is not adequate, and international students cannot work outside the university.

*Response:* Over the summer, a special committee has been considering ways to improve Ph.D. education. They have not gotten to the issue of total stipends;

however, they have some good recommendations to help Ph.D. students' progress towards degrees. Kornbluh is cognizant this is a larger issue we must face moving forward. It is not just an issue for international students: it has become a national issue regarding support for graduate students. If we raise stipends, does that mean we cut the number of students? What does that mean in different areas? U-M had a long-term strike and they settled with large increases in baseline salary for the students, and the individual colleges will reduce the numbers of Ph.D. students significantly to pay for that. This has to be a larger discussion with faculty.

*Question:* If there is money to build a new law building, how do we allocate money and what are our priorities? There have been budget presentations to the Senate before, and we hear about issues with employees, the need for software and our buildings being in disarray. Is there a way to ask the state to reallocate money to operations instead? The Matthaei building hosts 700 students in classes, and as we are thinking about constructing new buildings, perhaps we can set up an endowment for maintenance so that we can continue to serve students in the buildings.

*Answer:* Significant funding has been reallocated to operations. \$18 million has been spent on elevators alone over the last 16 months, addressing a significant number of elevator problems. The Matthaei building is a high priority: we are assessing what we need and how to deal with that building. There are opportunities to fundraise for a much better intramural facility. As noted, we will have a Senate discussion with Massaron about long-term physical plant plans. He has certainly heard loud and clear the issues with deferred maintenance. Part of the facilities plan is to choose which buildings we invest money in and which we do not. The law building is one of the most problematic on campus, next to Scott Hall for which we received a \$100 million commitment from the state towards a new building. We must have open discussions to plan to replace buildings that do not work and understand how much is spent on buildings that do not work. Facilities has worked hard to build some software that can make this transparent for everyone. For example, there is now a website posting in real time which elevators are working and which are not, and what our plans are for elevators. All the elevators will be replaced in the Towers dorms, but it will take three years to complete. The Anthony Wayne Drive apartments have an elevator system that does not work, and nobody can make it work. FAB has three elevators, but when it was built, they put in a card that was designed to run four elevators. Even though they fixed all three, they can only run two at a time because you

cannot get a card from the 1980s to rerun that. Heating and cooling in the buildings are even more complicated. Out of the updated facilities plan, there will be a transparent plan that will indicate our goal and timetable for each building. It will be public, and everyone will have the ability to be heard in the process.

Beale added that the Senate's Facilities, Support Services and Technology Committee (FSST) discusses these issues. There is an annual capitol report that the Policy Committee, FSST and the Budget Committee have input into. There are various ways to become better informed and to have a chance for a voice about what the priority should be through the Senate standing committees.

*Question:* The Policy proceedings discussed center proposals and noted a concern that faculty might seek other homes if approval of the CEID charter is too delayed. Are there any updates?

*Answer:* We are in the final process of working these out: they are not going elsewhere. The prior model of research centers resulted in removal from academic departments, so we are moving to a different model where faculty have academic appointments—not just fallback appointments—and the economics are clearer with the role of OVPR in providing some level of support for the centers to be transparent and efficient.

*Question:* The First-year Interest Groups (FIGs) rolled out in the Classical & Modern Languages, Literature and Cultures department were very problematic due to the infrastructure, and classes were canceled because there were spots set aside for the FIGs. There is concern that FIGs are developed on the back end of the process, so information is hidden, and it is not obvious there are available seats. Are there any updates or plans to change that?

*Answer:* We have more FIGs than ever before. We must do a better job of how they are integrated in orientation. We are starting to work with advisors in every college about scheduling students, not in FIGs, but pre-scheduling freshman students into a set of classes that are appropriate for the major in those colleges. It works better to use advisor and department chair expertise in recommending classes for first-year students. It provides a better start of the semester and allows departments to plan better. Kornbluh agreed with the need to change the infrastructure and prioritize those.

*Comment:* There have been numerous complaints about our food contractor on campus and the administration has expressed its frustration. As part of that arrangement,

Aramark promised to improve staffing, quality and changes in branding (313 Dining). They are now fully staffed, and we have a campus catering manager who meets weekly with Patricia Romer (AVP, Business Ops.), who oversees dining and reviews catering orders. There have been requests for clear labeling (e.g., halal) and better quality and quantity of food in the Towers cafeteria.

Food quality is important in filling our dorms. We are at 84% occupancy and there appears to be a path back to full occupancy next year. One strategy is to house underclassmen on the north side of campus near food rather than in University Towers. University Towers, the least expensive housing, can then serve graduate and professional students, with people able to share rooms because it is more like an apartment building and closer to the medical campus. In doing this, we may be closer to 95% occupancy next year.

*Question:* Historically, one of the problems has been the high cost of catering on campus. Is there any chance Aramark will offer more reasonable pricing?

*Answer:* Some of those costs are related to plate and utensil rental, so we are considering buying to eliminate rental fees. Aramark also pays union wages, whereas most of our other vendors do not. Another issue is volume—the lower the volume, the higher the costs. A policy is in place to allow the use of an outside vendor without additional permission if the cost is under \$1,000. We are also aware of the importance of supporting small businesses and do so by bringing food trucks to campus. Aramark has a monopoly on the larger events. If they offer a price that is outrageous, the provost encouraged Senate members to alert him. They usually come in with a lower price when he asks.

VIII. STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY ADDRESS

President Espy thanked Senate members for the opportunity to address them and noted her amazing first month learning about the campus and the work of our faculty and staff. She was appreciative of the work of the Presidential Search Committee and thanked the provost for facilitating her meetings across the campus.

She is excited that this is one of the largest classes Wayne State has welcomed, with diversity as a reason students chose to come here. They want to be in an environment where they can learn from students and with students who are different from themselves and more importantly, to become richer for it, not only

personally, but also better prepared for what comes next for them—a truly multidimensional, multi-mosaic world. She has been impressed with the faculty and staff who are represented here that drive our world class teaching and service mission that benefits Detroit and the region. She looks forward to working with the Senate as we leverage accomplishments to become that premier urban research university that is best in class for advancing social mobility. It is really this mission and the aspiration of this institution that drew her here.

Espy discussed her own values, centered around providing access to and success in a high-quality, Carnegie R1 education for those who are traditionally underserved by higher education, with faculty and staff that are second to none. This university has been around for 155 years, and she anticipates it will be around at least 155 more: we will continue to serve generations from the richly diverse mosaic of backgrounds who have been able to attend Wayne State and then go on to become productive, engaged citizens and community leaders. She is struck by the distinctive research that is conducted here across disciplines that benefits communities, impacts policies and changes our understanding of the world. We should talk more about that value and impact of that research for our students. Our students are learning at the frontiers of discovery, directly from world experts. For students at other universities, that knowledge appears in textbooks that take a long time to develop. Students here work alongside the faculty in undergraduate research and scholarship activities where they learn about the inquiry process, how to ask questions, how to gain systematic information, solve problems, communicate outcomes and team with others. All those are marketable skills that prepare them for a bold future as a productive citizen. This mission of transformative social and economic mobility is one that she has championed throughout her career and is excited to do so here.

Urban research universities have a tremendous opportunity in that they are indelibly tied to the cities that they serve. There is a symbiotic relationship that the university cannot excel without Detroit excelling; and Detroit, quite frankly, cannot excel without Wayne State excelling. It is our life-altering innovations, breakthroughs in research, our community health services and new businesses that spin off from TechTown that are driving the well-being of Detroit. The city's diversity, culture, business ecosystem and spirit enrich our community like nothing else. Quite simply, Wayne State fuels Detroit with a talented workforce, and then we power the economy of the future. So again, we

are inextricably linked. To reach our goals for social mobility, we have to pay as much attention to what comes next as we have to the outreach, access and success that we have achieved to date.

Espy noted that she in talking to people almost everyone has some connection to Wayne State. It is always a good story of how they came here to study with world-class faculty and do wonderful things. That is an asset that we should not take for granted but can further leverage. If we systematically organize and coordinate our activities, we can make these efforts to connect to what is next visible in a way that can in turn bring more resources to the university.

As an active researcher, Espy is guided by the fundamental principles that undergird new discovery: collaboration with colleagues who bring different ideas and capacities to the table. There is no question that we are better, smarter, more creative when we work together. She is an advocate for the role of shared governance: her leadership path started in the faculty senate, where faculty learn to make a difference beyond their own programs and research. She celebrates the role that shared governance plays in the leadership of the university and is looking forward to collaborating with the Academic Senate. In particular, she noted she is pleased to have Beale represent the Senate's voice in the new University Leadership Council. This is a forum that the provost and VP for Research will lead to create discussion among executive, academic and shared governance leadership.

In the spirit of collaboration, the president earlier invited the campus community to share what makes them proud of Wayne State. She gained insight from these messages, what we do here that shines as well as some ideas that we might pursue in our future. For example, Espy has asked Beale and interim VPR Tim Stemmler to pick up the work that the Senate did last year on AI more broadly to think about how we as a community can develop ideas for how Wayne State can harness these technologies to advance our institutional position across disciplines and in our operations. What can we do that is distinct from others across disciplines? This is not just about ChatGPT and cheating, it is more broadly about how these technologies disrupt and change our future. We should be a part of that here at Wayne and add our distinctive imprimatur.

In conclusion, Espy asked to hear from members of the Senate regarding their thoughts about priorities for the upcoming year and how she can incorporate those

priorities into her thinking.

hoogland (CLAS) shared that a significant priority for her this year is to establish a faculty club. Espy noted that goes back to her comment about collaboration. If you have a place and a space where you can gather and share ideas in a comfortable way, it can make a difference. In San Antonio, they had a very nice academic center that served that role. It was a nice, light, open space with good coffee. If we are going to think about something like that, we would need a commitment to use it: the biggest worry is that it sounds great in theory, but no one goes there. In needs to be put in the middle of campus where people typically gather. She believes in those kinds of spaces and can understand why that would be a priority.

Pothukuchi (CLAS), who teaches an asynchronous online class, asked for the president's views on online education. She agreed that online options are valuable. As a faculty member, she looks for ways to make online richer. Our online classes fill up first because they are convenient: students do not have to drive to campus and park. For some students who experience challenges, it is also a way for them to hide. The newer cohort of students who are coming from high school over the last few years have experienced the highs and lows online because of the pandemic. Is there a systematic way to connect with those students who are taking online classes and share expectations, norms and perhaps some coaching as well?

Espy looks forward to learning from faculty and shared observations from elsewhere. The provost would probably want to note the services offered through the Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL). Who would have thought at the start of the pandemic that within a week an entire university could pivot to a new format that most had never used before? When she was provost and had to do that, she thought her university was going to close. How could that work? But these tools were available way before the pandemic, we just had not used them in part because faculty are so pressed for time. You typically incorporate something as there is need, and there was need at the start of the pandemic. There are many lessons to be learned from that. First, we know that bad online pedagogy is bad. If it is not interesting, engaging, thoughtful and organized around learning objectives that matter, students are not going to find it appealing. She would argue that bad in-person teaching is bad, too. We also know that our students have many competing influences in their lives. More than half of our students work outside the classroom, and sometimes



they are working long hours. They need to set school around life rather than centering life around school: we want to be able to serve those students as part of our mission around social mobility. Yet you can have students taking the same class with very different motivations, skill sets and preparation to be able to take full advantage of online. Some students are more organized and self-directed than others. There is not going to be a one-size-fits-all that is perfect for every student. That is also not true for face-to-face instruction, yet because that was our way of doing things in the past, that became the accepted standard. Fundamentally, Espy suggested there can be outstanding online and hybrid pedagogy, and there are some benefits of those modalities that cut differently for different subjects. For example, the vast majority of medical students' curriculum is now online. Does that mean that is the best way? No. The faculty have a good sense of their skills and abilities, but we at the university need to provide the support, help, instruction—the kind of methodology that can help you think through what is the best way to teach. There is not a one-size-fits-all answer, just like we do not have a one-size-fits-all student. It also differs depending on whether there can be multiple sections (introductory math classes can have sections for those planning to use math further and for those just taking a core requirement) versus electives where there may be only one section. What are our objectives? How we map that on to what we are trying to accomplish is important.

Espy is hopeful that OTL is helpful in assessing the actual impact, providing some guidance on what faculty might do differently. As a scientist by training, she supports trying something to see how it goes and collect data. Did students feel like they learned more? Granted, sometimes the feeling that they learn more is not the same as actually learning more, so you have got to pay attention, but that is data, too. That tells you something about engagement that can be helpful. That has been one of the surprising benefits of the pandemic: it has opened up new ways of doing things that we had not considered before.

Robinson (CFPCA) lived in Arizona for over 20 years but came back to Michigan to Wayne State. The Department of Theatre and Dance is a smaller department compared to others, but it is rich in culture and makes up a very significant part of Wayne State's presence, especially in the performing arts world. She is hopeful Espy will see that.

Espy responded that she looks forward to experiencing firsthand our arts programs, including theatre and dance,

art and music. The full range of programs and pathways offered students is a wonderful part of the university. She has been impressed with the Cass arts corridor, one of her favorite places to walk because of the architecture, rich culture and the cool shops and restaurants. That, to Robinson's point, enriches our experience as humans, and actually is the "special sauce" of what universities are. Her role as a president is to advocate for the university and make clearer to our external community—whether decision makers in Lansing and the federal government or stakeholders here in Detroit—the importance of supporting those programs so that we can facilitate continued growth. Growth does not always mean getting bigger: it can sometimes mean having a greater impact. She encourages the Senate to think not only about the number of tenure lines but also how we make a difference that matters for our students and our city.

Donahue (Libraries) brought Espy's attention to the work the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council and the interim chief diversity officer. Perhaps the president could provide support by sending an email to encourage people to take the upcoming climate survey. It heartens people who work here to know that the people in higher positions care about the same things.

Espy noted that she is aware of the DEI Council, having read the Social Justice Action Committee report. She was pleased to see the transition to a permanent DEI Council that connects with school/college-level councils that are developing diversity action plans for their units. A similar model was used at the University of Oregon, and she liked how it struck a nice balance with a local plan that reflects local interests. Situations can look different in the medical school compared to the law school, so plans need to be specific to the local context. At the same time, if an institutional body does not push for progress, local units can get off track. She is pleased to see the model used at Wayne. She is also enthusiastic about the climate survey. As a second survey, there can be comparative results. Much has happened since the last survey, so it will be interesting to see what has transpired between the two. Survey data is useful, but it also has drawbacks: it will provide information that the community can talk about. Maybe there is improvement at the university level, but not in a specific college. It helps to understand and to form the basis of collective action. If the DEI Council would find this is useful, when we send out the climate survey, an email can definitely come from the provost, CDO and the president urging participation. These surveys provide critically important information that can be a catalyst for

institutional and local action.

Calkins shared two things that delighted him when the president was appointed. First, members of the search committee were enthusiastic about Espy's appointment. Second, Espy had taken her prior university to R1 research university status. Faculty like the fact that this is an R1 university. That has been important to him from the beginning of his time here. He wished the president luck in maintaining that R1 status because of the many challenges facing our medical school.

Espy responded that a particular joy at the University of Texas at San Antonio—a university much like Wayne though the demography is different—that it was focused on access and student success and worked on becoming an R1 institution. That was different than her experience at the University of Arizona—a top 25 institution with a very large research profile. She noted that she thinks of research as being much broader than just externally funded research, since it includes scholarship and creative activity, discovery and application. Sometimes that is missed: people count dollars in part because it is easy to count. Externally funded research alone does not represent the outstanding research scholarship and creative activity that happen at an R1 university. That is, universities that have a high output of funded research also have a high output of outstanding scholars across the institution. That is what an R1 institution is actually about. Sure, there are funding challenges with respect to the current federal landscape. In fact, Espy noted conversations with some of our congressional representatives regarding the possibility of a federal government shutdown and the resulting widespread impacts. At the same time, we have outstanding scholarship, research and creative activity across this R1 institution. She noted her commitment to continuing to advance our progress and hiring outstanding faculty who will join the outstanding faculty we have to do wonderful things. She is cautiously optimistic that there is even more we can do, particularly by working together. Collaboration brings outstanding creativity, and that is how cool things happen, whether it is externally funded or not.

Cordero (Financial Aid) raised the issue of the significant FAFSA overhaul for 2024-25. There was an email sent to the presidents of universities asking to support and help the financial aid office in spreading the word about the change that reduces 140 questions to 36. Historically, they considered wages, assets, number of people living at home and family support, but that is now removed from the formula. It will cause discomfort,

but the financial aid team will make it work.

Espy is aware of some of the changes. The Department of Education has talked about this for some time, but implementation was delayed. The change is a benefit for families. Her understanding is that it will result in students typically being eligible for more financial aid, which will work well for Wayne State where there is unmet student need beyond the provided financial aid. Not surprisingly, we have processes that are built on the old questionnaire, and it is challenging to change the mindset.

The provost thanked President Espy, and members were reminded of the reception following the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Linda M. Beale  
President, Academic Senate