

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
Senate Educational Policies Committee
February 18, 2011
Meeting Minutes

Present: John Close, Bonnie Falcione, Cynthia Golden, Kathy Kelly, Juan Manfredi, Jay Rajgopal, Alberta Sbragia, Charlene Trovato, Jessica Yokley, Alex Zimmerman

Excused: Amy Aggelou, Judy Erlen, Bev Gaddy, Debbie Miller

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 1:15 PM. The minutes from the December, 2010 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*". The emphasis will be on the past 10 years of progress and changes at the University.

With respect to the issue of faculty involvement in improving student retention, Dr. Manfredi suggested that faculty not share concerns with students about faculty related issues that may be contentious - e.g. the curriculum. Rather, faculty should be champions of the University when communicating with students and deliberate issues of concern with colleagues at the Department or School levels.

Drs. Manfredi and Sbragia spoke about the goal of improving and increasing our global competency at the University. While international student applications have increased, the University is striving to achieve a benchmark of 4% for international students enrolled at Pitt; currently we are at 1.3%. Dr. Manfredi asked that we all take an opportunity to review the 'International Plan Framework' which is on the Provost Office website. In particular, Dr. Manfredi requested that we review the student section. The document can be found at:

<http://www.provost.pitt.edu/documents/International%20Plan%20Framework.pdf>

Additionally, Dr. Sbragia asked us to review and give feedback on the website "Cool Pittsburgh". The site has been re-designed and updated with international students in mind.

<http://www.coolpgh.pitt.edu/>

2. CIDDE Update:

Cynthia Golden, Director of CIDDE, provided an update on current activities, particularly on the new Blackboard upgrade to version 9.1. The conversion to 9.1 will occur during the first weekend in May and should be seamless. The interface will look different, but faculty should find it easier to use and navigate. Faculty who are teaching 15-week summer courses will be directly affected by the version change, which will occur after classes start, and they have been contacted directly. There are multiple faculty support resources available on the CIDDE website, including Quick Reference Guides and 'On-Demand' video (for those who want just-in-time information,) as

well as face-to-face workshops to help faculty navigate the new version. Departments who would like CIDDE staff to visit a faculty meeting to provide a brief presentation about the upgrade and answer questions should contact coursweb@pitt.edu. Detailed information is available at: <http://www.cidde.pitt.edu/bb9>. A mobile application will be announced for Blackboard following the upgrade to the new version.

CIDDE continues to offer courses and workshops focused on both pedagogy and instructional technology, and will also tailor workshops to meet the needs of individual schools or programs as requested. The upcoming 'Summer Institute' will be on the topic of Student Engagement; the date is TBA. The Provost's Summer Faculty Diversity Seminar will be held May 9-20, 2011.

Lastly, the faculty lab (FIDL) in Alumni Hall is in the process of being updated. An Open House will be scheduled later this spring for faculty to see the new layout, meet some new staff, and try some new educational technologies.

3. Leadership for SEPC:

Committee members were asked to consider a leadership position within the SEPC. There may be a vacancy in the Co-chair(s) position.

4. Next meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 18, 2011 at 1:15 pm in Room 826 Cathedral of Learning.

5. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 pm.

Submitted by,
Kathy Kelly (Co-Chair)