

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

**Present:** Amy Aggelou, Bonnie Falcione, Zsuzsa Horvath, M. Kathleen Kelly, Mary Lou Liebold, Laurel Roberts, Alberta Sbragia,

**Excused:** Linda Frank, Irene Frieze, Juan Manfredi, Kimberly Brown-Riley, Cynthia Tananis

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

**Approval of Minutes:**

The January meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

**New Business:**

Dr. Joe Horne from CIDDE spoke about hybrid/online course structure and best practices; he also discussed the resources available for plagiarism awareness.

- Hybrid courses typically involve some face to face interactions coupled with on-line components. Transitioning completely to a hybrid format is difficult to do all at once and teaching evaluations will often suffer initially because students will be resistant to change. He recommended starting small – pick 2 or 4 lectures to start with.
- Dr. Horne spoke of the many advantages to using webinars in hybrid courses. He also spoke about using Gamification to engage students. Gamification also known as **Game-Based Learning (GBL)** – refers to the incorporation of game mechanics into non-game situations in order to boost motivation, creativity, and productivity.
- The question was raised about the ability to confirm student participation in a hybrid course. Dr. Horne recommended using the chat box feature during a webinar. The chat box allows you to ask your audience questions at different intervals during the presentation to determine if your audience is listening. You can also use a polling feature to ascertain student viewership.
- Dr. Horne discussed one of the downsides of hybrid courses being the students' expectation of 24/7 availability of the professor. In order to set appropriate student expectations for the course, he recommended specific parameters in a syllabus such as "I will respond to your email within 24 hours."

Webinar tools to aid in this process are:

1. Microsoft Lync. Microsoft Lync is a good chat tool, but has proven to be problematic for webinars. It also doesn't handle different users very well (MAC, IBM, etc.) Microsoft Lync is FREE to all Pitt users.
2. Adobe Connect. Adobe Connect provides a good webinar tool for the classroom. Instructors who are interested can request a free trial through CIDDE. Those schools that may be interested in adopting should contact the School of Engineering. Because a contract is already in place with that school, there would be a huge discount.

Plagiarism software like “Turnitin” and “iThenticate” were also discussed as being available to Pitt users. In addition to these tools, Instructors can also cut and paste large portions of student papers into *Google* to get a quick assessment of whether or not text has been plagiarized.

There was also an interest in creating modules that can be used for plagiarism awareness. The discussion led to the committee agreeing they would be interested in working with CIDDE to create those modules. Dr. Horne referenced a Digital Ethics series that he developed at Georgia State focusing on Plagiarism, Social Media and Copyright.

[\[http://technology.gsu.edu/help-center/digital-ethics/\]](http://technology.gsu.edu/help-center/digital-ethics/)

**The committee was enthusiastic about creating a similar series here at the University of Pittsburgh and will plan to work with CIDDE.**

#### **Old Business:**

In light of the discussion during Dr. Carl Wieman’s talk at the *Assessment* conference, and the ongoing discussions of the SEPC about the use and utility of the OMET surveys, the committee would like to revisit this topic. The discussion centered on the desire to 1) provide meaningful information to the teaching faculty and to use this information for its intended purpose, 2) recommendations for distinguishing between classroom climate survey and assessment of student learning used in faculty evaluations and promotion.

**An OMET representative will be attending our March meeting in March to discuss this topic.**

#### **Vice Provost update:**

Dr. Sbragia gave an update on the Versatile PhD panel discussion that was held by the Office of Academic & Career Development (OACD); over 100 participants attended. Four PhDs who found jobs outside academia emphasized their success in being able to generalize the process of planning and writing the dissertation, and framing themselves as being very good project managers. As job applicants they emphasized their abilities in handling complex projects, long-term planning, research and communication.

#### **Faculty Assembly update:**

Faculty Assembly has not met since our last meeting. It will meet on February 18<sup>th</sup>; an update will be given at the next SEPC meeting.

#### **Adjournment:**

Meeting was adjourned at 4:40 PM.

*\*\*The next meeting will be held on March 17<sup>th</sup> at 3 PM.*