

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC SENATE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE
September 25, 2023

Present: D. Aubert; L. Beale; S. Chrisomalis; r. hoogland; P. Khosla; M. Kornbluh; N. Rossi; B. Roth; S. Schrag

Absent with Notice: J. Lewis; N. Simon

Guests: Boris Baltes, Sr. Assoc. Provost, Faculty Affairs

I. APPROVAL OF POLICY PROCEEDINGS

The proceedings of the September 11, 2023 Policy Committee were approved as amended.

II. DISCUSSION: INCLUDING NON-TENURE-TRACK FACULTY ON P&T

Baltes was invited to Policy to discuss the question of non-tenure-track faculty on promotion and tenure committees in schools and colleges. Baltes indicated that the collective bargaining agreement allows departmental promotion and tenure committees to include non-tenure track teaching, research or clinical faculty for attending, receiving materials and voting on those non-tenure-track promotional decisions. The question is whether the school and college promotion and tenure committees may be expanded on a school/college faculty decision basis, to include non-tenure-track faculty for those same purposes.

The general consensus of Policy was that it would be acceptable to allow but not mandate the school and college promotion and tenure committees to include a non-tenure-track faculty member for the discussion of materials and vote on non-tenure track promotions.

III. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

3N committees for research and clinical faculty: Provost Kornbluh announced he would like to establish 3N committees for research and clinical faculty to advise on non-tenure-track clinical and research promotions. The deans, for example, think clinical faculty are so different that there should be a college-level process. The School of Medicine already has its own rules for clinical faculty promotion that might provide guidelines for the entire university. Danielle Aubert indicated she has talked to clinical faculty who have been frustrated with the selective salary process, especially those in nursing and pharmacy.

Kornbluh also noted a concern about building a culture of promotion. Should that be a part of this clinical and research non-tenure-track committee process or a separate process? Pramod Khosla suggested a separate discussion with input from different sources would be important because it is a significant cultural issue.

Kornbluh supported the idea of two 3N committees. Policy will work with the administration to come up with an overall selection of faculty from different colleges to ensure full coverage.

Anti-Muslim preachers on campus: The group of anti-Muslim preachers returned to campus for two days last week. After speaking with Muslim students, the administration sent out a notice to all students in advance of their arrival. In the past, plainclothes cops were used but this year

students requested a larger, visible police presence. The preachers were kept behind a barrier and the police were available to escort students to class if they felt threatened. CAPS was on call and a discussion took place in the Student Center. Rather than arguing with the preachers, students made light of their presence: a jazz group played music over them for hours; students were blowing bubbles and drawing with chalk. The provost thought the event went well.

Aubert heard that faculty did not know about the event, and students were unsure about classes. To eliminate confusion, she suggested sending faculty a copy of the email that went out to students. Kornbluh agreed to do that.

VPR search: The vice president for research search is now moving forward. The search committee has scheduled a meeting to choose semifinalists and determine dates for ‘airport’ interviews. The president wants to have public campus meetings, ideally bringing a number of candidates to campus before Thanksgiving.

CLAS review: Noting the error in the original posting on the BOG website, Kornbluh announced that College of Liberal Arts and Sciences dean Stephanie Hartwell was renewed for three years. The provost met with the review committee and with the faculty of CLAS. It was a complicated and very detailed review that showed an ambivalent college.

IV. REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT

Board of Governors Faculty Recognition Award: The Office of Faculty Affairs and Development announced the Board of Governors Faculty Recognition Award nominations are due December 1.

Retirement: Naida Simon is retiring at midyear. A retirement party will be held in her honor in the Student Center ballroom on December 4 after the Policy Committee meeting. Additionally, renee hoogland will organize a Policy Committee celebratory dinner.

Ph.D. Committee meeting: Linda Beale was unable to attend the most recent meeting, but she reported that the committee is finalizing its preliminary report for the provost which should be completed within the next few weeks. This would likely be a good topic for a Senate plenary this fall.

Graduate Council meeting: Beale was unable to attend the meeting, but council member Steve Chrisomalis reported the somewhat unclear discussion there about Ph.D. credit hours. This is an issue that the Academic Standards Committee has been working on since at least 2018. Beale noted that either the Executive Committee or the Academic Standards Committee was researching the same issue about GRA/GTA funding allocations, but the work of those groups and the Ph.D. Committee has not been well coordinated.

There are a few Ph.D.-producing departments that want to cut the required Ph.D. instructional credit hours to 60. Chrisomalis explained the administrative challenges and the concern that many Ph.D. programs would have to redo their curriculum to comply. Kornbluh pointed out that the idea is to require 60 credit hours as a minimum, not to mandate that as the required number for every program. For example, the university has a minimum undergraduate requirement of 120 credits, yet some of our engineering programs require more than 120 hours.

Chrisomalis noted that the Graduate Council discussion included people who are new to Graduate Council and who are not knowledgeable about the issue, resulting in little accomplished at that meeting. The credit hour report presented at Academic Standards in 2019 showed that most programs have 60, 66 or 72 required credit hours, with very few at 90.

If this would cost us money, Kornbluh said, we could not afford to do it, but the analysis has shown that a reduction to 60 credit hours would cost less than half a million dollars. The Ph.D.-paying students are generally our employees so this change would not be revenue significant.

Institute for Brain Health: Beale met with interim VPR Tim Stemmler and institute director David Rosenberg about Policy's recommended changes. Stemmler and Rosenberg will send a revision to Policy soon. The meeting seemed productive in terms of Rosenberg's understanding the issues.

3N Committee on the University Factors: Beale noted that the 3N factors recommendation will come to Policy next week, and Kornbluh welcomed substantive discussions but noted that this is not the setting for wordsmithing the entire document.

Budget Committee meeting: The Budget Committee met in the morning. Perhaps the most interesting item is modifying the BOG statutes to ensure that endowment funds work as intended. The change will provide an annual allocation amount so that it is clear how much can be spent. It also revises how and whether distributions are made if the fund is underwater, with the expectation that there would be sufficient one-time university funds available for spending so that the endowment base could be protected.

V. OCTOBER 4 SENATE PLENARY DRAFT AGENDA

Beale noted that we are still awaiting Board member Danielle Atkinson's confirmation of addressing the plenary.

At the last Policy meeting, Jennifer Lewis pushed to facilitate a Senate discussion in breakout groups, including around the topic of academic freedom/free speech, so this was included in the draft agenda. Various members noted concerns about logistics of doing breakout groups in Bernath Auditorium, so Beale agreed to discuss the details with Lewis to develop a plan for the free speech discussion.

Kornbluh indicated that he would like to report on undergraduate enrollment and changes to financial aid. The university's ability to get good coverage in the press is an issue: no local newspaper has a higher ed reporter anymore.

Regarding the public relations issue, Noreen Rossi noted a recent article in *The Detroit Free Press* about an innovative U-M group coming to Detroit doing 3-D printing to help babies and whatnot. What that article left out is that Wayne State has been doing that at a high level for over five years, yet we do not get coverage for it. We keep ourselves the biggest secret, and that has got to change because we are doing great things here. For example, in the last Research Committee meeting, she learned Robert Reynolds (ENGG) wrote a book on AI impacts that is considered *the* book in the area. This is the kind of work that should make news. Beale noted that was briefly discussed in Today at Wayne, but it does not seem to make it to the external community.

All agreed that our Instagram presence has improved markedly in the last couple of months to reach the prospective students, but it is important for news to reach prospective donors and the decisionmakers in Lansing.

VI. APPOINTMENT OF TUITION AND FEE APPEALS BOARD FACULTY MEMBER

Policy selected Patricia Wren (Public Health) from the two faculty nominees for the appointment to the Tuition and Fee Appeals Board.

VII. FOREIGN RELATIONSHIPS AND CONFLICT OF COMMITMENT POLICY DRAFT2

Policy discussed an updated draft of the foreign relationships and conflict of commitment policy but agreed that “personal relationships” was likely too narrow a wording to capture the professional collegial relationships that do not involve large payments (perhaps “professional and collegial relationships involving research collaboration or symposia/conference presentations with honoraria of \$1000 or less as well as mere personal relationships” would be appropriate substitute wording).

VIII. GRADE APPEALS POLICIES

Policy Committee had a preliminary discussion of the various concerns about current grade appeals policies across the university and the need for revisions to include notice to instructors, consideration of timelines and also the somewhat odd fact that Ph.D. dismissal notices from the director of graduate studies and the graduate studies committees for programs are now said to be appealed through the unit grade appeals process, but also said to go to the dean of the Graduate School as a final step (which cannot work, since the final step in unit grade appeals processes is the provost).

Chrisomalis believes clarity is desperately needed. Rossi agreed with the need for clear guidelines. Steps in the process must be well defined, as well as the timeline for both student appeals and responses to appeals. A student in the medical school was just reinstated because of the process was not followed on the part of the administration/school.

Beale asked about Policy’s views on Ph.D. dismissals going beyond the graduate dean to the provost. Chrisomalis considered dismissals for Ph.D. programs to be complex and require a specified different process altogether.

Pramod Khosla questioned what constitutes a “serious allegation.” Brad Roth explained the three criteria really amount to misconduct by the instructor in evaluating students on criteria not directly reflective of performance relative to course requirements—i.e., these criteria imply action out of malice. The ethos underlying the process here (as in the other process that we dealt with earlier on grade penalties) is the notion that administrators sufficiently represent faculty concerns, so instructors have no need for a stake in the outcome. That is clearly not an accurate reflection. If a student prevails in a grade appeal, the student will announce the success to all classmates. It results in an aspersion on the faculty member because a flipped grade is essentially a finding that the faculty member committed malfeasance.

Chrisomalis pointed out that the policy does not take into account the role of the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO): when a student goes to OEO with these sorts of allegations, the process bypasses this process completely. OEO investigates grade appeals when a student feels that they have been discriminated against because of their membership in a protected class. This all looks nice, but if the student can go to OEO and immediately initiate a different process, then we need to include a clear understanding about how OEO sees its role with respect to grade appeals.

Aubert noted a few years back there was a student who threatened to go to the local news, resulting in the chair not supporting the faculty and changing the grade. It was disappointing that the chair did not back the faculty member.

These matters will be referred to the Faculty Affairs and Curriculum and Instruction committees for consideration, to be brought back to Policy and to the plenary for proposed resolution.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

Policy discussed the Coalition of Unions meeting with H.R.

Approved as revised at the Policy Committee meeting of October 2, 2023.