



## Academic Affairs Committee

June 25, 2021

### Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 9:37 a.m. by Governor Gaffney. The meeting was held in the Ball Room at the Student Center Building. Secretary Miller called the roll. A quorum was present.

**Committee Members Present:** Governors Busuito, Gaffney, Kelly, Kumar, and Stancato; Ewa Golebiowska as Faculty Representative and Naida Simon as Faculty Alternate; Mannat Bedi as Student Representative and Ibrahim Ahmad as Student Alternate Representative

**Also Present:** Governors Barnhill, Land, and Thompson; President Wilson; Provost Clabo; Vice Presidents Burns, Cooke, Lanier, Lindsey, Lessem, Schweitzer, Staebler, and Wright; and Secretary Miller

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES, APRIL 30, 2021**

**ACTION:** Upon motion made by Governor Stancato and supported by Governor Busuito, the minutes of the April 30, 2021 meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee were approved as submitted. The motion carried.

### **PRESENTATION: NSF GEARS GRANT**

Provost Clabo introduced the first presentation, which is an overview of work in the University's STEM area, a National Science Foundation ADVANCE grant. The NSF ADVANCE program is designed to address and assess supporting a more diverse community in preparing and educating the STEM workforce of the future. This is the second ADVANCE grant the university has received. This grant, covering a 3-year period, and funded at \$1 million, is referred to as the GEARS grant, covering gender, equity, and retention in STEM.

Three faculty members serving as co-PIs on the grant were introduced for the presentation: Krista Brumley, Associate Professor of Sociology, Stine Eckert, Associate Professor of Communication, and Lars Johnson, Assistant Professor of Psychology. Professor Brumley explained that the GEARS grant is intended to support women and underrepresented minority faculty in STEM fields. The ADVANCE program has a long history of work advancing women and in supporting underrepresented minority faculty. The GEARS grant is an "adaptation" award. Adaptation awards look at successful programs from other ADVANCE campuses and adapt them at the awarded institution. Awardees have adapted programs from a number of prominent institutions including the University of Maryland, UMass, Amherst, Florida International and U of M, as examples. WSU's previous ADVANCE grant was an institutional grant in partnership with U of M, and focused exclusively on engineering, biology, math, physics and chemistry, and the GEARS grant will build on this work.

Professor Brumley introduced the 9 faculty members who are part of the GEARS team. In addition to the faculty team, there is a project coordinator, an Internal Advisory Board, a Chair Advisory Board, several key stakeholders, including Deans from some of the schools/colleges, and liaisons with other university groups. In developing goals for the project, the PIs reviewed various forms of institutional data. Through that process they identified three barriers to advancing women in STEM, which include work/family life strains, toxic work environments and workloads. The number of women in STEM at WSU has increased, from 14% in 2010 to 20% in 2018. Much of this improvement is credited to the hard work of the previous NSF ADVANCE team and that project. Today, 13% of STEM women faculty at Wayne State are underrepresented minorities, women of color. However, as of 2019, pre-pandemic data, only 2.6% of all faculty are women of color.

The GEARS project goal is to develop evidence-based strategies and resources that will help to eliminate barriers in hiring, retaining, and advancing underrepresented minority women faculty in the natural, physical, and social sciences as well as technology, engineering, and mathematics disciplines. On Wayne's campus, that means that 23 departments are part of this grant. Using car references, the GEARS project has three components. Wayne Drives covers nuanced data collection using surveys, focus groups and in-depth interviews. Wayne Shifts includes expanding work already underway, such as Chair and Dean workshops, and, as a further example, expanding the workload equity project out of the College of Engineering. The third component, Wayne Accelerates, is the development of new programs on campus that would help accelerate systemic change. Areas here include bystander training, train the trainer and networking.

They have accomplished a lot in the first year of the grant, including development of a baseline faculty survey, the pilot of the workload equity project, and a Bystander Leader Workshop. The website has been established and networking has begun through the establishment of the Women in STEM profiles, with a new profile published each week. Workshops are in development, and work is continuing on the barriers previously identified.

Professor Brumley next honed in on two of the project's programs. The first, Wayne Serves, is a workload equity tool, which will help develop evidence-based action research to promote equity. This includes working with departments to help them develop transparency, clarity, credit, norms, context, and accountability on the workloads of their departmental faculty. Workload includes service components, such as committee service and advising, as examples. Eleven departments, with 80 faculty, have volunteered to participate, across three colleges. Project faculty will analyze the data received, also looking at research, analyze the data, and provide the volunteer departments with feedback mechanisms about workload. They can then use the report to make changes if needed to create a more equitable distribution among the workloads.

For Year 2 of the GEARS project, a second survey will be launched in March 2022. Training will begin for faculty interested in working as advocates for the Family Advocacy Network, the departmental briefs mentioned earlier will be finalized and shared with the respective departments, and additional workshops and training programs will be

developed and produced. Networking with women on the STEM faculty and the ongoing virtual community will continue. As part of communication efforts, a series of town hall meetings will be held, as well as meetings with departments, the Academic Senate, department chairs, and any other university group interested in learning more.

Professor Eckert reviewed the GEARS project website with the committee. The website focuses on the Profiles for Wayne Women in STEM. They have posted 18 profiles thus far, and one is posted each Monday. The profiles follow a template so that consistent information is provided for each faculty member. It includes information about research areas of interest, background about educational and work progression, role models from literature, and any resources the faculty member would want to pass on to others. This information is also posted on all social media channels.

Governor Thompson asked whether there is any funding available in the grant that would provide opportunities for students to be involved in any aspect of this programming, which might encourage them to go into STEM fields. Professor Brumley advised that this particular grant is focused on full-time faculty. She added, however, that there are 5 graduate students working on the grant, and one of them is a graduate research assistant. The students are working on data collection. It is an excellent opportunity for the graduate students, in some cases beyond what they would find in course work or dissertation hours. Professor Eckert added that the workload project also provides opportunities for informal mentoring.

Governor Gaffney thanked the professors for the presentation, and for the work that helped them receive the grant. That accomplishment was not an easy one, and he appreciates their efforts.

### **ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF GENERAL EDUCATION REFORM**

The committee heard next from Professor Jennifer Hart and Associate Provost Darin Ellis, who brought a report to the committee on the impact of general education reform. The Board of Governors adopted significant changes to the general education curriculum in Fall 2017, and today's report will provide an overview of the impact of those changes.

Professor Hart began with an explanation of the role of the General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC), which is charged, by Board statute, with making recommendations to the President or his/her designee for the implementation and review of the General Education curriculum. She provided a description of the Gen Ed program, as follows:

Serves as a foundation for *academic achievement*, preparing students to participate effectively in a competitive global economy and to contribute as citizens in a *diverse and engaged democracy*. General Education presents a unique and powerful opportunity to develop the skills necessary for *long-term academic success*.

With this definition, the program moved from a list of requirements to check off to an intentional program that fosters curiosity and helps students build the foundation for success. The program includes 12 credits of competencies, 24 credits under the category

of inquiries, and a 1 credit Wayne Experience class. The program was also designed to be flexible, aligning the university with national best practice models, leading to an assessable program structured around transparent and understandable learning outcomes. A new assessment plan has been created to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and engage with instructors. In this process, program learning outcomes have been refined, and instructor needs have been identified. The committee has begun to generate program and instructor level reports for 9 of the 11 gen ed categories. As part of both natural curriculum growth and change and some of the new needs introduced through gen ed reform, departments have also stepped up to propose new courses in a range of categories, which the committee evaluates and approves based on the gen ed learning outcomes.

Much of the GEOC's work has been centered on the creation of the assessment program, and the assessment program is now in place. They believe they will have a complete set of assessment data for all gen ed categories at the end of Winter 2022. They will now begin to shift focus to planning and improvement in response to the data, both at the program level and at the individual course level, to ensure the university is supporting student success and achieving improvement goals. Much of this work has been led by members of the GEOC's Assessment Sub-Committee. Assessment is one part of achieving the broader goals of transparency, efficiency, and culture-building to support the success of students and instructors. A new Engaging Gen Ed website and connected social media accounts went live just before the beginning of the fall term. In addition to the new website, a new Gen Ed Teaching Award has been developed, to recognize the extraordinary hard work, commitment, and skill of dedicated gen ed instructors of all types, including tenured/tenure track faculty, lecturers, part-time instructors, academic staff, and graduate students. The award and website provide opportunities to recognize the people behind the data, both students and faculty. Professor Hart also lauded the efforts of members of the GEOC and the Assessment subcommittee who have gone above and beyond normal service expectations in making this program a success.

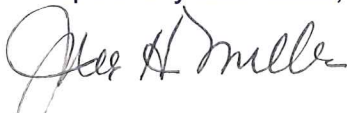
Governor Gaffney thanked Professor Hart for her presentation and added that he believes that the changes made to modernize General Education were closer to what the students needed, and from the presentation this morning, he believes that success is underway.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Julie Harshen Miller  
Secretary to the Board of Governors