

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
Senate Educational Policies Committee
January 26, 2012
Meeting Minutes

Present: John Close, Bonnie Falcione, Kathy Kelly, Juan Manfredi, Jay Rajgopal, Alberta Sbragia, Alex Zimmerman

Excused: Amy Aggelou, Jessica Brand, Burhan Gharaibeh, Debbie Miller, Karen Zellars

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 2:40 PM. The minutes from the November, 2011 meeting were approved by committee members via email in lieu of the December meeting.

New Business:

1. New Business:

SEPC meeting dates & times for spring term were reviewed.

Student access to OMET evaluations: the question was raised as to whether or not the OMET course evaluations can be accessible to students. This issue comes as a result of students' desire to have legitimate access to student feedback about specific courses and faculty prior to class registration. The point was made that many students are currently using information on public websites such as 'Rate My Professors'. The committee discussed the pros and cons of having such information readily available and agreed that, if adopted, it should be optional for faculty. There was no consensus on this idea but the committee agreed it was worth exploring. Dr. Manfredi and Dr. Sbragia will discuss the idea with Dr. Andy Blair in his role as Vice-Provost for Faculty Affairs. Additionally, Mr. Zimmerman (UG representative to SEPC) will get benchmarking data from other institutions who allow student access to teaching evaluations.

Access to course syllabi: the question was raised as to whether or not more information on course requirements and expectations can be available to students when they are registering for classes. The discussion centered on the issue of students wanting more detailed information about a course (e.g. workload for course; grading criteria, etc) prior to registration. The committee discussed ideas about how this might be implemented and the possible barriers. The committee asked Mr. Zimmerman (UG representative to the SEPC) to first discuss with Dr. John Twyning (Associate Dean, UG Studies) and the A&S Council. The SEPC will revisit this once more information is obtained.

2. Vice Provost updates:

- a. Dr. Manfredi provided an update on the progress of the Middle States Accreditation Self-Study. A preliminary accreditation visit occurred October 31-November 2 on the Pittsburgh campus and the feedback from that visit was very favorable. The Self-Study document was recently made available to the University community with a request for comments by January 31st, prior to the final document submission on March 1. The Accreditation visit will occur April 11-14, 2012 and the focus will be on Standards #7 (Institutional Assessment) & #14 (Assessment of Student Learning).

- b. The 2011 'Gainful Employment' report was successfully submitted.
- c. Dr. Sbragia distributed a first draft of the *International Graduate & Undergraduate Students* report. This report is a compilation of the university's enrolled international graduate and UG students as of October 2011. It also lists students and faculty who have (or had) received Fulbright Scholar awards. The goal is to have a better mechanism for tracking and describing the diversity of international students and faculty at Pitt. Additionally, the reporting will provide a means for raising the visibility of Pitt's Fulbright awards and other awards for international study. Dr. Sbragia asked the committee members to share the report with their respective units and to provide any updates/edits for the report.

3. Faculty Assembly Update:

John Close reported on the recent Faculty Assembly meeting. Several committee reports were given. Minutes from the meeting can be found on the Senate website.

<http://www.pitt.edu/univsenate/faminutes.html>

4. ACIE Update:

Bonnie Falcione updated the committee on the recent ACIE Council meeting. This included a briefing on the pending report from the OMET pilot on-line evaluations; a reminder that ACIE Award proposals are due January 31st; and that CIDDE will be hosting Susan Ambrose again this spring as one of the authors of "How Learning Works" for the faculty book discussion.

5. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 23, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

M. Kathleen Kelly, PhD, PT
SEPC Co-Chair