

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE
January 29, 2024, 10-11 a.m.

Minutes

Present: M. Bridges (Chair), L. Delale-O'Connor, S. Dickerson, B. Falcione, L. Fennimore, S. Goodkind, Z. Horvath, T. Klinbubpa-Neff, D. Och

Absent: B. Barnhart, C. Bonneau, P. Harper, C. Perfetti

Call to Order

Mike Bridges called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. He then briefly reviewed the minutes from Nov. 30, 2023. **Bonnie Falcione** requested to add a notation about questions/contributions brought up at the meeting. **Lori Delale-O'Connor** confirmed her attendance at the Nov. meeting. The minutes were formally approved by Laura Fennimore and seconded by **Noon Klinbubpa-Neff**.

Innovation In Education Awards

Mike Bridges reviewed the timeline outlined on the agenda, which was distributed before the meeting. The due date *may* change, but it is February 16, 2024. Joy Hart briefly reviewed the process to access *InfoReady Review* as a reviewer. **John Radzilowicz** confirmed that the Teaching Center has received (thus far) 10 consultation requests. The Committee's meeting to review the proposals is scheduled for March 27, 2024, at 4:30-7 p.m. in 817 Cathedral of Learning. The conference room is inside the Provost's Suite 801. This is an in-person meeting, and dinner will be provided.

Master of Teaching Certification

Mike informed the council that he met with the Office of the Provost about funding and faculty load concerns. We will send the link to the document [Preliminary Draft of Recommendations for the Master Teaching Certificate Proposal](#) after the meeting. Mike mentioned that the current updated language for the P4P does not explicitly address teaching. We shall see whether language reflecting teaching is integrated into the final Plan for Pitt revision. The Teaching Center's efforts align with the completed benchmarking, focusing on the number of programs incorporating curriculum.

Below are the initial suggestions for the implementation of the certificate:

- Cohort model but may be limited in participation
- Continue conversations with the School of Education about collaborations
- For-credit certificates may be a choice for graduate/professional students; faculty can turn it into a Master of Teaching Certificate.
- Develop and provide an overview of the plan to earn the certificate.
- Submit the proposal in the spring term and launch the program in the fall term of 2024. Use the phased approach, starting with the badging program, securing buy-in from institutional leaders, and continuing to work with the sub-committee.
- Further discussions are needed on the design to address the question on format – use Teaching Center and peer observations.
- Draw ideas from the Graduate Student Teaching Initiative (GSTI) to determine the final design.
- Obtain commitment from departments to release faculty to complete the certificate.

- A specific credential, for example, *Distinguished Teaching Faculty*, can appear on official documents to increase the visibility of completion of the certificate.
- Highlight the certificate's impact on faculty tenure reviews. The Provost's Office announced in Oct. 2023 its acknowledgment of faculty work in DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) and community-engaged scholarship in the University's tenure and promotion process.

All council members can access the [draft document](#) and are encouraged to edit it.

Mike Bridges continued the discussion on non-traditional learners, adding the concept of smaller units to stack and earn the credential. The University has begun to embrace this idea as an impactful educational support.

Sara Goodkind shared that the School of Social Work has encouraged faculty participation to provide genuine support for faculty. Offering support at a lower level, what would be the next level? This would be an excellent start.

Sam Dickerson reminded the group that one of the current goals of offering workshops must be fully utilized. He's unsure if badging is enticing to faculty. There is a stronger appeal for credits, part of the incentive piece.

Allie Dakroub suggested that badging may not inherently motivate faculty, and proposing a clear value directly relevant to faculty could serve as an initial step, such as acting as an entry point to the School of Education master's program. Education courses present significant challenges speaking as part of the most recent in-person cohort in the [Institute for Clinical Research Education \(ICRE\)](#). There needs to be a formative and mandatory component instead of solely an online option.

There is a consensus on prioritizing in-person experience.

Mike Bridges explained the Graduate Student Teaching Initiative (GSTI) involves FACDEV, a three-credit course, an introduction to scholarship in teaching.

John Radzilowicz added that the School of Social Work and Psychology Department offers this course to their graduate students, and the departments cover the cost. This could potentially enhance the value of the Master of Teacher Certification (MOT.)

Laura Fennimore raised concerns about the time commitment associated with credits in terms of hours. Estimating the time required may aid in providing incentives. From a quick calculation (by **Sam Dickerson**), a regular three-credit course equals two hours outside for every one hour in class.

Bonnie Falcione added that the significant time component and the need to examine the logistics (introduction/fundamental) require further development. She also suggested returning to the provost's charge to develop a community of teachers, having the language related to the program, and serving in the mentoring capacity. Have we addressed it through the MOT certificate? Can we integrate it?

Lorie Delale-O'Connor revisited the concept of stacking credits and its potential implications for promotion, faculty workload, and incentives. She suggested exploring its connection to the School of Education and emphasized the opportunity to leverage the University's tuition benefit.

Zsuzsa Horvath stressed the importance of having realistic expectations and providing options for varying commitment levels, such as offering an introductory course. She suggested catering to individuals with different experience levels and gauging interest as part of the communication process.

Sara Goodkind commented on tenure and promotion and the Office of the Provost's initiative toward creating a community. The School of Social Work is reassessing its tenure process as most departments have yet to incorporate DEI principles into a community of engaged scholarship.

As we neared the end of the meeting, Mike thanked the group for an engaging and lively conversation.

Announcements

The Assessment and Teaching Conference is on Friday, Feb. 2, in the Connolly Ballroom of Alumni Hall. Barbara Barnhart regrettably had to step down from the council to attend to family. While we will miss her contributions, we wish her well.

Next Meeting

The next ACIE meeting, which will be virtual, is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2024, from 1-2 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11 a.m. with no further business to discuss.