

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

**Present:** Amy Aggelou, John Close, Bonnie Falcione, Burhan Gharaibeh, Kathy Kelly, Juan Manfredi, Debbie Miller, Tom Platt, Nashaat Rizk, Karen Zeller, Alex Zimmerman

**Excused:** Jessica Brand, Linda Frank, Jay Rajgopal

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 3:35 PM. The minutes from the September, 2011 SEPC meeting were approved by committee members via email in lieu of the October meeting.

**New Business:**

**1. Vice Provost updates:**

Dr. Manfredi provided an update on the progress of the Middle States Accreditation Self-Study. A preliminary accreditation visit occurred October 31-November 2 on the Pittsburgh campus. Documents supporting 12 of the 14 standards were reviewed and a team including the accreditation committee chair, John Sexton of NYU, visited with representative university groups. The report from the visit back to the university is pending. The Self-Study document is expected to be made available to the University community in December. The Accreditation visit will occur April 11-14, 2012. The University is using the 'Selected Topics' option whereby 12 of 14 standards are evaluated by the document review process and the remaining 2 standards that focus on assessment (Institutional Assessment and Assessment of Student Learning) will be the focus of the on-site visit in April, 2012.

Other updates included a report that the 'Gainful Employment' report was successfully submitted. Also, the Net Price Calculator (NPC) is now available on the Pitt website. The calculator provides a first approximation to the cost of attending the University. The NPCs provide a generic estimate of financial aid based on income; the template is the one provided by the Department of Education. Lastly, Betsy Porter, Director of the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid announced her retirement effective June 30, 2012 in September and a search committee has been organized to identify her replacement.

## **2. SEPC Mission Statement:**

At Senate President Pinsky's request, Committee members provided suggestions for revisions to the mission statement. The revisions focused on updating the last paragraph to include recent examples of the committee's work. An updated mission statement will be circulated to committee members for review and a report will be provided back to Dr. Pinsky.

## **3. Faculty Assembly Update:**

The committee was referred to the University Times for a summary of the Faculty Assembly proceedings. Discussion focused on a report from the Tenure & Academic Freedom committee; and a motion was presented re: the Open Access Policy. The motion presented was that "the Faculty Assembly is in support of the proposed 'Open Access' policy and encourages all University schools and responsibility centers to follow this policy". The motion passed unanimously.

Additional information regarding Open Access can be found at:

University Times article:

<http://www.utimes.pitt.edu/?p=18283>

Report of the Open Access Task Force:

<http://www.pitt.edu/univsenate/Open%20Access%20Task%20Force%20Report.pdf>

## **4. ACIE Update:**

Dr. Falcione reported council members toured CIDDE in October and updates from the September meeting were provided including: charges set forth by Provost Beeson to focus on 1.) soliciting and developing faculty Innovation in Education Award proposals and the review process as it relates to evaluating funding 2.) continued work on conducting OMET evaluations online 3.) advice and support for CIDDE continuing faculty development programs. Other updates included Dr. Blair's acknowledgment of the two council standing committees (Best Practices and Faculty Development). Dr. Falcione will be a member on the Faculty Development committee. The council modified the RFP for 2012 to reflect the council's interest in proposals that involve large enrollment lecture courses. The RFP was recently distributed to all university faculty.

Discussion amongst committee members from this update focused on the potential implications of the OMET online survey process, including the potential for decreased student survey response rates. Committee student

representative indicated more students may be willing to complete the surveys if the results were made public. Faculty committee members expressed concern about public access to these results, selection bias potential and the consequences of low survey responses on the faculty evaluation process. Dr. Manfredi expressed the importance for communication by course directors and faculty to students on the impact of survey results on the continuous quality improvement process for courses. The committee agreed that the ongoing work of the council in this area warranted ongoing updates to the committee.

**5. Transcript Update**

Dr. Kelly updated the committee that she has been in contact with Mr. Ralph Hertel and the request for PeopleSoft transcript modifications [adding detailed test credit information] has been added to the CSSD project list although it is pending prioritization. These transcript modifications are intended to include AP scores and associated university credit.

**6. Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 9, 2011 @ 9:30-11:00am in Room 826 CL.

Submitted by,  
Bonnie Falcione (Co-Chair)