

## **ADVISORY COUNCIL ON INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE**

**Laurie Kirsch, Chair**

**November 18, 2014**

### **Minutes**

Present: L. Kirsch (Chair), P. Beeson, G. Bender, M. Besterfield-Sacre, A. Covarrubias, B. Falcione, C. Golden, G. Hatfull, A. Infanti, D. Jenkins, C. Lance-Jones, P. Mirchandani, G. Mitchell, C. Perfetti, L. Roberts, S. Saxena, and C. Singh.

### **Approval of the Minutes**

Laurie Kirsch asked for a motion from council members to approve the May 6, 2014, meeting minutes. The motion was offered, seconded, and approved, with slight amendments to the minutes. The minutes will be posted on the ACIE website.

### **Council Charge**

The Provost, Patricia Beeson, reviewed several issues facing institutions of higher learning generally and the University of Pittsburgh in particular:

- Perceptions that colleges and universities are too expensive and that the value added via higher education is not sufficient
- Whether technology driven education – i.e., placing the entire classroom experience online – can replace the brick-and-mortar educational experience

One of the council's roles is to encourage discussion about how to reconceptualize the traditional residential college experience in a way that both perpetuates its strengths and applies them in a technologically advanced society.

Dr. Beeson also discussed the University's drive to cultivate educational and teaching expertise via center-based activities. CIDDE serves as the hub for much of this activity, but other discipline-based centers complement its endeavors. They include LRDC, the Engineering Education Research Center, and the newly established Discipline Based Science Education Research Center. Additional activities are planned to address pedagogical issues in the social sciences and the humanities. The ACIE can act as an advisory body to all of these units.

Dr. Beeson then delivered the council charge. She asked council members to:

- Act as an advisory board to CIDDE and provide oversight and recommendations with respect to CIDDE's faculty programs and events
- Monitor the online OMET process and, specifically, to determine whether the University can implement measures to enhance the response rate
- Continue to sponsor the Innovation in Education Awards program and share the programmatic results in a way that is accessible to all faculty members
- Provide recommendations related to diversity programming as a way to perpetuate the momentum of last June's Diversity 2020 Summit and other, related events

### **Working Groups**

Two subcommittees will be formed, which will address issues related to diversity programming and student opinion of teaching surveys. Council members discussed the subcommittees' potential foci.

### **Diversity Programming Subcommittee**

Dr. Kirsch reviewed some of the recent activities related to diversity in the curriculum, including highlights from the June 2014 Diversity 2020 Summit. The Summit was held this year instead of the annual diversity seminar, to both celebrate past accomplishments and consider ways to expand the scope and reach of diversity programming efforts. It brought together faculty members and senior administrators from throughout the University, as well as external experts, to consider issues related to diversity. Council members discussed prior university-wide diversity programming initiatives. The subcommittee will be asked to build on the feedback gathered during the Diversity 2020 Summit to explore ways to increase the scope and reach of diversity programming across the University of Pittsburgh.

### **Student Opinion of Teaching Surveys Subcommittee**

The student opinion of teaching surveys have been administered in a fully online mode by OMET since Fall 2013. It was noted that while response rates compare favorably to other institutions in their first year of administering surveys online at 57%, they are lower than the 75% average response rate when surveys were administered on paper. There was a general discussion among council members about the response rate, as well as other broader issues, such as working with the University Senate's Education Policies Committee on teaching assessment, the relationship between student opinion and teaching assessment, and the questions on the survey instrument. The subcommittee will be asked to review data to date and make suggestions for strategies to encourage an increase in participation rates.

### **Innovation in Education Awards**

Council members discussed the Innovation in Education Awards program, focusing primarily upon the timing of the proposal review process. The council is tentatively scheduled to discuss the proposals over two days – the evening of Monday, March 16 (4:00 to 7:00), and, if needed, the morning of Tuesday, March 17 (8:30 to 10:00). Several issues were raised, in particular potential reviewer fatigue associated with long review sessions and inconsistent evaluation processes that may accompany two review sessions.

There being no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:30 p.m.