

Minutes--Senate Educational Policies Committee 17 November 2023, 10-11:30 a.m.

Present: Wert (co-chair), Falcione (co-chair), Godley, Fennimore, Levine, McCormick, Shaver, Cecchini, Rikstad, Godley, Kear, Lechtenberg, Lemmon, Castellanos, and Schein

1. Call to order/Approval of meeting minutes of October 2023 SEPC meeting

Rikstad noted that “c” missing in Meeting updates, as did **McCormick**; will follow up to confirm. **Falcione** able to confirm nothing was missed and typos removed – able to reconsider approval of minutes Motion to approve – **Cecchini** Seconded – **Rikstad**

2. New Business

- a. Update posthumous degree policy. Benchmark and options for intermediate measures (**Godley**)
- b. OTP updating policies and this was one to be updated; issues have arisen around this policy (lacking clear guidelines related to provision of Certificate of Achievement when criteria not met for awarding a degree); did some benchmarking with other universities – primarily looking at PhD; also wanted to clarify dissertation status and completion); UCGS reviewed and had no suggested edits
 - i. **McCormick** – question inclusion of certificates with degrees or stand-alone; Godley considered that a good possible addition
 - ii. **Wert** – questioned how level of “significance” will be defined; **Godley** – 25 AAU public peer benchmarking had a large range related to degree of program completion; **Wert** suggested 50% as baseline to consider; **Shaver** suggested some consideration for “significance” since this may differ between majors
 - iii. **Shaver** – questioned how “active” is defined; **Shaver** highlighted students working towards a double-major with inherent staggered progress. **Godley** indicated active if registered for a term within the past 12 months; benchmarking shows similar timeframe for being registered.

3. Report from Vice Provost Amanda Godley

- a. Decommissioned policies have been removed
 - i. **Kear** clarified policy confusion – 14 policies reviewed and discussed, an additional 5 policies failed to be shared for review as a result of miscommunication; asked if the 5 policies in question could be reviewed by SEPC just to ensure that they are reasonable to be “removed”? **Godley**: agreeable to have them listed at next meeting for committee review (SEPC).
- b. Update to grading policy, going to PACUP next week and then to SEPC; registrar consolidating some grading structures into 1 policy and important change related to auditing for Graduate students; bringing these to SEPC in Jan/Feb 2024

- c. Assessment and Teaching Conf (Feb 2, 2024) and Mentoring Conf (March 8, 2024) announcements going out, as well as Year of Discourse and Dialogue and related RFP for funding.
 - d. First at Pitt initiative focus from Kessler Program to engage and support first-generation college students or an ally of, as well as first-generation faculty, staff, and alumni. **McCormick**: how do students find out about this and is there an effort to assist international students who are also first-generation students? **Godley**: panel put forth effort to ensure that international students voice is heard, April Belbeck leading this effort and is using newsletter and word of mouth, social media to get message out to ALL applicable students. **McCormick**: is there engagement with university communication and marketing about marketing to this specific “group” of students? **Godley**: unsure of specific engagement with marketing for this particular initiative but they are actively engaged in similar efforts for University interest as a whole (for all students considering)
 - e. School of Engineering is hosting a lecture on ChatGPT in the classroom; today at noon
 - f. Student Health insurance task force still meeting, productive, medical hardship assistance (MHA) Fund has new website with FAQ – appears to be going smoothly per student feedback
 - g. Winter Commencement –first at Pitt; UG/Grad/Professional; effort to celebrate student achievement. RSVP Due Dec 6th
 - h. Holistic Grad Admissions – last Friday event well attended and high quality engagement; second opportunity/workshop will take place December 1st & 8th (virtually)
4. Old Business
- a. New members of SEPC?
 - b. Student wellness/religious observances (**Falcione**) – meeting scheduled for Nov 28th
 - c. Decommissioning of University Policies (**Godley**)
 - d. Committee on generative AI (**Wert/Falcione**)
 - i. ELI asked UCTL to do a session on AI and did a great job and offered suggestions for how faculty could use the tool
 - e. OTP exploration of University-wide general education requirements
 - i. **Falcione**: Three co-chairs met with leadership who have a very clear and detailed plan and milestones for moving the process forward and engaging broad array of stakeholders; 3 main working groups to help tackle various pieces of the process; agreeable to having SEPC members be engaged on those working groups
 - f. FERPA draft policy (**Stoner**: no new developments)
 - g. ELI closure/discussion (**McCormick**) – discussions ongoing; Godley: working to collect data for new student testing for ELP, survey went out to international students querying their input; also benchmarking with other universities as well

as talking with programs/schools that have high volume of international students.

- h. OMET questions on inclusive learning environments (**Falcione**) – email sent to CBU to confirm information received from UCTL that this would be in conflict with contract negotiations and what can be done in the interim.
 - i. Outlier.org – no update
 - j. LMS feedback – no update
 - k. SEPC Spring meeting schedule – working with host of individuals to arrange
5. Meeting Updates
- a. Faculty Assembly – **Kear**: the Provost search is ongoing, names of suggested candidates can be passed along through end of November, can also use the feedback link provided by University to provide feedback; another policy up for decommissioning (COVID 19 vaccination) – no longer operational students/employees; counterpart up for public comment is new policy related to immunization – encouraged to take a look at policy. **Falcione**: comment period is for how long? **Kear**- immunization policy is up for comment now (28 days).
 - b. Senate Council
 - c. ACIE—**Falcione**: upcoming meeting on Nov 30th, interim meeting for subcommittee (teaching cert) on Nov 8th and document created of outline, discussed deliverables and gathering faculty input; more meetings scheduled and updates will be brought back to committee.
 - d. UCGS/PACUP—**Schein/Cecchini**
6. Adjournment – **Wert** @ 11:06 AM EST
7. Next Meeting – December 15, 2023