

## Minutes Senate Educational Policies Committee 19 January 2024, 9-10:30

a.m.

(see information below to access the meeting)

9:00-10:30 am

Attendance: Stoner, Falcione, Godley, Shaver, Rikstad, Lemmon, Petracchi, Fennimore, Cecchini, Schein, Wert, Kear, Levine, Lechtenberg, McCormick

1. Call to order at 9:02 a.m.
2. Approval of minutes from December 2023 meeting
  - a. Motion: **Fennimore** Second: **Cecchini**
  - b. Minutes approved unanimously with friendly amendment to remove orphaned line (**McCormick**).
3. New Business
  - a. February meeting will have presentation by UCTL Director of Academic Support Services Erik Arroyo regarding Student Support Services and high volume of student requests
  - b. Presentation by University Registrar Jonathan Helm, Brittany Conner (Policy Specialist, Office of Policy Development and Management), and Laurel Gift (Assistant Vice Chancellor for Compliance, Investigations, and Ethics) on updated FERPA policy and procedure (AC 04)—drafts pre-circulated
    - i. **Conner** briefly explained goal of presentation (update AC 04). Sought broad representation (different units from the University), met monthly Feb-Sep 2023, goal was to be more up to date with current FERPA regulations as well as formalize procedures already in practice at the University
    - ii. FERPA (50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2024), last reviewed in 2009. Applies to all “education records,” Review of “primary rights” of students, annual notification of Directory Information and student rights to restrict release including definition of “school officials” and “legitimate educational interest.” Also requires maintenance of certain records and disclosures of personally identifiable information.
    - iii. Key revisions in update:
      1. definition of what “in attendance” means;
      2. annual notice of rights; identification practices when seeking/acquiring student consent;
      3. maintenance of disclosures; limited disclosure of date of birth (defining when use is appropriate);
      4. new requirements for training; and provision for noncompliance. All employees (faculty and staff) will be required to complete FERPA training. Left room for additional training as needed, especially for those regularly working with student records.

- iv. Review and next steps—
  - 1. already reviewed by Academic Leadership Team and Operations Council.
  - 2. Public Comment will run from 1/9-2/7.
  - 3. Then review by Faculty Assembly, Senate Council, and the Chancellor.
- c. Questions
  - i. **Falcione** asked if students were represented on revision committee. One UG and GR student representative. Did they have comments? **Helm** replied that UG representative was actively engaged.
  - ii. **McCormick**—is gender identity considered directory information? **Helm** replied it is not considered directory information. Last guidelines from U.S Department of Education were in 2012. Could change with new regulations. **McCormick**—could date of birth status change? What level of decision making does Pitt have to determine what can be considered Directory Info? **Helm** noted that there are national guidelines via Dept of Ed. (things like social security number can never be considered, and others that are highly recommended not to be used but there is some flexibility...i.e. D.O.B.). *Ad hoc* Committee concluded it should ultimately be included but with caveats about its appropriate use. **Stoner** added that long discussions took place related to what items should or should not be in Directory Information (i.e. hometown, etc...) – it was taken seriously.
  - iii. **Kear**—was there benchmarking? Is Pitt more or less restrictive in terms of its FERPA policy? **Gift** responded that Ericha Geppert in her office had done extensive benchmarking of peers and aspirational peers. From this work, it does not appear that Pitt is too strict or too flexible – a nice balance was struck in the process. **Helm** agreed – benchmarking was extremely valuable to the conversation and decision making. **Stoner** also endorsed Gift and Helm responses.
- d. Motion to approve the draft policy as provided
  - i. Motion: **Petracchi**, Second: **Fennimore**.
  - ii. Approved unanimously (9-0, no abstentions)
- e. Motion to approve draft procedure
  - i. Motion: **Fennimore**, Second: **Schein**
  - ii. Approved unanimously (9-0, no abstentions)
- f. Next steps—
  - i. **Stoner** will present to Faculty Assembly and Senate Council (provided it is approved)
  - ii. **Kear** mentioned it could go on February agenda for Faculty Assembly
  - iii. **Connor** confirmed most recent version (including Operations Council edits) were included.

4. Report from Vice Provost Amanda Godley
  - a. Consideration of request from University Registrar to consolidate and revise two grading regulations
    - i. The two regulations were decommissioned last year, with others, to Provost's level regulations
    - ii. The registrar proposed to combine and update the proposals to better align with updated requirements; consolidated repetitive sections and updated terminology
    - iii. Discussed by UCGS and PACUP and approved
    - iv. Might see additional revisions due to prior recommendations related to combining G/I grade options
    - v. Questions
      1. **McCormick** – appreciative of combining information into a single source; questioned language choice for B-grade; **Godley** confirmed discussion on language choice (meritorious was used in prior document – but attainment was added to descriptor). **McCormick** noted that peer institutions offer variety of options – but nothing to offer to replace and notes challenge. **Fennimore** suggested “very good”.
    - vi. No other concerns voiced by committee. **Godley** noted that this will likely be approved by Provost and finalized during Spring term.
  - b. New OTP language about Readmission of student military service members to the Office of Veterans Services (OVS) website and University Catalog
    - i. **Godley**—FYI—not a policy but an explicit description of current practice at Pitt that is mandated by the Federal Government that allows accrediting as a Title IV institution. FYI item: what was added is not a policy but an explicit mandated practice by the government for Title IV institutions.
    - ii. Pitt received notice that they must post Student Service Members readmission practice; OVS website and UG/Grad Catalog; the Department of Defense desired that this be very explicitly laid out and viewable
    - iii. Questions
      1. **Stoner** – is there somewhere (center) student service member requirements are posted/listed? **Godley** noted purview of OVS.
      2. **McCormick** – will this information be accessible for students? **Godley** confirmed, through OVS at [www.veterans.pitt.edu/benefits](http://www.veterans.pitt.edu/benefits). **McCormick** – should it be explicitly stated that limitation of statute of limitations on return? **Godley** responded that there are still some exceptions to consider as programs are evolving; worthy to note the exceptions.
  - c. General Questions
    - i. **Stoner** asked Godley if her sense was that graduate student data is becoming more available to provide insight on graduate student body. **Godley** – confirmed that they have more data to better understand the

landscape of graduate student data; was able to provide graduate applicant data for the first time (i.e. PhD applicants up 19% over last year); offered to present any data at any time should there be an interest. **Stoner** – suggested that maybe towards end of year Godley could share graduate statistics. **Godley** noted that deans can request access to Graduate dashboard (via Amanda Brodish). Also data on student loan debt.

- ii. **Wert** – asked about accreditor pressure in his school to post/make transparent graduate program debt but school does not have access to undergraduate debt data. **Godley** says the graduate student loan dashboard only include debt incurred when the student is a graduate student at Pitt.
- iii. **Rikstad** – noted that all Federal Loan data is available to Pitt for students who completed UG elsewhere (with exception of private loans) – but all federal loan information can be obtained (Peter Capucci in Office of Admissions and Financial Aid (OAFA) is a good resource).

#### 5. Old Business

- a. Student wellness/religious observances (Falcione)
  - i. **Falcione**—waiting for updates/feedback
- b. Decommissioning of University Policies (Godley)
- c. UCGS/PACUP subcommittees
  - i. **Godley** notes all have given their reports. Academic Office at OTP will look at recommendations and put them in regulation form. Once in regulation form, SEPC and other bodies will see them (UCGS/PACUP, Provost Cabinet, etc.) Recommendations were at various levels of detail. Posthumous procedure should be posted sometime soon.
- d. Committee on generative AI (Wert/Falcione)
  - i. **Stoner** shared that the Ad Hoc committee wrote a report that was provided to with SVC Rutenbar and Interim Provost McCarthy – who requested providing additional guidance on developing policy; committee is now moving into different phase of how to operationalize movement towards making policy (considerations included making report more broadly available to capture additional information that some schools may already be engaging in; and possible dividing into groups to accomplish more discrete tasks and efficient accomplishment of broad tasks).
- e. OTP exploration of University-wide general education requirements
  - i. AVP Torres shared information last month; **Stoner** noted kick-off luncheon pending (**Stoner** encouraged anyone with interest to reach out and request opportunity to engage).
- f. FERPA draft policy
- g. ELI closure/discussion (McCormick)

- i. **Godley** noted recent productive meeting re: ELI and continuing conversations about future of ELI. **McCormick** thanked Godley for time and effort put in to explore options/opportunities.
  - h. OMET questions on inclusive learning environments (Falcione)
    - i. **Falcione** emailed various FA committees looking for feedback about who would want to be involved in working collaboratively with SEPC on, had received some positive responses to work collaboratively to move forward with process.
  - i. Outlier.org
  - j. LMS feedback
- 6. Meeting Updates
  - a. Faculty Assembly
    - i. Return to FA a draft IT policy and appropriate use of IT resources
      - 1. Policy approved
    - ii. Immunizations and vaccinations
      - 1. Policy had not been updated for some time
      - 2. Updates made with flexibility “built in”
      - 3. Approved
    - iii. DEI/Community Engaged scholarship being considered worthy for tenure/promotion
      - 1. Approved and sent back to units/departments/schools to design plans for implementation
      - 2. Can be viewed at  
<https://www.provost.pitt.edu/announcements/provost-memos/acknowledging-faculty-work-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-and-community>
  - b. Senate Council
    - i. Chancellor Gabel reported on Plan for Pitt refresh/update
    - ii. Discussion of departure of CFO Hari Sastri
  - c. ACIE—**Falcione**
    - i. First meeting of term 1/29. The call for proposals for the Provost’s Innovation in Education Award is due Feb 16<sup>th</sup>. The UCTL is available to discuss projects and assist those developing proposals. The group was encouraged to submit and applications themselves and encourage their peers to submit applications.
    - ii. <https://www.provost.pitt.edu/acie/awards>
  - d. UCGS/PACUP—Schein/Cecchini
    - i. Nothing additional
- 7. Adjournment @ 10:28 a.m.
- 8. Next Meeting – 23 February 2024 @ 9 a.m. (19<sup>th</sup> floor conference room CL or Zoom)