

Minutes of Senate Educational Policies meeting September 2023 (agenda follows minutes)

Approved Minutes 22 September 2023

Co-chair Stoner opened the meeting @ 10:02 a.m. Recording started.

Attending: Lemmon, Levine, McCormick, Stoner (co-chair), Godley (VP Graduate Studies and Interim VP Undergraduate Studies), Wert (co-chair), Rikstad, Kear (President, University Senate), Falcione (co-chair), Wasser, Schein, Lechtenberg, Fennimore

**Stoner** introduced new members (Lechtenberg, Fennimore, and Wasser). Indicated would introduce other new members when in attendance.

**Stoner** referred committee members to the availability of meeting recordings pending submission of formal minutes to the committee.

**Stoner** will solicit meeting time preferences for the Spring semester.

### **New Business**

Co-chair **Stoner** briefed SEPC on University exploration (via Interim Provost McCarthy and Associate Vice Provost Torres) of University-wide general education curriculum. Three year project. SEPC Co-chairs were invited to meet with Torres to discuss, meeting date to be set. AVP Torres will address Faculty Assembly on 10/4/2023. As economy and job market involves, other skills like digital literacy and professional development have increased in importance and this may be one way for the University to ensure that students get crucial foundational skills.

Committee members asked if the current anti-black racism course looks at other forms of discrimination/hate. Co-chair Stoner indicated that hoped-for three-credit course on racism/discrimination (connected to SEPC and Massenberg petition) would cover multiple identities/types of discrimination.

**Schein** content announcement for class connected to student wellbeing—SHRS. Counseling degree program content announcement.

Ongoing discussions of generative AI at various levels of University (department, unit/school, University). Co-chairs Falcione, Wert, and Stoner have been invited to serve on University Committee on Generative AI that is meeting not to make policy but to make recommendations as to potential issues/ramifications of having one or more policies/guidelines on generative AI and the most crucial aspects that should be considered by the University in making such a policy.

### **Report from VP Godley**

**Godley** (now also Interim VP for UGS—reporting on both UG and GR matter while Interim Provost McCarthy has stepped away from his usual liaison role with SEPC)—Supreme Court decision on race-conscious admissions. How can Pitt both align with the law and still seek a diverse learning environment (including racial diversity)? VP Marc Harding, VP Godley, and others attended SAAA meeting to talk about the University's approach.

UCGS and PACUP subcommittees to update graduate student mentoring among other issues. Bring to shared governance in Spring in hopes of enacting policies by AY 25

Ongoing discussion of decommissioning policies and introducing them (often in revised form) as academic regulations/guidance through the Office of the Provost. These are decommissioned big "P"

University policies that are very difficult to change. A number of those policies have been devolved into Provost-level-area academic policies/regulations/guidelines. Expect to see further revisions throughout the year.

Two former policies (ca. 1993) that are being recommended for removal. Out of date not only in terms of language and specificity (old SIS) and inaccurate information about things like minimum funding levels

<https://www.provost.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/GSA-TA-TF-GSR-Scholarships-AcadReg.pdf>

<https://www.provost.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/Procedure-GSA-TA-TF-GSR-Scholarships.pdf>

Replaced with

<https://www.gradstudies.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/assets/GSRAcademicRegs6-1-22.pdf>

<https://www.gradstudies.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/assets/TATFGSAAcademicRegs6-1-22.pdf>

Asking SEPC support to decommission the University-level policies that have since been replaced by more accurate regulations. Not sure which policies are involved. Will report back in October.

**Fennimore** asked about how these changes get communicated to schools/programs. VP Godley mentioned that they go to deans/associate deans but that those structures vary within schools. Go to Council of Deans.

<https://www.policy.pitt.edu/university-policies-and-procedures/university-policies-category/academic-policies>

@ UG level, things seem to be fairly smooth. First “real” post-pandemic Fall. Anti-Black Racism course continues to be offered. Very few disenroll. VP Godley and several colleagues co-authored a book chapter on the course recently. Three-year project to consider new University-level general-education requirements.

Student success programs (McNair Scholars and Kessler Scholars). With Interim status, Juan Manfredi is serving this year as Associate Vice Provost for UG Studies—PACUP, calendar committee, athletics. Dr. Belkys Torres and Dr. April Belback are part of Provost team working on various aspects of student success.

@ Grad level, enrollment slightly higher than last year. Building back to prior enrollment levels from about a decade ago. Three professional development initiatives being rolled out. Graduate Career Foundations program. <https://www.gradstudies.pitt.edu/graduate-career-foundations> Offers students chance to gain expertise in six areas that have been nationally determined as core competencies. Students can get an electronic transcript to reflect these competencies.

Career Exploration workshops <https://www.gradstudies.pitt.edu/professional-development/career-exploration-and-support>

Interstride specifically for international students <https://interstride.com/pitt/> helps students understand company track records in sponsoring visas for international students and helps students interested in working abroad.

Ervis Fellowship program extended to 26 students across schools. Help with networking and mentoring for UR Ph.D. students. Also programming for 1<sup>st</sup> gen UG students. Other programming includes DEI topics; students receive monthly newsletter about opportunities.

UCGS developed and approved new required educational module for grad students for building diverse learning communities. Includes intercultural competence and humility. Very close to launch.

Were able to issue a number of stipend advances for new faculty and graduate students with appointments. Over 100 graduate students took advantage. Been able for first time to assist students with direct payment for health insurance. Increased minimum student GSA/GSR to \$10k/semester. Med School and DSAS increased theirs above min. level. Talking with GPSG about stipend increases. Change in student health insurance for graduate students. Trying to respond to student concerns. Medical/expense hardship fund and task force to plan for student health insurance moving forward.

**Kear** asked **Godley** to share chapter on Anti-Black Racism course.

### Old Business

Co-chair **Stoner** briefly reported on FERPA committee that is drafting new FERPA policy for University. Will likely come for consideration by shared governance bodies in late Fall/early Spring.

English Language Institute update from **McCormick**—currently to be closed June 2024. Meeting in September to discuss. ELI has opportunity to submit proposal on future of ELI. How to disaggregate functions that serve the University as a whole or have regulatory/compliance functions vs. functions that may be more specific programming. **Godley** and **McCormick** have been working to assess needs for support for English language and looking at options for meeting needs of international students.

OMET questions on inclusive learning environment—**Falcione**—no progress was made with this over the summer. Described prior discussion has identified general interest in creating a set of questions rather than a single question to get beyond current vagueness.

Student Wellness statement has been separated from Provost's annual reminder about religious observances. Interim Provost McCarthy has reached out to President **Kear** and co-chair **Falcione** has generously agreed to help work on drafting that statement.

Outlier.org—No updates

LMS feedback—**Falcione**—Examsoft/Examplify platform being implemented in Pharmacy this year for professional degree program. Separate platform not part of Canvas.

Report on Faculty Assembly—questions/concerns raised about increases in student insurance costs. **Godley**--No change in premiums for students on appointment. Changes to copays only (\$250 deductible). Had been no changes to benefits and copays in two decades. Communication could have been a lot better. Task force creation is certainly one of the efforts to address this issue.

**Kear**—GPSG and Staff Council and FA BW committee member all represented on task force. Departments and units. Going forward plans will be part of conversation of medical group that considers plan changes

**Falcione**--ACIE met over the summer—subcommittee working on Master Teacher Program which will be a focus of the Fall for ACIE. Meetings on the books

Meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m. Recording stopped.



## **Senate Educational Policies Committee 22 September 2023**

(see information below to access the call)

10:00-11:30 am

1. Call to order
2. New Business
  - a. New members of SEPC/welcome of new committee members
  - b. Committee on Generative AI formed (Wert, Falcione, Stoner)
  - c. New work with Interim Provost McCarthy on possible gen-ed revisions
  - d. Interim Provost McCarthy's religious observance/ student wellness statements (Falcione)
3. Report from Vice Provost Amanda Godley
4. Old Business
  - a. FERPA draft policy (Stoner)
  - b. ELI closure/discussion (McCormick)
  - c. OMET questions on inclusive learning environments (Falcione)
  - d. Outlier.org
  - e. LMS feedback
  - f. SEPC Spring meeting schedule
5. Meeting Updates
  - a. Faculty Assembly
  - b. Senate Council
  - c. ACIE—Falcione
  - d. UCGS/PACUP—Schein/Cecchini
6. Adjournment
7. Next Meeting – Fall 2023

### **Zoom Info**

Stoner, John C is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: SEPC September 2023 Meeting

Time: Sep 22, 2023 10:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

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- 213.244.140.110 (Germany)
- 103.122.166.55 (Australia Sydney)
- 103.122.167.55 (Australia Melbourne)
- 149.137.40.110 (Singapore)
- 64.211.144.160 (Brazil)
- 149.137.68.253 (Mexico)
- 69.174.57.160 (Canada Toronto)
- 65.39.152.160 (Canada Vancouver)
- 207.226.132.110 (Japan Tokyo)
- 149.137.24.110 (Japan Osaka)

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