

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
Senate Educational Policies Committee
April 15, 2011
Meeting Minutes

Present: Amy Aggelou, John Close, Bonnie Falcione, Bev Gaddy, Kathy Kelly, Juan Manfredi, Tom Platt, Alberta Sbragia, Jess Yokley, Alex Zimmerman

Excused: Judy Erlen, Debbie Miller, Jay Rajgopal, Charlene Trovato

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 1:15 PM. The minutes from the March, 2011 SEPC meeting were approved.

New Business:

1. Vice Provost updates:

Dr. Manfredi provided a brief update on the progress of the Middle States Accreditation Self-Study. The University is using a 'Selected Topics' option and will focus on "*Using a University Wide Culture of Assessment for Continuous Improvement*". Dr. Manfredi reported that the Self-Study report is in the process of being written and will be delivered to the Steering Committee in early May.

Dr. Manfredi also reported that the restrictions on study in Japan are still in effect as of today's date. The university follows the guidelines and mandates from the State Department during such times.

Dr. Sbragia discussed the recent approval of the '*Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Guidelines*'. These guidelines assist graduate students immediately following the birth or adoption of a young child. The purpose of these guidelines is to make it possible for a student to maintain a full-time status (along with the benefits) while facilitating the return to full participation in courses, research and teaching. These guidelines are meant to be tailored to the student's individual circumstances and can include specific provisions per School. The complete guidelines can be found on the Office of the Provost website at:

http://www.provost.pitt.edu/documents/Grad_Parental_Accommodation_Guidlelines2011.pdf

2. New Business:

Transcript information/content- The committee discussed the issue that the Pitt transcript does not itemize AP courses (or courses transferred from other institutions) on its official transcript, rather the transcript only reflects that a block of courses were credited to the student. The official Pitt transcript lists *only* those courses taken at the University of Pittsburgh. The discussion centered on the issue of the difficulty students have when applying to graduate programs as they need to verify completion of the prerequisite courses which were satisfied by AP credits. At the present time, students get a letter/memo from their respective schools which verify each course for which the University of Pittsburgh accepted the AP test score. The committee was in favor of pursuing this issue to determine if there is any way to include these courses on the official transcript. This will be added to the May agenda if we are able to get someone from the Registrar's office to attend the meeting.

Confidentiality of OMET evaluations- The specific concern related to the confidentiality of the teaching evaluations and student comments. In at least one School it was noted that course evaluations and student comments are distributed to the Dean and then to a Curriculum Committee Chair. The concern was with respect to the student comments in particular as the electronic reports put both the numeric ratings and the subjective comments all in one document. The OMET website states the following:

OMET reports results electronically to instructors several weeks after the end of the term. It is essential that final grades have been turned into the Registrar's office before results are sent. *Some Deans and department heads, and course coordinators receive copies and/or summaries of instructor results. Please check with your department for its policy.*

The committee recognized that the detail of distributing this information does lie with the Schools/Departments. Specific concerns should be directed to Dr. Andy Blair, Vice-Provost for Faculty Affairs.

3. Next meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, May 20, 2011 at 1:15 pm in Room 826 Cathedral of Learning.

4. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm.

Submitted by,
Kathy Kelly (Co-Chair)