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UNIVERSITY OF
WISCONSIN SYSTEM

May 26, 2023

To: Provosts
Chief Business Officers
Senior Student Affairs Officers
Chief Diversity Officers
Shared Governance Groups

From: Sarah Ebben, *Policy Analyst*

Re: FY 2022-23 Feedback on Policy Development and Communication

Every biennium, University of Wisconsin System Administration (UWSA) collaborates with University of Wisconsin System (UW) institutions to obtain feedback on the current practices for policy development and communication. In Fiscal Year 2023, UWSA solicited feedback through both virtual meetings and a Qualtrics survey. Both the meetings and survey were centered on the UW System Administrative (SYS) policy set.

The survey was distributed to attendees of the virtual meetings, which included Provosts, Chief Business Officers, Senior Student Affairs Officers, Chief Human Resource Officers, Chief Information Officers, and representatives our standard policy distribution listserv.[1] Recipients were also encouraged to further distribute the survey to other individuals at their institutions.

In total, UWSA held virtual meetings with stakeholders from eight (8) UW institutions, as well as the Academic Staff Shared Governance Group. (For institutions which elected not to schedule a virtual meeting, the institution's Provost was sent the presentation materials and a link to the survey to share with their institution and provide feedback.) UWSA also received survey responses from over 26 individuals; some of these individuals represented UW institutions which were unable to participate in a virtual meeting.

The questions in the survey focused on:

- The number of policies the respondent reviewed and commented on in the last year;
- Rating satisfaction with the current process for providing feedback on draft SYS policies;
- Rating communication effectiveness regarding approved new/revised SYS policies;
- Rating satisfaction with current support provided by UWSA during policy implementation;
- Current practices that the respondent finds most useful; and
- Potential avenues for improvement.

In general, both meeting attendees and survey respondents expressed satisfaction with the current processes for providing UWSA with feedback on policies and procedures. Attendees and survey

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[1] The policy distribution listserv is comprised of individuals identified as relevant stakeholders by the leadership on at their institutions and is updated quarterly.

respondents were also generally satisfied with UWSA's communication of policy and procedure approvals and support of UW institutions in implementing approved policies and procedures. Attendees and survey respondents said that they were appreciative of UWSA's efforts to reduce the volume of emails and notifications sent to UW institutions, as well as UWSA's use of an equity lens when drafting policies and procedures. They also provided valuable insights into opportunities for UWSA to further improve the policy process. Several common themes emerged from the virtual meetings and survey responses, which are summarized below.

I.   CURRENT PROCESS FOR DRAFTING POLICIES

- Several stakeholders requested that UWSA, particularly policy owners, account for the cost to campuses to implement or comply with a policy or procedure. Additionally, a stakeholder requested that UWSA determine whether the cost of implementing or complying with a policy or procedure can be absorbed by the UW System. If such absorption is not feasible, the stakeholder requested that UWSA provide guidance to campuses on how to secure necessary funding.
  - o *UWSA will provide better guidance to policy owners on the expectations of predicting implementation and compliance burdens. However, the UWSA does not have the resources to conduct cost-benefit analyses for each proposed policy and procedure. We ask that the campuses express any specific concerns over the predicted costs of implementation and compliance during the institutional review process for the consideration of the policy owner.*

II.   CURRENT PROCESS FOR PROVIDING FEEDBACK

- Many campuses requested extending the institutional review period for policies and procedures. Currently, the standard institution review period for policies and procedures in the SYS 200-1200 series is two (2) weeks, although policy owners can opt for longer review periods if they believe it to be necessary.
  - o *The Finance and General Administration Policy Committee (FGAPC) will increase the standard institutional review period from two (2) weeks to three (3) weeks beginning with the June university distribution. If a policy is an urgent priority that requires quicker action, a rationale will be provided for why that policy will be distributed for two (2) weeks. Policy owners are also encouraged to engage with campus stakeholders and subject matter experts during the drafting process before the distribution cycle.*
- Some stakeholders requested that UWSA aggregate comments during the feedback period, as well as facilitate collaboration between campuses.
  - o *Stakeholders can view other stakeholders' posted feedback at the bottom of any comment form. We will adjust the language at the top of draft policies to ensure that commentors understand that they may view posted comments at the bottom of the comment form. UWSA lacks the ability to facilitate further collaboration, although we encourage informal collaborations between stakeholders when possible.*
- Some shared governance representatives requested that UWSA unsure their incorporation into the annual policy prioritization process.
  - o *UWSA included shared governance representatives on the list of campus stakeholders that leadership were encouraged to consult when developing their campus' recommendations for*

- *prioritization; however, UWSA does not dictate how campuses collect and compile prioritization feedback to respect their internal processes.*
- Some stakeholders reported that diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) officers were confused about their role in the institutional feedback process.
  - *UWSA highly encourages all DEI officers and administrators to participate in the institutional feedback process. Our office will meet with these officers during their regularly scheduled meetings to encourage their participation and clarify any confusion over their role.*

III.   COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS

- Stakeholders requested that, after the conclusion of the institutional review period, UWSA promptly notify campuses when policies or procedures will be distributed to campuses a second time.
  - *We inform campus stakeholders of the UWSA's intent for a second distribution as soon as possible (i.e., in the soonest institutional review period).*
- Many shared governance representatives requested that UWSA take steps to ensure that shared governance groups are aware of policy distributions.
  - *We will reiterate to state shared governance representatives that we rely upon them to forward emails to their shared governance committee members. Additionally, members of shared governance may subscribe to the UWSA's RSS feed to receive prompt distribution notifications. A presentation on the policy process will also be included in the Shared Governance State Representatives orientation in the fall.*
- Several stakeholders said they were occasionally unaware of how UWSA policy owners respond to and incorporate stakeholder feedback during the finalization process.
  - *Beginning in March 2023, we updated our monthly policy action summaries to include a list of feedback that we received for each policy and procedure. Additionally, we describe how all feedback was addressed during finalization, including justifications for why certain requests or recommendations were not included.*
- A few stakeholders requested that UWSA further condense policy-related emails to campuses.
  - *UWSA will take steps to condense the content of distributions (e.g., monthly policy action summaries) to campuses to make them easier to process without sacrificing transparency.*

IV.   SUPPORT FROM UWSA DURING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

- Some stakeholders requested that UWSA provide campuses with resources for policy management and drafting best practices.
  - *The Resources for Administrative Policy Owners and Responsible Officers webpage contains several document templates and guides which campuses may use for their own policies.*
- Some stakeholders said they were often confused over when campuses are required to adopt their own campus-level policy or procedure for implementation purposes after the UWSA adopts a system-level policy or procedure.
  - *We will work with policy owners to be more explicit about what campuses are expected to do after the promulgation of a new policy or procedure (e.g., using "must" vs. "may"). This clarification will be provided in the policy or procedure summary documents under "Campus Implementation."*

My sincere thanks to all who participated in the feedback process and provided invaluable feedback that will help to shape future enhancements to the UW System Administrative policy process.

cc: Johannes Britz, Interim Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs
           Sean P. Nelson, Vice President for Finance and Administration
           Laura Dunek, Special Assistant for Governance & Strategic Initiatives
           Finance and General Administrative Policy Committee
           Office of Academic and Student Affairs Policy Committee