

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
Senate Educational Policies Committee
March 18, 2011
Meeting Minutes

Present: John Close, Judy Erlen, Bonnie Falcione, Laura Fonzi, Bev Gaddy, Kathy Kelly, Juan Manfredi, Debbie Miller, Michael Pinsky, Jay Rajgopal, Alberta Sbragia, Charlene Trovato, Alex Zimmerman

Excused: Amy Aggelou, Jess Yokley

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 1:15 PM. The minutes from the February, 2011 SEPC meeting were approved.

New Business:

1. Vice Provost updates:

Dr. Manfredi provided a brief update on the progress of the Middle States Accreditation Self-Study. The University is using a 'Selected Topics' option and will focus on "*Using a University Wide Culture of Assessment for Continuous Improvement*". Dr. Manfredi reported that the Self-Study report is in the process of being written and that drafts have been sent to Provost Beeson, Sam Conte and Sheila Rathke.

Dr. Manfredi also reported the new regulations established by the Secretary of Education related to Program Integrity under the Higher Education Opportunity Act. Those that were mentioned and may have immediate implications for the university include: standardizing the definition of a 'credit hour'; authorization from home states for students enrolled in Pitt distance education programs (if an institution is offering postsecondary education through distance or correspondence education in a State in which it is not physically located, the institution must meet any State requirements for it to be legally offering distance or correspondence education in that State. An institution must be able to document upon request from the Department that it has such State approval); and ensuring that 'eligible' students receive financial aid. The latter might include issues such as verifying the validity of H.S. diplomas, requiring the institution to ensure that students are achieving satisfactory academic progress.

Dr. Sbragia discussed some of the recent challenges with the disaster in Japan and the effects on our undergraduate and graduate students who were studying in Japan. The university follows the guidelines and mandates from the State Department during such times. The Safety Abroad Advisory Committee is charged with making recommendations to the Provost re: the safety of travel in specific areas where there may not be clear guidelines from the State Department. Dr. Sbragia also emphasized the difference in restrictions for undergraduate students vs graduate students, the latter being given a different consideration based on their research expertise in their choice to study abroad.

2. Faculty Assembly update:

University Senate President Michael Pinsky attended the meeting to initiate discussion with the committee around the issue of adequately addressing and assessing the challenges of educating students in the 21st century. He noted that the Provost will be addressing this at the upcoming Faculty Assembly meeting.

3. Next meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 15, 2011 at 1:15 pm in Room 826 Cathedral of Learning.

4. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm.

Submitted by,
Kathy Kelly (Co-Chair)