

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH  
Senate Educational Policies Committee  
September 17, 2012  
Meeting Minutes

**Present:** Amy Aggelou, Linda Frank, Kathy Kelly, Juan Manfredi, Jay Rajgopal, Nashaat Rizk, Laurel Roberts, Alberta Sbragia, Cynthia Tananis, Cynthia Golden (Guest)

**Excused:** Debbie Miller, Tom Platt, Alex Zimmerman

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 3:05 PM. The minutes from the March meeting were approved.

**Introduction:** All members present were introduced and new members Laurel Roberts and Cynthia Tananis were recognized.

**Review SEPC Mission  
& Goals:**

Overview of SEPC mission statement and functions were reviewed, including attendance policy. For complete overview see:

<http://www.pitt.edu/univsenate/committees/educational/mission.html>

A request was made for those interested in being a Co-Chair. One member expressed an interest during the meeting; ***if anyone else would like to be considered***, please let Kathy Kelly know ASAP so the committee can vote. In this role the Co-Chair will serve as a member of the ACIE committee.

Priorities and goals for the upcoming year were identified and included: 1) continued work with Registrar's office to enhance the transcript detail, 2) continue to explore the issues of allowing students access to OMET evaluations and making course syllabi available to students prior to course enrollment, 3) the suggestion was made to have the committee address issues related to having a 'Social Media' policy/statement.

A question was raised re: English requirement for International Students – specifically, what is the policy concerning the obligations/requirements of the students and university after they take the ESL Michigan placement test? What are the scores that students can be expected to attain prior to being admitted?

Both Drs. Manfredi & Sbragia stated that the results are merely recommendations. With respect to the scores, each Program/Department can set their thresholds for scores; it is expected that graduate programs will set the requirements for enrollment to reflect the program's needs for the students.

## New Business:

### 1. **CIDDE update:** Dr. Cynthia Golden (Director, CIDDE) attended the meeting and provided an update on a number of initiatives that occurred over the summer and plans for the fall term.

- SIDI was a resounding success and one of the speakers, Professor Rick Moog from Franklin and Marshall College, will be coming back on November 5 for an all day seminar on designing courses following the principles for process oriented group inquiry learning (POGIL). ACIE member Mary Margaret Kerr participated.
- Since mid-June, 65 faculty have requested consults with the teaching and learning consultants – this is *much* higher than in previous years.
- CIDDE is continuing their outreach to adjunct faculty with workshops on the basics of teaching and syllabus design, evenings and weekends.
- Faculty development activities this year will include a wide array of workshops on topics ranging from the basics of teaching and designing effective assessments, to a number of sessions focused on making effective use of educational technologies.
- Effective in June, OMET now reports through CIDDE. This fall there will be work on integrating the teams, starting with the Testing Centers. In addition, this year OMET is moving to online student evaluations of teaching. This academic year faculty may still request a paper survey, and online surveys will become mandatory next year. As of Wednesday with 1/3 of requests in for Fall Term, 70% were for online, 30% were for paper surveys.
- Pitt Online
  - Awarded the Bb Exemplary Course Award for Management Essentials Online
  - Launched 2 new programs: School of Information Science – MLIS: Pitt Online & School of Nursing – MSN – Informatics
  - Completed an accessibility review of all courses for access by students with blindness and visual impairments
  - Developed accessibility tutorials for online courses
  - 247 students for Fall term, 30% Out of State, 2 International Students (Canada and Military Location)
- VERP – CIDDE had five staff total and are making reassignments; may feel some pinch with changes

### 2. **Plagiarism modules:**

A question was raised re: the possibility of Pitt (CIDDE) creating a Plagiarism module for university students. A faculty member in the Sports Medicine & Nutrition Department found (and currently uses) a plagiarism module developed at Indiana State so the question was raised with respect to Pitt creating something similar.

<https://www.indiana.edu/~tedfrick/plagiarism/>

Cynthia Golden will follow up with the committee on this topic.

**Vice Provosts update:**

Dr. Manfredi discussed the very successful report from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The site visit and the accreditation Self-Study were very well received and the committee awarded the University reaccreditation for a 10 year period with no qualifications. The report praised the University and the process used in preparing the Self-Study and suggested that we not lose the momentum with the assessment process and culture that we have achieved. To that end, there are plans for an Assessment Workshop on January 18, 2013. More details to follow.

The full report can be viewed at:

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

The Periodic Review Report (PRR) will be due in 2017.

Dr. Sbragia reported on the graduate student health insurance issues that arose this past summer. Her office has been working with UPMC to deliver care for students with emergent health issues and in the meantime, the situation has been resolved.

The issue of how GSAs should be structured is also under review – Dr. Sbragia will keep the committee apprised of updates on this topic.

**Old Business:**

Transcript detail- Patti Mathay (Interim Registrar) was unable to attend the meeting but sent an update to the committee. She reported that work on the new version of the transcript is continuing and the template for the Pittsburgh campus official transcript is about ready to go forward for approval. There will need to be multiple templates for each campus thus the process is taking longer than originally anticipated. There is not a target date for implementation as all of the templates will need to be completed and implemented at the same time. The Registrar's office staff is looking at options for making sure the details of the transcript are added if the new transcript format is delayed any further.

Student access to OMET - Committee acknowledged article in the Pitt News written by undergraduate student committee member Alex Zimmerman. In the article Alex made the case for OMET results being accessible to the students. A copy of that article can be viewed at:

<http://pittnews.com/newsstory/pitt-should-release-omet-results/>

This topic will be revisited.

**Faculty Assembly update:**

Brief overview of topics discussed at the Faculty Assembly meeting (for details see:

<http://www.utimes.pitt.edu/?p=22532>):

- request from Student Veterans group to get more faculty involved with the Faculty Advisory Board and request to have more efficient means of communicating and networking with students who are Veterans
- overview of state budget issues and university appropriations
- report from new Senate President, Dr. Tom Smitherman
- announcement of Senate Plenary session in March on the topic of cyberlearning

**Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

M. Kathleen Kelly, PhD, PT  
SEPC Chair