

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
Senate Educational Policies Committee
March 17, 2014
Meeting Minutes

Present: Amy Aggelou, Bonnie Falcione, Irene Frieze, M. Kathleen Kelly, Mary Lou Liebold, Juan Manfredi, Helen Petracchi, Kimberly Brown-Riley, Laurel Roberts, Alberta Sbragia,

Excused: Zsuzsa Horvath, Cynthia Tananis

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

The February meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

New Business:

Lisa Votodian from OMET attended the meeting to discuss current OMET initiatives to enhance the response rate for the classroom climate surveys that are now being done online. Lisa reiterated that policies re: the use of OMET surveys lie with the units (Schools or Departments). There is not a mandate to use OMET but there is a requirement for some type of formal evaluation. OMET is encouraging faculty to remind students about the surveys, to provide class time to fill them out, and suggest that faculty give the students explicit examples of how OMET results were used for ongoing process improvement. They are also moving towards a process of using administrative requests vs faculty requests for the surveys. Any changes to the OMET template would have to be processed at the School or Unit level. Each semester, OMET surveys are slated to launch 3 weeks prior to the end of classes. This spring they will launch March 31st.

The committee would like to continue to explore the development of a survey to assess student learning and provide meaningful information for the faculty, separate from the assessment of classroom climate.

Old Business:

Committee member Zsuzsa Horvath created a Box account for the committee's ongoing discussions on the creation of digital ethics modules and surveys designed to assess student learning. These resources can be found by SEPC members at:

<https://pitt.box.com/s/529jeigloqlv1n4utjwu>

Vice Provost updates:

- Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) is hosting a town hall meeting this Friday, March 21st at the Renaissance Hotel in downtown Pittsburgh. The purpose of the meeting is to comment on the proposed changes to the standards that comprise the 'Characteristics of Excellence'.

<http://www.msche.org/documents/characteristicsdraft120913.pdf>

The new regulations also include information related compliance with relevant federal regulations. The commission will be looking for institutional compliance in the following areas, all of which will be reviewed as part of the Periodic Review Report (PRR) and self-study:

- ❖ student identity 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 state and other accrediting agencies
- ❖ contractual relationships; and
- ❖ assignment of credit hours

[Added March 26] Vice Provost Juan Manfredi and Associate Provost William Shields attended the meeting. Vice Provost Manfredi will give us a report at the next SEPC meeting on April 21st.

- The University of Pittsburgh will be hosting the 9th annual 'ACC Meeting of the Minds' conference on April 3-5, 2014.
- The University of Pittsburgh has a MOU with the Department of Defense to assist with facilitating the admissions process for veterans. This will include both undergraduate and graduate students.

Faculty Assembly update:

- **Senate Plenary**

The next senate Plenary titled, "The Research University in the Age of Digital Information" will be held on Wednesday, March 19 from noon – 3 pm.

- **Retired /Moving Authors**

How does a retired or moving author's correspondence get handled? Library system is investigating a system called ORCID. If everyone was registered with ORCID, it would provide researchers/authors with an identity that they could go in and update as their contact information changes.

- **Benefits and Welfare committee** gave an overview of their committee's activity since the beginning of the academic year.

Highlights include:

- In an effort to communicate better with faculty/staff about the current available benefits John Kozar is establishing a column titled "Did you know?" for the University Times. This column will help bring awareness to various benefits offered by the University.
- Also, we are to inform our respective schools of the availability of individual advisory sessions within TIAA CREFF or group meetings within our schools. Prior to this, sessions were only offered at the location on Craig Street.
- On July 1, 2014 UPMC Campus's will become Tobacco Free – All physicians, staff, visitors, volunteers, students and contractors will be covered. The changes are being implemented to reduce the levels of second-and third-hand smoke. They are looking into the feasibility of extending the smoke free policy to the Pitt Campus.

- It was announced that starting with the FY 2015, faculty and staff will be able to roll over up to \$500 into their FY 2016 Flexible Spending Accounts. Prior to that, if you didn't use your yearly allocations, you would lose them.
- Assist America is a provider of global emergency services. They provide emergency travel assistance through employee benefits. They are open 24hr/day, 7 days a week. Any faculty or staff who carries the UPMC health plan and is traveling more than 100 miles from home for less than 90 days is covered by assist America. Children and spouses covered under the UPMC plan are also covered. Travel could be business or pleasure.

ACIE Update:

The ACIE Council will be meeting to review the 33 proposals that were received for the Innovation in Education grants. The proposal review session will take place on Friday March 21st.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 4:40 PM.

***The next meeting will be held on April 21st at 3 PM.*