Senate Educational Policies Committee
Meeting Minutes for December 16, 2019

Attendance: Cecchini, Nicole (excused); Falcione, Bonnie; Hampton, Marian; Horvath, Zsuzsa; Jacqueline, Camille (excused); Kelly, M. Kathleen (absent); Kucinski, Barb; Landsittel, Douglas (excused); Lausberg, Cynthia (absent); Lotz, Andrew (excused); Oh, Eunjoo (excused); Pollini, Lorraine; Rikstad, Pam; Schein, Michelle; Shaver, Kevin; Stoner, John; Vento, Barbara; Urban, Nathan; McCarthy, Joseph; Dang, Lynn (excused); Wilson, Frank (excused); Bonneau, Chris (excused); Lori Molinaro (excused).

Call to Order: the meeting was called to order at approximately 3:00pm by Co-Chair Bonnie Falcione.

Approval of Minutes: the minutes for both the September 2019 and October 2019 meetings were approved.

Co-Chair Falcione mentioned a new member whom we hadn't introduced--Lynn Dang.

Old Business

- Spring meeting schedule: Co-Chair Stoner scheduled the Spring meetings based on feedback from the committee. With the exception of MLK week (the committee will meet a week earlier than normal), all meetings will be the third Monday of each month from 3-4:30. All rooms save one have been secured and invitations have been sent through Outlook.
- Amanda Brodish introduced Pathways as a tool that will consolidate the systems through which advisors make notes about their individual interactions with advisees (cites SARS calendar system formerly used in Dietrich School); it will also provide a consistent way by which students can be referred to other units/advisors/departments ("generic" referral). There has also not been a proactive way by which the University can identify students ahead of time who might need intervention/support. Overall goal is to improve retention and graduation rates (already high, can always be better). Hope is that over time this will also reduce gaps in achievement that we know already exist. Program is advised by steering committee (reps from all UG schools/campuses, Faculty Assembly), faculty committee, student committee (all campuses—working on predictive analytics among other things), and implementation committee. Students experience Pathways via several different components: a student-facing phone app (Navigate Student), an advisor-facing platform (Navigate), Othot predictive-analytics platform (High impact questions), and recommendation engine.
  - Brodish then showed individual examples of each of the above; advising platform presents PeopleSoft data in a much more user-friendly way. The Navigate platform can be used to schedule appointments, leaving notes/summaries of appointments, referring students to other offices, and messaging students. It also includes a photo of the student, it allows advisors to create lists and "campaigns" by which they can target a select group of students either for tailored or customized messaging, and appointments of selected groups of students.
  - Brodish then discussed security within the platform, talking about how job-specific roles define access to student information (advisor vs. "front desk" role as an example). All users will be required to watch a FERPA video featuring colleagues from the Office of the Registrar and the Office of University Counsel.

Best practices collateral will be available and ongoing efforts are being made to generate Pathways-specific documentation guidelines.

- o Brodish then turned to the Othot predictive-analytics platform which focuses on High Impact Questions (likelihood of retention, graduation within six years, and post-graduation placement). At the moment, that information is only shared with advisors. Platform is not yet released broadly and would only be so after "thorough vetting."
- o Recommendation Engine—currently being piloted with Study Abroad Office and starting with Outside the Classroom Curriculum. Data are complicated.
- o Brodish then laid out the timeline—pilot year in Nursing, Engineering, and SCI (to differing degrees) in AY 2018-2019. In Fall 2019, significant broadening to include part of Dietrich School (all undeclared students being advised through Pre-Major Advising Center), several of the regional campuses, and a number of other units that provide services to students (TRIO, Veterans Services, Honors College, etc.) In Spring 2020, the platform will be extended to several Dietrich departments, UCIS certificate advisors, and some others. In Fall 2020, many other UG (upper-division schools) programs, more Dietrich departments, Study Abroad Office, etc. The final onboarding will be concluded in AY 2021-2022.
- o Brodish then briefly described the referral process.
- o Brodish then fielded questions from the committee about FERPA training, tutoring access, the degree to which the data can be queried, and possible use of program in graduate programs.
- o More information can be found at www.pathways.pitt.edu, email: PathwaysHelp@pitt.edu
- o Slides will be shared with the committee.

Updates from Vice Provosts
- Vice Provost Urban reported on the effort to promote mentoring and the improvement of graduate mentoring across the University. There have already been a number of workshops, but another will happen at the end of January (Linda D'Angelo will talk about mentoring under-represented students and about mentoring as a pathway into graduate schools helping students surmount barriers to access to graduate programs). There are several other initiatives seeking similar ends. VP Urban also mentioned the refresh/revision for the Plan for Pitt; VP Urban will co-chair along with Vivian Curren from the law school. Urban suggested that some of the standing committees may have an opportunity to discuss what contributions the committees might make to the strategic planning process. There will be facilitators for ~15 workshops in the spring term. Might be useful to have them meet with established groups (possible future agenda item). Planforpitt.pitt.edu is live; people can write comments and provide feedback through that portal. Lists of the steering committee and liaisons for every unit at the University (both academic and non-academic) are also listed there. When asked about the timeline, VP Urban cited end of Sep. 2020 as moment for approval by the Board of Trustees. Information gathering in January/Feb, April will articulate some initiatives that are likely to be part of the plan. This plan will be more metric driven (what can we actually deliver upon in terms of making concrete the less-specific goals of the existing plan). Questions of resources (how do we accomplish this?) will also be discussed. There will be a more formal announcement coming through UMC in the new year.
- VP McCarthy discussed beginning of re-accreditation process with Middle States (a steering committee will be defined, process is yet to be worked out, will start in earnest in Spring 2020). It is a long process; self-study will not be due until the Spring of 2022 and visit of accreditors will be in late Spring 2022. McCarthy then discussed degree-

planner tool that Pitt hopes to integrate into Peoplesoft; that has been approved and will produce various analytics that will likely be of use to advisors in order to (like Pathways) tailor messages about degree completion progress. It is hoped that this will be live in summer 2020. McCarthy affirmed that a charter has been approved for policy revisions to PACUP (Provost's Advisory Committee for Undergraduate Programs). It is anticipated that the new policy will expand PACUP's scope in terms of advising on educational policy. Referenced how UCGS "guidelines" have really provided a way in which graduate policy decision making is nimbler; the goal is to make UG policy making similarly agile. Co-Chair Stoner sits on the committee, which will meet for the first time on 17 December 2019. Finally, McCarthy returned to the question (raised in previous meetings) of the new suite of "distinctions" offered by the University. UCIS has the first (the Global Distinction); the University Honors College is close behind (adding to the variety of options available to students engaged with the UHC). These offerings will keep the openness for which the Honors College has been previously known and yet provide a more distinct experience for those interested in greater engagement. McCarthy added that the calendar committee is looking at the academic calendar for AY 20-21. It appears that the provisional extended calendar will be confirmed; this would mean August 24 for the first day of the fall 2019 semester, January 11, 2021 for the spring term. Based on student feedback, the committee is considering a variety of other changes involving the University calendar, flexible finals schedules, fall break, etc. VP McCarthy says more deliberation is required before confirming any of the latter. Vice Provost McCarthy answered questions from the committee about implications for certain units (one night per week classes on specific days, for example). He indicated that feedback will be welcome on the changes implemented in for AY19-20 and said it should be provided to the co-chairs of the SEPC. He added that some schools already don't follow/abide by the general University calendar.

- Old Business (continued)—Co-Chair Falcione confirmed the appearance by UCTL head and Associate Vice Provost Cynthia Golden at the January SEPC meeting. She also mentioned discussion of completion of OMETs as possibly being impacted by Thanksgiving holiday timing. Laurie Kirsch will be invited to a future meeting to discuss teaching evaluations. In terms of the subcommittee looking at holiday observances, Kevin Shaver, Barb Kucinski, and Michelle Schein have agreed to serve.
- Co-Chair Stoner related events from both the past month's Faculty Assembly and Senate Council meetings.
- PACIE proposals are being discussed per Co-Chair Falcione Co-Chair Falcione reported that the Provost's Advisory Council on Instructional Excellence (ACIE) will review the Innovations in Education proposals again this coming year; the RFP was recently distributed by email and proposal are due at the end of January.

NEW BUSINESS:
- EIDAC reached out to seek input about disparities in academic rank and tenure status among faculty. Falcione sought input from the committee.
- Committee member Rikstad requested feedback as to whether other units were struggling with issue of G grades being used inappropriately. Committee members mentioned various practices within their own units and indicated the degree to which those units were continuing to struggle with these issues. Vice Provost McCarthy provided some clarifications about the appropriate use of "I" and "G" grades and what happens after certain time cycles.

Adjournment: the meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:30pm.