

**UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH**  
**Senate Educational Policies Committee**  
**September 19, 2016**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Present:** Amy E. Aggelou, Michael Beach, Leslie Poljack, Bonnie Falcione, Douglas Landsittel, Helen Petracchi, John Stoner, Joseph Kannarkat, Sarah Najjar, Mario Browne, Pamela Rikstad, Zsuzsa Horvath, Juan Manfredi, Alberta Sbragia

**Excused:** David Beck, A. Murat Kaynar, M. Kathleen Kelly, Laurel Roberts

**Not Present:** Micah Gross, Frank Wilson, Susan Skledar, Lori A. Molinaro

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Doug Landsittel (Chair) at ~3pm.

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from the May, 2016 meeting were approved as written.

**Introductions:** Committee members were introduced.

**SEPC Review:**

- An overview of the SEPC was presented by the Chair. The SEPC mission statement was reviewed with examples of committee work that had been conducted in recent years. Members should contact the Chair or Co-Chair if unable to attend a meeting. The Committee's website (<http://www.univsenate.pitt.edu/committees/educational-policies>) includes member names, meeting dates, minutes and other related documents can be found.
- Meetings for AY 2016-17 were reviewed: October 17, November 21, December 19, February 20, March 20, April 17 and May 15 from 3:00-4:30pm in Room 826 of the Cathedral unless otherwise noted.
  - The January meeting was tentatively cancelled, as it falls on Martin Luther King Day. The committee will consider rescheduling at a later time if necessary.
- The committee is represented by the Chair at Faculty Assembly (once monthly on Tuesdays, open to all faculty, dates are posted at <http://www.univsenate.pitt.edu/faculty-assembly>); by the Co-Chair as liaison to the Provost's Advisory Committee on Instructional Excellence (ACIE) Council, and by the Chair (required) at the University Planning and Budgeting Committee (UPBC). The committee Chair and Co-Chair will represent the SEPC at the upcoming Senate Expanded Executive Committee meeting on October 17; the Chair will provide the report.

**New Business**

- Electronic Thesis and Dissertations
  - Chair Landsittel brought a concern to the committee that was raised via email (from a concerned faculty member outside the committee) regarding technical concerns in submitting an Electronic Thesis and Dissertation. Vice Provost Sbragia noted that there has been ongoing discussion about this issue, and stated that she would provide an update at a future meeting. Committee member Michael Beach noted that the Nursing school is using a new system.
- Disruptions in the classroom
  - A concern was raised about having clear guidance on how to proceed when student behavior during a class session, or in an office meeting, is extremely disruptive but not specifically threatening. Vice Provost Manfredi noted that the applicable policy (Guidelines on Academic Integrity, Suggested Code, Student Obligations #14) would

address this scenario. Committee member Pamela Rikstad noted that there are resources available through “CARS” (the Care and Resources Support) Team and provided a link (<https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/dean/distressedstudents/>). Other resources mentioned included the Student Affairs Office emergency response service, and the campus police.

## Old Business

- Process for holding executive/closed discussions
  - In the past, the SEPC has initiated executive sessions as needed during the course of a meeting. While doing so has provided the most flexibility for unanticipated discussion points, especially when guest speakers are presenting information to the committee, it may also introduce challenges for any reporters attending the meeting who are then asked to leave.
  - To better address any future needs for closed sessions, the SEPC will use the following process:
    - All meetings will be open to all attendees unless previously announced otherwise.
    - If an issue requiring an executive session/closed discussion arises during the course of a meeting, 1) discussion of that issue will be delayed for a later SEPC meeting, and 2) the SEPC Chair will communicate this to the Director of the Senate Office to ensure that the need for an executive session/closed discussion is appropriately posted.
    - The general scope of discussion will still be captured in the meeting minutes.
- Work group updates
  - Working Group on Issues Related to Student Opinions of Teaching Online Surveys
    - The Work Group Chair Michael Beach noted that the work group was not able to schedule a time over the summer. Subsequent planning would be made for a meeting later this fall. It was also mentioned that the Office of Measurement and Evaluation of Teaching (OMET) has been trialing a new platform for these.
    - Note from the Faculty Assembly Minutes: President Wilson highlighted this issue in his report, stating “Also, the OMETs have been a focus of Educational Policies Committee (via a working group) and they will be looking at faculty evaluation of teaching methods.”
  - Working Group on Digital Ethics
    - The Work Group Chair Bonnie Falcione indicated that the work group would need to meet again before providing recommendations as new resources and access points for these resources have since been developed. For example, there was some discussion regarding new plagiarism software that faculty and staff would benefit from having located in a central repository. ,

## Vice Provost updates

### Undergraduate

- Vice Provost Juan Manfredi provided his report:
  - The USNews and World report rankings were released; a high level overview will be provided at a subsequent meeting. The University of Pittsburgh’s overall national rank fell from 66 to 68. The university was 20<sup>th</sup> among public AAU schools and 24<sup>th</sup> among public institutions. The University of California at Berkeley was #1 among public institutions and 20<sup>th</sup> overall. Further details can be found in the University Times at <http://www.utimes.pitt.edu/?p=40440>.

- The credit hour policy, which has been discussed at previous meetings, is now under review by the Chancellor.
- The University Bulletin will have a new system, with more information; the transition process is beginning in October.
- The Vice Provost also mentioned the Periodic Review Report; we have two members on the PRR Steering Committee (Zsuzsa Horvath and Bonnie Falcione).

### **Graduate**

- Vice Provost Alberta Sbragia provided her report:
  - There are two ongoing searches for the Director of the University Library System and Dean of the School of Education. The School of Education has over 1,350 students. Public interviews of final candidates will be held in the future.

### **Faculty Assembly update**

- Chair Doug Landsittel provided an update from the Faculty Assembly held on September 13<sup>th</sup>.
  - The Senate President Frank Wilson discussed some of the events associated with the Year of Diversity, including presentations to first year students. Co-Chairs and a Steering Committee have been appointed and are meeting in September. Events will be broadly announced in the University Times and via other announcements. A diversity retreat was held and 24 proposals were submitted for funding under this effort.
  - The Budget Policies Committee, which had previously approved some recommendations for full-time faculty, is meeting to discuss regional campus faculty benchmarking and a salary report on part-time faculty.
  - The Governmental Relations Committee is seeking to engage more in state budget, lobbying, and in research in Harrisburg.
  - An ad hoc committee on academic community engagement and applied research is being formed and will seek to increase recognition for conducting this type of research. The Community Relations Committee will also have a role in these efforts. Other ad hoc committees are being formed or continuing, and will be discussed more at the Expanded Executive Committee meeting in October.
  - Open meetings are being held to discuss the role and needs of a new position being created for the Senior Vice Chancellor for Research. Research under the Provost's Office may move to this Vice-Chancellor position. A series of open meetings will be held; Faculty Assembly members were encouraged to attend.
  - The use of research metrics in faculty evaluation were then discussed by Vice-President Kear. She noted a publication a year ago of 10 principles to guide research evaluation; see <http://www.nature.com/news/bibliometrics-the-leiden-manifesto-for-research-metrics-1.17351>.
  - Vice-President Kear noted that the University Senate has a Twitter account: @PittSenate (#PittSenate).
  - Vice-President Kear also described the transition of the University Times (see <http://www.utimes.pitt.edu/?p=40157>) and the Pitt Chronical from paper to all digital. A number of concerns were expressed and discussed about possibly negative implications in terms of reducing the reach of these publications.
  - The next Faculty Assembly meeting will discuss the proposed policy on "Consensual Sexual, Romantic, and Intimate Relationships with Students and Between Employees".
  - Ian McLaughlin, Global Operations Support Manager, University Center for International Studies (UCIS) gave a presentation on his role with those working internationally. He is the initial point of contact for all faculty, staff and researchers working on behalf of the

University internationally; students are not covered under this service. Further information can be found at [www.globaloperations.pitt.edu](http://www.globaloperations.pitt.edu).

- Further details from the September Faculty meeting can be found at [http://www.univsenate.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/Sep%2013%202016\\_0.pdf](http://www.univsenate.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/Sep%2013%202016_0.pdf).

**Advisory Council on Instructional Excellence (ACIE) update**

- The first meeting has not yet taken place for this academic year.

**Next meeting is October 17, 2016 3pm in CL 826**

**Adjournment:** at ~4:30pm.

Article of potential interest: 'Time management in the classroom' at <http://www.utimes.pitt.edu/?p=40448>.