

Senate Educational Policies Committee 23 February 2024

9:00-10:30 am

Present: Attending: Falcione, Godley, Bridges (UCTL), Rikstad, Schein, Arroyo (UCTL), Culley (DRS), Stoner, Kear, Fennimore, Levine, Lemmon, McCormick

1. Call to order (Stoner)
2. Approval of minutes from January 2024 meeting
 - a. Following feedback on the need for edits to minutes, committee agreed to delay approval of minutes until March 2024 meeting
3. New Business
 - a. Presentation by University Center for Teaching and Learning Director of Academic Support Services Erik Arroyo
 - i. **Arroyo** gave PowerPoint presentation, explaining how the testing accommodations at the testing center are handled. Individual requests for accommodation. AIM database. Faculty upload exams, students schedule exams. Exams are scanned, saved, uploaded where they can be retrieved.
 - ii. 50 different combinations of accommodations possible based on time/tech accommodations
 - b. Growing pressure on Testing Center
 - i. 2014—n=5776, DRS 1732 or 30% In 2022 n=7900, 7278 DRS (n tests administered in testing center) or 92% Crowds out other types of testing
 - ii. **Kear**—what is “other testing?” **Arroyo** references types of other testing. Crowded out “other” testing populations —**Bridges** “it is a capacity issue”
 - iii. **Kear**—have those “others” stopped testing? **Arroyo**—no, but they have had to move elsewhere (closest similar center is in Monroeville). **Falcione**—do they still ask? Are the other places better? **Arroyo**—not better for them to go elsewhere, but unfortunately there is a greater need to serve the accommodated testing space so Pitt can no longer offer those. **Bridges**—for many of those previously administered whether internal stakeholders or external clients—often required proctoring at a certified testing center which Pitt was. We decided to focus on “primary mission”—we could refer them to other places
 - iv. **Arroyo** showed chart indicating “staircase climb up” Other than COVID pause, anticipating almost doubling by 2026-2027 more than 14000 exams by 2026. **Kear** asked why assumption of growth—**Arroyo** noted projection based on past trends. **Bridges**—increased growth of people requesting accommodated testing. Culley may be able to give better sense of growth anticipated. **Culley**—all things being equal this trend will continue (all things being equal—faculty continuing to offer timed exams

for their courses) since 2014-15 228% increase in students registered. As University continues to grow, we're going to see continued increase demand. **Fennimore**—can this be attributed to COVID and impact on all students across educational spectrum? Are we now seeing greater expectations on all parts that student experience was so awful that it will take a long time to get back to sense that timed tests are a reasonable expectation? Almost seems like a societal shift. Is it changed expectations or changed resources? **Arroyo**—group coming through now is group that had its high school experience compromised by COVID. **Arroyo** provided context and historical timeline. **Bridges** talked about whether requests were coming from classes less than 30 or classes 30+. Mostly these requests have come in larger classes. N=719 Largest number is courses that are enrollments from 51-100. courses. **McCormick** not a surprise about larger classes—do you have proportions within smaller classes that are asking for accommodations? (class of 10, class of 30) **Bridges**—at lower class size levels about 2% of class. 31-40 4%, 41-50 8% and goes up. **Stoner** asked about whether students might be proactively seeking more DRS accommodations because big classes are more likely to have things liked timed exams as metrics/evaluations. **Bridges**—may be something about nature of class size by which students have different ways in which they can establish expertise. Larger classes may fundamentally have more methods of assessment that include objective or timed assessment methods. **Culley** has heard this anecdotally from students. As we continued to support universal design principles, but don't have quantifiable data to reflect that. We don't have data on faculty who provide accommodation themselves. Testing Center never hears about that. **Falcione**—two points. Potentially the larger class enrollments are representative of 1st and 2nd year classes and/or younger students. Do we know if that is the case? Seems reasonable to think younger students are requiring more? **Bridges** says Falcione's instinct is probably right. I wouldn't be surprised if data supports your hypothesis. **Falcione**—likely echoes Arroyo's assertion about COVID impacts. **Falcione**—encouraging students to seek out accommodations and not be hesitant about seeking accommodations/services. Can speak for School of Pharmacy experience. Seeing greater numbers asking for accommodations both in Pharmacy as well as seeking those accommodations/testing through testing center.

- v. **Arroyo**—testing center is only pencil and paper exams only. **Culley**—affirmed Arroyo's point. Wanted to make sure we were understanding that these accommodations do not exist because a student is struggling but a student with a verifiable disability who is seeking appropriate accommodations to barriers to their learning and achievement as a result of those disabilities. We have a responsibility and a commitment as an institution to support them. **Stoner** affirmed Culley's point and that there is an important distinction between the former and latter. **Godley** asked

about SCI—large classes in which exams are online. Struggling with how to provide additional testing time in these large classes when they can't happen through the testing center. Any advice? **Arroyo** confirmed this is computer-based exam. **Arroyo** mentioned it might be possible for them to reserve one of the computer labs. **Bridges**--identifying a dedicated computer lab where you have an extended period of time to administer the exam. Encouraged SCI to talk to Arroyo. **Arroyo** switched to discussing finals week. Hours are expanded to 12 hour days and all day Saturday. These are just testing hours, not hours staff are in situ scanning and preparing. Registrar has been very helpful in providing additional testing spaces in Cathedral with additional temporary hire proctors. They are trained and oriented before finals week starts. Have had to use additional hardware as well from UCTL. 331% growth between 2014 and 2023 (374 in 2014 and 1615 in 2023). **Arroyo** noted Pitt is not alone in what is happening. Benchmark survey in 2023 showed 46/50 that administer accomm. testing and that they have seen an annual increase. Only six administer a similar volume. **Arroyo**—top challenges—space, volume, and demand on staff. Keeping up with increased demand and ensuring compliance on federal requirements for equal access. **Culley**—DRS' responsibility is to ensure accommodations are implemented based on "reasonable accommodations"—understand faculty play a significant role here in ensuring compliance. Existing room has 42 seats and two private rooms. **Bridges** says photo in slideshow suggests room is larger than it is. Cites dedication and commitment of staff. **Arroyo** noted four FTEs in Testing Center—testing population is very susceptible to test anxiety and staff also effectively work as counselors often to ameliorate on-site challenges. Kear asked if computers are there. Arroyo noted most computers are not there any more but computers that are there are used for assistive technology.

- vi. **Arroyo**—short-term solutions. Have gotten some space from Registrar. G35 daily 11 seats. Finals, three additional rooms (124 combined seats) which is where additional proctoring happens. DRS team has volunteered to help provide additional proctoring support. Rapid check-in—ID scanners. By 2024-2025 Printer/scanner that reads QR codes and uploads completed exams directly to AIM. Flexible testing times—could have positive impact if scaled up. Faculty preference is that accommodated exams happen @ same time as classroom exams. . Used Physics 110 as an example in 25 students received 100% time accommodation. Classroom 60 minutes, Testing center 120 minutes. This creates a crunch in the testing center. Reduced number of seats in that time for entire rest of University population. Would prefer faculty to consider flexible testing times. On the same day but would allow students to take accommodated exams before, during, or after classroom exam. Allows de-densification of seating area and creates more even distribution and decreases

congestion at registration, supports effort at distraction-free environment. Would encourage modified version of exam for accommodated students and students would know they could flexibly schedule around their own academic schedules. Possible long term solutions=**Falcione** asks about whether that flexibility wouldn't actually be worse for students. **Arroyo** noted it already impacts students who have recitations or other classes immediately thereafter. **Arroyo** suggests faculty flexibility is going to be important to clearing logjam. Need to expand testing center to occupy additional space in G in Cathy. Can faculty manage some accommodations? If UPTC could JUST manage additional time exams (70% of volume) then it would better allow them to meet need for those who have more complex accommodations. **Stoner**—could TAs help proctor additional time (provided they aren't asked to work more than expected hours/burden)? **Arroyo** agreed. Consider alternative assessments. UCTL can assist in developing these alternative assessments. SGB Disability Resources Committee would be willing to help support changes that would meet this demand. **Kear** notes importance of topic and discusses how she hears from units that don't necessarily have the resources or support to do this. Are you working with high-volume units, explaining these pressures to them? It is illuminating to see how the pressures add up in aggregate. What kind of resources would students need in order to do this? **Arroyo** notes that Kear has been critical in bringing some of these challenges to public notice. **Arroyo** notes that being here (along with Bridges and Culley)—need to have more conversations at different levels.

- vii. Stoner wonders whether Qualtrics or other surveys might be used to explore where resources and attention needs to be focused in order to call attention to the problem and seek faculty input and interest into considering more flexible scheduling and/or alternative assessments. **Bridges** agreed it might be useful.

4. Report from Vice Provost Amanda **Godley**

- a. Consideration of request from University Registrar Helm to Vice Provost Godley to remove outdated regulations and procedures (memo is attached to email with agenda). On this website are a number of outdated procedures that Registrar has asked if we can delete. Gave some examples of outdated practices. Wanted to be sure that existing important information was somewhere and that as a consequence removing them wouldn't be lost in the removal. **Stoner** clarified what was what on memo. **Godley** noted existing PACUP/UCGS sub-committees are working on them.
- b. Two updates--posthumous degree guidance on OTP website for policies and guidelines (get link).

<https://www.provost.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/Posthumous%20Degrees%20Guidelines%202-15-24.pdf> and also

<https://www.provost.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/University-Grading.pdf>

- c. Last month, shared new language added to OVS and Catalog regarding readmission of service members. Question from SEPC was how leave for active duty service members interacted with Pitt's policy on leave of absence. They do indeed overlap—five year leave for active duty as well as 1-2 year leave of absence. That clarification will be added to the OVS website as well as a contact for faculty and administrators. What If you're in a cohort based program and you're required to go to active duty, etc.? This way, there will be a contact.
- 5. Old Business
 - a. Student wellness/religious observances (Falcione)
 - i. No news
 - b. Decommissioning of University Policies (Godley)
 - c. Committee on generative AI (Wert/Falcione/Stoner)
 - i. Stoner reported on request of ad hoc committee to create "one-pager" that would synthesize the broader points
 - d. OTP exploration of University-wide general education requirements
 - e. FERPA draft policy
 - f. ELI closure/discussion (McCormick)
 - g. OMET questions on inclusive learning environments (Falcione)
 - h. Outlier.org
 - i. LMS feedback
- 6. Meeting Updates
 - a. Faculty Assembly
 - b. Senate Council
 - c. ACIE—Falcione
 - i. Met in January and in February—Master Teacher Certification subcommittee met in February—progress on all fronts—ACIE innovation awards—got 17 applications
 - d. UCGS/PACUP—Schein/Cecchini
 - i. Nothing to report
- 7. Adjournment @ 10:35 a.m.