

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH  
Senate Educational Policies Committee  
January 29, 2014  
Meeting Minutes

**Present:** Amy Aggelou, Zsuzsa Horvath, M. Kathleen Kelly, Mary Lou Liebold, Juan Manfredi, Kimberly Brown-Riley, Laurel Roberts, Alberta Sbragia, Cynthia Tananis

**Excused:** Bonnie Falcione; Helen Petracchi

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

**Approval of Minutes:**

The November meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

**Dates for spring term meetings (all meetings held at 3 PM in 826 CL):**

- February 17
- March 17
- April 21
- May 19

**Old Business:**

The committee will make the recommendation that faculty utilize the existing Course Description forms as a means of keeping their course information up to date and informative for the students.

The committee will explore the best way to facilitate implementation across all units and Departments.

The Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences recently published guidelines for undergraduates teaching experiences and these outline the goals and expectations of this experience.

<http://www.as.pitt.edu/fac/teaching/guidelines-arts-and-sciences-undergraduate-teaching-experience>

The Biology Department is in the process of developing modules that would formalize the process for training the UG course assistants. Once the modules are developed they will be made available to other Departments/units.

**Vice Provost updates:**

Vice-Provost Manfredi:

- The Discipline Based Science Education Center (dB –SERC) will be unveiled this Thursday (January 30<sup>th</sup>). The Center will be under the leadership of Dr. Chandralekha Singh. The Center will be work with faculty members to develop and implement strategies for effective teaching and assessment of student learning in the sciences. The inaugural lecture for this event will be given by Nobel Laureate Carl Wieman on the topic of “Taking a Scientific Approach to Science Education”.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Assessment Conference will take place on Friday, January 31<sup>st</sup>. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Carl Wieman, Professor of Physics from Stanford

University, and a 2001 Nobel Prize winner in Physics. There will be 3 simultaneous breakout sessions on assessment in Undergraduate programs (Pittsburgh campus and Greensburg campus) and assessment in Graduate programs.

- Middle States update: MSCHE is in the beginning of a process to review and reduce its Accreditation Standards from 14 to 7. This reduction is not meant to change the focus of the standards, but is being proposed as a way to streamline & eliminate redundancies. MSCHE will host a series of town hall meetings to discuss and request comments on the proposed changes; one of the meetings will be in Pittsburgh on March 21<sup>st</sup>. For more information on the proposed changes please see:

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

The new regulations also include information related to MSCHE-accredited institutions' 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

#### Vice Provost Sbragia:

- The Versatile PhD has had a very successful rollout at Pitt since it was first accessible to students in summer 2013. To date Pitt has 362 active users; 59% of users have visited the Premium Content sites.
- On February 11<sup>th</sup> the Office of Academic Career Development (OACD) will be holding a panel discussion for graduate students and post-docs introducing the Versatile PhD. Details and registration can be found at:

<http://www.oacd.health.pitt.edu/vphd>

- An ad Hoc group on Veteran Affairs is working on a plan for Pitt students- undergraduate and graduate- to be able to easily access resources that are available to veterans. The admissions applications are also being revised to include questions specifically asking if the student is a veteran.

#### **ACIE update:**

The Council's last meeting took place at CIDDE where Cynthia Golden and colleagues gave an overview of PITTs experience to date with MOOCs.

Applications are due for Innovation in Education Awards this Friday, January 31<sup>st</sup>

**Faculty Assembly update:**

Shared Governance and the definitions of *Open vs. Executive* sessions were discussed. “From time to time, the meetings of Faculty Assembly, Senate Council, and the Standing Committees of the Senate are held in Executive Session instead of their normal mode (Open Session). All meetings are normally open to members of the University community, although Standing Committees may meet in Executive Session when necessary and appropriate for dealing with confidential matters.” The assembly discussed the implications for holding meetings in executive session. It was proposed that a general set of guidelines for the committees be developed. It was also recommended that each committee chair have an understanding that “Open Session” is the default.

As Chair of the Athletics Committee, Jay Irrgang is slated to present at the next meeting on his committee’s decision to decline the Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics’ (COIA) request to have a senate approved athletics representative appointment.

**The next Faculty Assembly Meeting is slated for Tuesday, February 18, 2014.**

**Topics to consider for SEPC:**

Members listed several topics that the committee should consider discussing at future meetings. Ideas listed were as follows:

1. Large class initiative
2. Hybrid courses—what are the best practices?
3. Development of plagiarism modules
4. Best practice guidelines when using iThenticate as it relates to publishing research papers, especially with respect to technical parts of papers (methodology sections) and how to cite one’s previous work in order not to plagiarize.

**Adjournment:**

Meeting was adjourned at 4:20 PM