

## Senate Educational Policies Committee

Meeting Minutes for March 16, 2020

**Attendance:** Bonneau, Chris; Cecchini, Nicole (absent); Falcione, Bonnie; Hampton, Marian; Horvath, Zsuzsa; Jacqueline, Camille (absent); Dang, Lynn (absent).

Kelly, M. Kathleen (absent); Kucinski, Barb; Landsittel, Douglas; Lausberg, Cynthia (absent); Lotz, Andrew (excused); McCarthy, Joseph; Molinaro, Lori; Oh, Eunjoo (absent); Pollini, Lorraine (absent); Rikstad, Pam (excused); Schein, Michelle; Shaver, Kevin (absent); Stoner, John; Vento, Barbara; Urban, Nathan; Wilson, Frank (absent).

**Call to Order:** the meeting was called to order at approximately 3:00pm by Co-Chair Bonnie Falcione.

**Approval of Minutes:** the minutes were approved pending edits received by Friday March 20th.

### Announcements

Co-Chair Stoner made the following announcements: next scheduled meeting is April 20th; planned guests Laurie Kirsch and Cynthia Golden had unanticipated last-minute schedule changes due to circumstances surrounding the COVID19 pandemic and requested to be rescheduled to discuss Assessment of Teaching; Senate President Chris Bonneau was added to the agenda to make opening remarks to the committee.

Senate President Bonneau thanked committee members for the work that everyone is doing, for their commitment to the committee especially recognizing the importance of anticipated committee work in the upcoming weeks, and for everyone's flexibility in the unprecedented time and circumstances of the COVID19 pandemic.

### Old Business

Religious Observances: members of the committee's working group (Schein, Shaver, and Kucinski) presented a draft statement and discussion ensued. Points raised included the importance of faculty being responsive to student requests, factors influencing timelines for students to provide requests, benchmarking with other schools, whether to include specific deadlines for requests (within first 2 or first 3 weeks of the semester) and including what actions faculty will take. The committee recommended further revising the draft based on the discussion in order to review and vote on at the next meeting.

Teaching Load: it was shared that some schools have reallocated teaching loads and that this may impact faculty (i.e. reduced time allotted to make course updates especially for textbook changes or any class preparation especially considering unknowns for how courses will be offered in the future). The committee agreed that this issue needs to be monitored more closely in the future for further discussion.

### Updates from Vice Provosts:

**Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies** Joe McCarthy reported on early enrollment that was scheduled to start on March 20<sup>th</sup>, and while it had been considered to modify this date it was ultimately maintained. VP McCarthy also reported on the US Department of Education and PA Department of Education and Middle States requirements for 15 weeks of classes and the impact of this on the decision not to hold classes the week after Spring Break because of the COVID19 pandemic. He described 3 possible options: adding a week, using an equivalent effort plan, and requesting a waiver to the Department of Education. A waiver was requested and was

pending at the time of the meeting. VP McCarthy also reported that peer institutions are allowing students to change grades from letter grades to pass/fail after the end of the semester due to the circumstances surrounding the completion of the term during the COVID19 pandemic and that similar discussions are taking place at the university with input being sought from the Deans for potential impact on accreditation and other related concerns. The committee provided input on this including how it could affect students' future opportunities and that students should be provided with a means for receiving advising on their specific circumstances and if they are considering pursuing this option.

**Vice Provost for Graduate Studies** Nathan Urban reported that under the current circumstances pertaining to the COVID 19 pandemic that a lot of work was being done to determine the current status of all graduate students. This also included making sure the needs of students on clinical rotations are being met (for example are they able to complete their clinical training requirements for graduation). It also includes addressing the needs of students with scheduled thesis defenses (the library is assisting with coordinating remote sessions). Other students have ongoing needs to be on campus (labs) or using public transportation, and issues surrounding these concerns are being addressed. Processes are being created such that any program that needs to shut down will have a process developed to accomplish this so that any associated risks can be identified and mitigated. Co-Chair Stoner shared that study abroad students are all home except a small number who were determined are safer in place and updates on their status are being addressed. VP McCarthy shared that adjustments are being made for credit for study abroad students.

### **Meeting Updates**

Faculty Assembly: Co-Chair Stoner reported on the announcement recently released that VP Urban will be leaving the university as he has accepted the position of Provost at Lehigh University. Congratulations were extended to VP Urban by committee members. Co-Chair Stoner also reported that here was not much reported at the meeting otherwise pertaining to the committee based on the update he received from Ms. Molinaro. He reported that the Provost recommended a change to the tenure policy whereby an extension of the clock for promotion could occur and this was approved. He also reported that there was a Health and Safety presentation.

Senate Council: Co-Chair Stoner indicated an update will be provided after the next meeting.

ACIE: Co-Chair Falcione reported that at the last meeting on February 17<sup>th</sup> an update on the Assessment of Teaching was provided by VP Laurie Kirsch and that the details would be shared by Dr. Kirsch in a formal presentation at the next committee meeting. She also reported that the Innovation in Education awards review process was outlined for the upcoming review of proposals, and that an update on the Center for Mentoring was provided. VP Urban who has had a pivotal role in the center provided details surrounding the mentoring training program that had been conducted under a train-the-trainer concept that involved 32 faculty members. He also described that the center is focused on the training of mentees on how to be successfully mentored, best practices for mentoring and assessment of mentoring. The next ACIE meeting is scheduled for March 26<sup>th</sup>.

### **New Business**

Issues pertaining to requiring student consent for the recording of classes conducted with technology such as Zoom was discussed since Pennsylvania is a two-party state.

**Adjournment:** the meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:40pm.