Minutes—Senate Educational Policies Committee—University of Pittsburgh—13 October 2023, 10-11:30 a.m.

Present: Falcione (co-chair), Stoner (co-chair), Wert (co-chair), Mahboobin, Godley, Johnson, Horvath, Kear, Fennimore, Lemmon, Levine, Rikstad, Meyer, Schein

1. **Call to order at 10:00am (Stoner)/Approval of minutes of September 2023 SEPC meeting**

Motion to approve: **Mahboobin** Seconded: **Schein**
Minutes of September 2023 SEPC meeting approved unanimously

2. **New Business**

No items of new business

3. **Report from Vice Provost Godley**

Returned to question of decommissioning policies raised at Sept. 2023 meeting. Some confusion over where 2 academic policies were listed (not clear why hadn't been on President Kear's list). Godley asks if SEPC accedes to decommissioning of the 2 specified old policies **Stone**r called for motion to vote to approve moving forward with deleting old policies. **Rikstad** motioned, **Mahboobin** seconded. **Committee members in attendance** voted unanimously to remove the old policies**.**

Godley—work continues for ongoing decommissioning of old polices and updating to new polices. Cleaned up and standardized Ph.D. milestones in Peoplesoft. Audit showed old milestones hadn't been updated consistently or regularly which could cause problems when students sought to graduate. Many different milestones across system. Worked with Office of the Registrar to create standard list of milestones that mirrors existing regulations. The Office of the Provost is requesting that units more regularly update milestones during semester in which that attempt/success happens. Doing so will also provide better data to the Office of the Provost regarding student progress through their programs. There are some predictable moments when students get "stuck" and having this data will better allow OTP to provide support structures to help students get past those. Support structures include writing groups; having better data could also allow OTP to add additional tools/structures. National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity has a writing group that is open to graduate students. Could provide more resources to mentors and advisors. **Fennimore** asked if changes applied to practice doctorates as well like the DNP in Nursing. **Godley** said there is no University-wide standard milestone requirement for professional doctorates (requirements differ across programs). There are options in Peoplesoft for programs to add milestones for their program. Wanted to start with Ph.D. because there are standard milestones (five in number). Will subsequently move to research Master's programs because they have two standard milestones. Then OTP can expand to think about other graduate programs. **Mahboobin** asked who will track milestones, advisors or graduate administrators? **Godley** responded that OTP hasn't asked that to change; while it differs across programs typically, administrators do that.

Additional happenings at graduate level—OTP has scheduled two workshops this Fall partnering with with the USC Center for Equity in Graduate Education on equity in graduate admissions and equity in holistic admissions. Important to share with program after Supreme Court ruling (SFFA vs. University of

North Carolina and SFFA vs. Harvard No. 20-1199, 29 June 2023) that race conscious admissions are no longer allowed. ,Invitations will go out soon. One is in person and one is online. **Stoner** asked at whom this is targeted. **Godley** replied that the University applied for a grant in Spring for underrepresented minority students in Natural Sciences/Engineering. Workshops initially targeted for 12 departments which applied for that grant. In-person workshop will be for those programs. Second workshop has a much higher capacity and will be virtual.

At the Undergraduate level, important and growing focus on transfer students. Interim Dean of Education Eboni Zamani-Gallaher has expertise on transfer programs. OTP working with OTR to make credit transfers and credit equivalencies more transparent and more accessible. Planning gathering in Spring with Interim Dean Zamani-Gallaher to flesh out further. **Fennimore** asked if a similar approach is being taken with graduate student transfer credits. **Godley** noted that those decisions are usually up to the program and that there are very few University-wide regulations that address graduate credits. There is something about the total number of credits being transferred which PACUP is discussing now. At graduate level, must have earned a grade of B or better. Those are only two University-wide regulations. **Fennimore** says they appreciate having flexibility of not having it overly regulated. Reports some students seem to chafe at apparent subjectivity in evaluating transfer credits. Faculty in Nursing try to assess whether courses are comparable not just in content but also in assessment as a concern. **Godley** gives hypothetical example from CCAC and says harder to do at graduate level. Recommends that programs at graduate and professional level to have conversations about how they determine transfer credits. Relates how her disciplinary home handles transfer credits in Education Ph.D. program. Don't allow transfer of some professional credits like student teaching. **Schein** is on committee looking at transfer credit policy and notes it is more difficult at grad level and is challenged by accreditation differences across professional programs; number of credits required by programs also varies **Godley** notes rules can vary widely especially range of credit limits in different degree programs. **Schein** agrees and says some programs want students to have "Pitt identity." Qualitative questions? Don't want transfer students set up to be unsuccessful.

Godley provided update on graduate student health insurance work. Task force has had its first meeting and OTP has been working to ensure that graduate students know about the medical hardship assistance fund to help students who face financial difficulties due to the change in the GSHP. Newsletter, graduate deans, will have information on fund on digital screens; posting at the health center and counseling center . The Office of the Provost would appreciate help in spreading word about it. Did get feedback from grad students that website sections were confusing and **Godley** indicated a separate website is live and new FAQs are coming as well. **Kear** noted additional efforts to get information out are welcome. **Godley** said newsletters go out to every graduate and professional student at Pitt. Worked with GPSG to help get the word out. Have put out messaging about Student Health Center and Counseling Center which are both available to graduate students. Also trying to think about how to disseminate helpful information about health care (how important to select PCP, preventative care which continues to be free). Trying to work with Student Affairs for both UG and GR students.

4. **Old Business**
   a. Introduction of new committee members—Student Government Board Vice President of Policy Sarah Mayer. **Mayer** introduced themselves.

b. Wellness statement/religious observances—**Falcione**--nothing new has happened. **Kear** and **Godley** indicated no movement on this that they are aware of either.

c. Decommissioning of University Policies (covered in VP report above)

d. Ad Hoc Committee on Generative AI—**Stoner** and **Wert** reported on ongoing *ad hoc* committee on generative AI. Two subcommittees - teaching/learning and research - summarized sub committees are tasked with identifying strengths/weaknesses/ concerns/ risks to make suggestions and possible recommendations that should be considered by the University related to Gnerative AI – **Stoner/Falcione** requested for EPC input for co-chairs to bring to the committee.

e. OTP exploration of University-wide general education requirements—**Falcione**, **Stoner**, and **Wert** reported upcoming meeting with AVP Torres and reported on Torres' presentation to Faculty Assembly.

f. FERPA draft policy—**Stoner**—nothing new to report save for ongoing discussions of necessary training for relevant University faculty, staff, and students. **Falcione** endorses multi-level training for FERPA

g. ELI—**Godley** reported continues to work with **McCormick** on needs including looking at data on variety of performance measures to better assess use and future student needs; Looking at testing role of ELI and comparing TOEFL scores and tests they take when they get to Pitt to see if retesting is necessary. Will be talking to schools about their sense of testing and instructional support that multilingual students need.

h. **Falcione** reports on OMET questions followed up with Michael Bridges; historically, may be a roadblock with collective bargaining agreement still being negotiated. Concerns that it might not be able to proceed may have since been resolved. **Kear** said she wasn't aware of union direction on OMET questions—SEPC is free to reach out to union and ask about what it is acceptable to discuss. Best for committees to communicate with the union on issues that relate to their mission. That is where shared governance question remained after Expanded Executive Committee. Contacts would be Chair of Bargaining Committee and/or Communication and Action Team

i.

j. Outlier—nothing to report

k. LMS feedback—nothing to report

l. Spring Meeting Schedule—waiting for OTP options

5. **Meeting Updates**

a. FA— Support resources for all related to current world events, report on AVP Torres on possible University gen-eds and Chancellor Gabel's discussion of mid-stream update to Plan for Pitt ("Plan for Pitt 2.75"); faculty are encouraged to reach out to her with comment/concern.
b.
c. SC—Israel/Palestine, Plan for Pitt, United Way (De Jong), safety training (De Jong), Yates on interim research data security/maintenance policies
d. ACIE updates—**Falcione** - 1st meeting Oct 3rd - Chaired by UCTL Director Michael Bridges , new members introduced , ACIE work over past years reviewed. OMET response rates went down during early COVID but have improved into Spring 2023 (not yet back to response rates of paper days). Interim Provost McCarthy charged ACIE to — 1. continue review of Innovation in Education Awards as a focus. Timeline includes RFP for council input, Nov posting, Feb deadline, awards announced in April. **Falcione** endorsed to share with faculty and encourage proposal submissions. UCTL is available for help in preparation of proposals. Generative AI may be a desired subtopic. 2. develop recommendations on further expanding diversity and inclusivity in the curriculum. 3. propose recommendations for Master Teacher Certification Program— renewed energy for this carry-over charge from last year . **Falcione** reminded EPC liaison to ACIE role includes information facilitation but also safeguarding considerations for timely sharing with EPC.
e. UCGS/PACUP –**Schein**—nothing substantive to report beyond what had been covered in Vice Provost Godley's report.

Meeting adjourned by Stoner at 11:35 a.m.