

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
Senate Educational Policies Committee
March 16, 2015
Meeting Minutes

Present: Shelly Renee Brown, Bonnie Falcione, Zsuzsa Horvath, A. Murat Kaynar, M. Kathleen Kelly, Alberta Sbragia, Cynthia Tananis, Aliyah Weinstein

Excused: Amy E. Aggelou, David Beck, Mary Lou Leibold, Juan Manfredi, Helen Petracchi, Laurel Bridges Roberts

Not present: Robert Sica, Michael Spring, Susan Skledar, Lori A. Molinaro

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Zsuzsa Horvath (Chair) at 3:06pm.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the February 16th meeting were approved with minor corrections.

Old Business

- Course Description Resolution:
 - The committee was updated on the Senate Council unanimous vote in favor of the submitted course description resolution. It was noted that in addition to Chair Horvath's compelling report, committee member Cynthia Tananis's contribution at the Senate Council meeting provided compulsory support for resolution passage. This update also clarified for members that the course description template drafted by the committee was included as an example but was not a requirement of the resolution. The committee's work with this business is now concluded. Implementation will be determined by the Provost's office.
 - In relation to the resolution, the SGA representative voiced commitment to working together on the use of student opinion of teaching data. Chair Horvath will take this issue to the Working group related to OMET issues.
- Working Group on Digital Ethics met on February 26th and discussed the background of the charge. The group agreed to meet on a regular basis. Joe Horn, CIDDE, provided background on the topic. Plans include reviewing the University of Georgia's program and developing our own training materials to assure needs unique to our university are met.
- Working Group on Issues Related to Student Evaluation met in January; next meeting is scheduled for April. The group extended an invitation to the student SGA representative to gather information about what information students seek when asking for publicizing the OMET survey results. In addition, Vice Provost Laurie Kirsch and CIDDE Director Cynthia Golden have been invited to attend the meetings to facilitate communication and collaboration between the Senate, CIDDE, the Provost Office and the Advisory Council on Instructional Excellence.

New Business

- Committee vacancy:
 1. Elected member Laurel Roberts (Biology, Arts and Sciences) stepped down from the committee due to her teaching responsibilities conflicting with the committee meetings. Protem member Mary Lou Leibold was approached to fill her position but regrettably is unable to do so because of prior commitments that pose conflicts. With only two meetings remaining in the term the committee agreed to wait for the next election to fill the vacated position. Discussion regarding the importance of representation on the committee by faculty members from Arts and Sciences ensued. A suggestion to reach out to A&S for future nomination candidates was raised.
 2. Chair Horvath suggested that committee meeting times remain as a Monday in the second half of the month at 3:00pm so that future committee candidates and current members can plan accordingly.
- Senate Ad Hoc Committee on NTS Faculty Issues resolution passage includes charges to EPC
 1. Review the process for teaching evaluation of NTS faculty to ensure they are treated fairly.
 - Tananis, also a member of the NTS Committee, suggested to take this charge back to the NTS Committee for clarification. It was suggested to make an affirmative statement as the charge to the committee instead of asking the committee to review the process.
 - A discussion took place about the wording of “treated fairly.” A recommendation was made for rewording to “treated equally to tenure stream faculty” or something similar.
 - Once the committee receives clarification on the charge, the committee discussed and concluded that this issue may be best referred to the Working Group on Issues Related to Student Evaluation.
 2. Assurance that NTS faculty with teaching duties have input into decisions about curriculum content and curriculum changes in the unit.
 - Committee member Tananis clarified that this pertains to full-time teaching faculty. In some units full-time faculty with teaching duties do not have an opportunity to provide input on curriculum content or changes. And in some units NTS faculty do not even have access to faculty meeting minutes where curricular issues are addressed. She also noted that in the past the term “tenure” may have indicated “full-time” and “non-tenure” may have indicated “part-time” in some units. As a result some policies in some units may never have been updated to encompass full-time NTS faculty or to provide voting rights to NTS faculty on committees. The committee discussed the charge and concluded that a resolution proposal on inclusion of teaching faculty in decisions about curriculum be drafted for discussion at the next meeting. Committee

member Tananis volunteered to draft this proposal including a summary of the committee's discussion, rationale, and a recommendation.

- A resource on this topic was provided to the committee with the meeting agenda by Chair Horvath:

Who Gets a Vote in Departmental Decisions? - Advice - The Chronicle of Higher Education (http://chronicle.com/article/Who-Gets-a-Vote-in/190499/?cid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en)

- It was recognized that this topic relates to the more general issue of the need of updating unit policies so that their language reflects the changes in the role of tenure stream (TS) and NTS faculty. The idea was suggested to add this as a recognition in the resolution to raise awareness and start the discussion at the senate and university levels.

3. The possibility was discussed to join other senate committees and recommend a broader survey of NTS faculty to gather more specific information on a variety of issues. Cynthia Tananis will bring up the issue of a broader survey to the NTS Committee.

- Blackboard Archiving

1. Background was provided to the committee by Chair Horvath. This included the current process whereby faculty are responsible for archiving course content, and a single export is available. However, this single export does not include all course data. Faculty may not be aware that in order to archive all course data multiple archive exports are needed. For example, submission to individual assignments and the gradebook must be uploaded and archived separately by the faculty member. The committee discussed possible educational and legal repercussions associated with non-archived course data including unavailable student level data prior to their graduation. The committee also acknowledged that this practice delegates a task to faculty that used to be offered as a service to them. The committee concluded that this issue will be discussed at a future meeting. Vice-Provost Laurie Kirsch will be invited and Provost Liaison Juan Manfredi will be asked to provide background and rationale for this practice.

- Provision of Closed Captioning for on-line course content

1. The committee discussed and concluded that the Provost Office taskforce on technology and computer accessibility would be positioned to address this item better than the EPC.
2. A resource on this topic was provided to the committee with the meeting agenda prior to the meeting by Chair Horvath:
 - Harvard and M.I.T. Are Sued Over Lack of Closed Captions
<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/13/education/harvard-and-mit-sued-over-failing-to-caption-online-courses.html?emc=eta1>

Vice-Provost updates

- Undergraduate

1. A Gallup survey has been given to the alumni during the month of March to gather satisfaction, civics engagement, and well-being data from our alumni.
 2. Climate survey on sexual assault for all degree students (graduate and undergraduate) is being distributed in April.
- **Graduate**
 1. The new Senior Director of International Programs and Director of the University Center for International Studies arrived at Pitt on March 1. Ariel Armony, the new Director, will play a crucial role in moving the University forward in the area of the university's international studies and international relations.
 2. The discussion of stronger collaboration between Pitt and CMU's library is moving forward.
 3. A committee, chaired by Larry Feick, the former director of UCIS, is exploring ways in which business practices within Pitt can be structured so as to better enable faculty to carry out research abroad.
 4. John Wallace, School of Social Work, and John Camillus, Director of the Business of Humanity project at the Business School, have been granted a \$100,000 grant to work on moving the Homewood Village forward.
 5. The committee planning the Year of the Humanities has held several meetings.

Faculty Assembly update

- See Old Business.
- See FA minutes at http://www.univsenate.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/Feb%2010%202015%20FA%20Minutes_0.pdf; the Senate Council minutes at http://www.univsenate.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/Feb%2018%202015%20-%20sc%20min_0.pdf; and the UT report on the Senate Council meeting at <http://www.utimes.pitt.edu/?p=34557>.

Advisory Council on Instructional Excellence update

- The council was meeting at the same time as the SEPC to review proposals for the Innovation in Education Awards.

SEPC future planning

- See New Business.

Adjournment at 4:38pm

Additional Documents posted in SEPC Box folder

Location: SEPC recourses >> References Resources from Meetings

Link to folder: <https://pitt.box.com/s/x3d6qb24xo9sc79i2xzm>

- Report and recommendations about Senate Committee Oversight and Continued Involvement on Identified NTS Issues from the NTS Ad Hoc Committee
<https://pitt.box.com/s/g4t2semaj3i8uhj3yley0d0x3cce3oyh>

- Final version of the Course description Recommendation approved by the Senate Council <https://pitt.box.com/s/g4t2semaj3i8uhj3yley0d0x3cce3oyh>
- Notes to agenda (page 2) <https://pitt.box.com/s/m3z050f7oqj7yetivuue7ra6dyobqdir>