

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH  
Senate Educational Policies Committee  
October 15, 2012  
Meeting Minutes

**Present:** Amy Aggelou, Bonnie Falcione, J.P. Matychak, Laurel Roberts, Alberta Sbragia, CJ Stavrakos, Cynthia Tananis, Alex Zimmerman, Patti Mathay (guest)

**Excused:** Kathy Kelly, Thomas Platt, Jay Rajgopal, Nashaat Rizk

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m. The minutes from the September meeting were approved.

**Old Business:**

Transcript Update – Patti Mathay, the interim university registrar, was present to talk about the progress on posting test credits on transcripts. Patti, who has spent the last 36 years at the University of Pittsburgh, accepted the position of interim registrar after the retirement of Ralph Hertel in June of this year.

The transcript project is taking longer than expected due to the necessity of creating multiple templates. Patti estimates that test credits will begin to be added to transcripts beginning sometime in November, however, these test credits will be added to the official transcript by means of an addendum. Patti provided an example of the addendum to those that attended the meeting. Exhaustive tests must be run before the system is converted completely and the test credits are incorporated into the official transcript. Patti projects that this complete conversion will occur sometime within the next calendar year. Transfer credits will still only be summarized. There is no intention of putting transfer credit detail on the transcript. After the system is converted ALL transcripts printed or requested electronically will have the test credit detail included (even to those transcripts of graduates prior to the system conversion.)

If students travel to Thackeray Hall in person, they can receive up to 10 hard copies of their official transcript per day. Students who request a hard copy be mailed are charged \$6 per copy. Student who request that an electronic copy be emailed are charged \$5 per electronic copy. Students cannot have an electronic copy emailed to themselves.

Student access to OMET – Committee agreed to continue to discuss the topic of making the results of OMET Teaching Surveys available to the students. Alex Zimmerman briefed the newest members of the committee on why the students would like access to the results of these surveys. Reasons included:

- 1) Students will take OMETs more seriously if they knew that the surveys were going to be used by their peers.
- 2) Will allow students to make more educated decisions concerning their educational experience.
- 3) Allowing students to view results would decrease student reliance on sites like “Rate my Professor,” to help make decisions concerning which courses to take.

Committee shared concerns with current OMET instrument being used in such a manner. Also the point was raised that each school uses the OMET in a different capacity (teaching improvement, tenure, advancement, etc.). Concerns were raised with going online and the initial decrease in participation rates and how this may affect faculty.

Pitt's Business School currently permits the students to view the results of their OMET surveys. Committee agreed that they would be interested in having a representative from the Business school come and share their experience (pros and cons) of making their OMET survey results available to the students. J.P. Matychak (staff member from Business School) volunteered to speak with his Dean to identify an appropriate individual.

Alex Zimmerman reported that due to the activities at the conclusion of last semester, this issue was not brought to Arts & Sciences. Alex questioned the committee as to how to proceed. It was suggested that he make an appointment with Dr. Twyning in Arts & Sciences.

Social Media – Committee unsure that an actual statement needs to be rendered. Questions raised by committee members included: Would this be more of a recommendation to the students? Would this be called: a statement, policy, position? Is there a policy that addresses the issues raised with posting items via social media (copyright, bullying, code of conduct, etc?) Could another current policy or statement possibly be extended to include the term “social media?”

Group agreed that this topic needed further discussion.

**Vice Provost Update:**

Dr. Sbragia reported that there is a quiet room available for Doctoral students working on their dissertations—the room is located on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Hillman library. Students can register online or at the main lending desk. Once registered, the student will receive a code to enter. Because of the limits on space, Doctoral students from the Health Sciences schools are not eligible to use this space.

Dr. Sbragia also mentioned that TA training for large introductory classes is being explored.

**Faculty Assembly:**

All faculty are urged to become familiar with the June 2012 National Academics report on maintaining the competitive position of the nation's research universities. The report titled “Research Universities and the Future of America: Ten Breakthrough Actions Vital to Our Nation's Prosperity and Security,” can be found via the following link.  
[http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record\\_id=13396](http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=13396) .

**Adjournment:**

Meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

*Next meeting is slated to be held on November 19th, 2012 at 3:00 in CL 826.*