

**UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH**  
**Senate Educational Policies Committee**  
**October 19, 2015**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Present:** Leslie Eibl, Bonnie Falcione, Micah Gross, Zsuzsa Horvath, A. Murat Kaynar, Douglas Landsittel, Helen Petracchi, Alberta Sbragia, and Aliyah Weinstein.

**Excused:** Amy E. Aggelou, Michael Beach, David Beck, M. Kathleen Kelly, Juan Manfredi, and Susan Skledar

**Not Present:** Shelly Renee Brown, Lori A. Molinaro, Naomi Stoll, and Frank Wilson.

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

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from the September 2015 meeting were approved as written.

**Old Business:**

- Recommendations for EPC from the Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Non-Tenure Stream (NTS) Faculty Issues 2014-2015:
  - NTS faculty with teaching duties have input into decisions about curriculum content and curriculum changes in the unit.
    - Chair Horvath updated the committee on the Senate Ad Hoc Committee on NTS Faculty Issues (NTS Committee) recommendation to the EPC that NTS faculty with teaching duties have input into decisions about curriculum content and curriculum changes in the unit. At Faculty Assembly held October 6, 2015 this was addressed by the revised recommendations from the NTS Committee which included that under shared governance, all units should include NTS faculty members into their decision-making processes and governance structures. Areas of governance where NTS faculty members could contribute include, but are not limited to, curricular revisions and development, recruiting and selecting faculty for new appointments and for promotions (especially of fellow NTS faculty members), student affairs and conduct, and graduate admissions (See document “Revisions for committee approval Senate Ad Hoc Committee on NTS Faculty Issues Report for Presentation at Faculty Assembly, October 2015”).
  - Review the process for teaching evaluation of NTS faculty to ensure they are treated fairly
    - Chair Horvath recommended that the EPC wait for the working group recommendations on other OMET related issues and make one combined resolution for all OMET issues. Committee members expressed agreement.
- Senate Expanded Executive Committee meeting, October 19<sup>th</sup> at 1pm.
  - Chair Horvath reported that she and Co-Chair Falcione attended the meeting earlier that same day. Chair Horvath presented the annual EPC report at that meeting (see Box folder for copy of the annual report). Chair Horvath highlighted three major areas of the report describing upcoming and ongoing work for the EPC: 1) ongoing work pertaining via the Working Groups on Issues Related to Student Opinions of Teaching Online Surveys and on Digital Ethics, 2) awareness of lack of representation on the committee from the School of Arts and Science, and 3) how the EPC work aligns with the University

Strategic Plans, especially pertaining to Strategic Goal No.1 Advance Educational Excellence. Committee members were asked for input the third item and agreed that the November meeting should focus on this. Chair Horvath also reminded committee members about the upcoming Spring Plenary on Academic Freedom.

- Working Group Updates
  - A request was made to the new committee members to consider joining one of the working groups.
  - Working Group on Issues Related to Student Opinions of Teaching Online Surveys
    - Chair Horvath updated the committee that the upcoming schedule for the working group meetings is being planned.
  - Working Group on Digital Ethics
    - Chair Falcione reported that the next meeting is being planned for this term.

#### **Vice-Provost updates**

- **Undergraduate**

Vice Provost Sbragia presented the report prepared by Vice Provost Manfredi.

- An overview of the Periodic Review Report (PRR) and proposed working plan was provided. The report will be approximately 50 pages, excluding appendices, and will include the following sections: a summary description of the university's responses to recommendations from the previous evaluation and to Commission actions (Pitt received none but will address recommendations that we made for ourselves in the Self Study), a brief narrative identifying major challenges and/or current opportunities, analysis of enrollment and finance data for the period covered by the university's strategic plan (but not less than the current year and 3 future years) including enrollment and fiscal trends from the 3 previous years and assumptions upon which projections are based, evidence of sustained and organized processes to assess institutional effectiveness and student learning and evidence that the results of such processes are being used to improve programs and services and to inform planning and resource allocation decisions, evidence the at linked university planning and budgeting processes are in place. Also included will be verification of compliance with accreditation-relevant federal regulations, including: student identify verification in distance and correspondence education, transfer of credit policies and articulation agreements, Title IV program responsibilities, Institutional records of student complaints, required information for students and the public, standing with the state and other accrediting agencies, contractual relationships, and assignment of credit hours. The timeline for the report includes: PRR training (Spring 2015), establishment of working plan (Summer 2015), committee appointments (2 committees, compliance and the report) and financial reporting, compliance committee starts to meet to identify policies/processes in place to address the 8 sections and what may need to be implemented along with the PACUP and UCGS to review and/or draft proposed new policies, and enrolment data/reporting to be reviewed (Fall 2015), the report committee starts to meet and policy updates are completed (Spring 2016), the report is drafted (Summer 2016), the report draft undergoes committee review (Fall 2016), the university reviews the report (Spring 2017), the report is completed (April 2017), the PRR is due to MSCHE (June 1, 2017), MSCHE committee response (August 1, 2017), the university replies to MSCHE comments (September 1, 2017), full MSCHE meets (October 2017), MSCHE response provided to the university (November 1, 2017).
- Response to request for update on implementation of the Course Description Resolution passed by the Senate Council in February 10, 2015: was presented by the

Provost at the Council of Deans held on May 7, 2015. It is now up to the Schools to follow through. The Office of the Provost does not have any additional information.

- Chair Horvath commented: on June 18<sup>th</sup> Jeff Bastian from the registrar's office was to meet with Chairs in the School of Dental Medicine to explain the process for making updates to the course catalog in People Soft to remove outdated or inaccurate information.
  - Response to request for update pertaining to recent article in InsideHigher Ed regarding the software program Turnitin pertaining to questions about its efficacy for plagiarism detection: there has not been a response from Office of the Provost to this and there have been academic integrity cases promoted by this software in the School of A& S and possibly other schools. Because Turnitin is administered by CIDDE for the University it was suggested that the Director of CIDDE, Cynthia Golden, be asked for suggestions from someone from CIDDE to come to an EPC meeting to present an update.
  - Response to request for suggestion for invitations in addition to Vice Provost Laurie Kirsch and CIDDE Director Cynthia Golden to an upcoming EPC meeting to provide an update pertaining to the BlackBoard archiving process for course content and its implications that were discussed at the March 2015 EPC meeting: suggestion was provided to consult with the University Registrar who is officially in charge of all student academic records at the University to address concerns discussed at the March EPC meeting pertaining to possible educational and legal repercussion associated with non-archived data including unavailable student level data prior to graduation.
- **Graduate**
    - Vice Provost Sbragia presented the report:
      - American Council for Learned Societies
        - Dr. Sbragia recently presented to the Council Pitt's initiative for the Year of the Humanities. A detailed summary of this presentation was provided to the EPC:
          - The core of the Year so far has been the matching funds program, which invites faculty, students, and staff from across the University to propose humanities-related events and apply for matching funds of up to \$5,000. So far, we have close to 80 proposals for various events. Proposals have come from the Dietrich School, the Swanson School, SHRS, the School of Education, the School of Nursing, the School of Medicine, the School of Pharmacy, the School of Information Sciences, the Katz School, the School of Dental Medicine, the School of Social Work, the Honors College, ULS, UCIS, the Center for the Philosophy of Science, Student Affairs, (including PittServes), the University Press, and all four of the regional campuses. We have also received proposals funded by sources external to Pitt including the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, the Eastman School of Music, and the Pittsburgh Festival of New Music. Some of the events we have already funded so far include: a Kick-Off Event Reading with frequent NYTimes contributor and practicing nurse Theresa Brown (BSN '07), a series of conversations between HAA, Biology, ULS, and the Carnegie Museum called, "What Does it Mean to be Curious?" , a series of discussions bridging the Dietrich School and SIS called "Intelligent Conversations on Digital Computing and the Humanities," a Panel Discussion on the Humanities and Liberal Arts in the Honors College featuring Fareed Zakaria, Hunter Rawlings, Helen Small, Regina Barreca, and Art Levine, and a play called

“Mathematics of Being Human,” based on two faculty members’ (one from English; one from Math) experiences team-teaching a course at the University of Maryland-Baltimore County. Finally, the Humanities in Salk Hall: a year-long celebration of the intersection of the humanities with research and education in the School of Pharmacy and School of Dental Medicine. In addition to, (and in some cases growing out of) these events, there are also several thematic series that are taking shape: one on Health and the Humanities, another on how different fields conceive of the human body, and another on what the ideal of cultural competence means in various fields. We are also staging *Arts and Humanities Pop-Ups*, which are short workshops led by faculty from the music, writing, and arts and humanities departments at Pitt. Pop-Ups are taking place in spaces on campus not typically associated with the arts and humanities, such as Benedum and Salk Hall. In keeping the Year of the Humanities’ goal to promote arts and humanities-based interdisciplinary work on campus, the Pop-Ups are designed to give faculty and students an opportunity to engage in creative work, reflect on ways in which the work they do in their field relies on creative thinking, and encourage more of this kind of thinking in the future. There is now a website that lists all of the events and has a link to the call for proposals, the address is [humanities.pitt.edu](http://humanities.pitt.edu), and you can follow the Year on Twitter and Facebook. Lastly, podcasts featuring interviews with speakers who come to campus during the year are being produced. In conclusion: the Year is shaping up to be a tremendous success! We have talked to a number of people at other Universities and in the Pittsburgh area who are thrilled that Pitt is supporting the humanities in this way, and we are convinced that the initiative has a chance to distinguish Pitt both locally and nationally if we follow through on the momentum that has been created.

- Search for new Library Director has been resumed. An open forum has taken place, and a profile has been posted in the Chronicle of Higher Education.
- A search for a new Dean for the School of Education is underway (the current Dean is retiring). An open forum has taken place and a profile is being put together for the Chronicle of Higher Education (the profile will require approval by the Provost before it is posted).
  - Chair Horvath indicated that an email had been sent via the Read Green system with a survey requesting input within a 2-week time period and she would forward this to committee members.

### Faculty Assembly updates

- Faculty Assembly on October 6<sup>th</sup> - the committee was provided a brief update on the following topics and referred to the University Times for further details.
  - Strategic plan initiatives (<http://www.utimes.pitt.edu/?p=37107>)
    - Executive Vice Chancellor David DeJong and others reported on discipline-based approaches. This included comments on an increase in discipline-based centers that are actively engaged in research on the question of education in that discipline, that this will be done to inform the way different subjects are taught, and regarding support for faculty interested to use cutting-edge techniques to have a bigger impact on students.

- Contact information for the working groups for strategic planning information is posted at [impact.pitt.edu](http://impact.pitt.edu).
- New ad hoc committee to investigate part-time and other NTS issues to: (<http://www.utimes.pitt.edu/?p=37111> )
  - Develop greater understanding of the nature of part-time NTS appointments across the University, to distinguish between those who teach an occasional course and those NTS faculty who have a continuing relationship with the University.
  - Propose ways to improve the terms of employment and work environment for part-time NTS faculty.
  - Review implementation of its predecessor's recommendations and continuing efforts to improve the work environment and terms of employment for full-time NTS faculty.
  - This committee is seeking new members.
- NTS faculty ad hoc committee's expanded final report and recommendations
  - Institutional support and recognition appropriate to their faculty roles and responsibilities.
    - The committee called for NTS faculty to have access to professional development opportunities, including travel funding for attendance at conferences or participation in workshops. The committee also called for units to make their processes for allocating professional development funding fair and transparent.
  - NTS to have a role in units' decision-making processes and governance structures.
    - NTS faculty could contribute in areas such as curricular revisions and development, recruiting and selecting faculty for new appointments or for promotions (especially of fellow NTS faculty members), student affairs and graduate admissions.
- Expanded NTS eligibility for emeritus/emerita status
- 2016 Senate Plenary on Academic Freedom, March 30, 2016
  - At this early stage, the plenary planning committee is seeking feedback from the university community. Please take a moment share your thoughts on academic freedom and the upcoming plenary by going to the University Senate website: <http://www.univsenate.pitt.edu/>

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

- Liaison Falcione reported that the council has not yet met but will provide the committee with regular updates once the council begins their work for the year. This will include following-up on a request to the council to provide additional information on ACIE innovation in Education award proposals not funded in order to increase awareness on ways for faculty to strengthen proposals.

#### **SEPC future planning**

A discussion forum for suggestions for the committee to address specific aspects of the University's strategic plan will take place at the November meeting.

**Adjournment @ ~4:30pm**