

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE

October 2, 2024, 3-4 p.m.

Minutes

Present: M. Bridges (Chair) Provost McCarthy, C. Bonneau, L. Delale-O'Connor, B. Falcione, L. Fennimore, J. Hart, K. Heffernan, A., Z. Horvath, B. Keown, T. Klinbubpa-Neff, J. Martinson, M. Norman, A. Tuttle, E. Votruba-Drzal

Not present: P. Harper

Welcome and Introductions

Mike Bridges called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m. and welcomed the members. He asked each member (including continuing members) to identify themselves and indicate whether they are new or continuing members, their schools and departments, and length of service at Pitt.

Welcome to new members:

- Kayla Heffernan, Pitt-Greensburg, Mathematics
- Bridget Keown, Gender, Arts & Sciences: Gender Studies Women's Studies
- Jeremy Martinson, Public Health: Infectious Diseases & Microbiology
- Marie Norman, Medicine, IDEA Lab

Overview and brief ACIE historical background

After a hiatus in 2021, the Council reconvened in the 2022-2023 academic year, welcoming several new members. The former Provost Jim Maher established the Advisory Council on Instructional Excellence in 1998. He chaired the council during the 1998-99 academic year. Vice Provost Andrew Blair assumed the chair the following year, followed by Vice Provost Juan Manfredi, then Vice Provost Laurie Kirsch, and until 2022, Associate Provost and Executive Director of the University Center for Teaching and Learning, Cynthia Golden. Since 2022, Mike Bridges, executive director of the University Center for Teaching and Learning, has chaired the committee.

ACIE advises the provost on promoting instructional development and teaching excellence at the University of Pittsburgh.

Provost Charge

Ongoing: Innovation in Education Awards

The provost asked the Council to continue its efforts related to the Innovation in Education Awards administration.

Main Themes:

- Experiential Learning: Encouraging hands-on, immersive learning experiences.
- Innovative Approaches: Developing impactful methods that can be adapted to other disciplines.

- Technology-Enhanced Learning: Leveraging technology to improve learning outcomes.
- Creative Student Engagement: Encouraging students to participate in meaningful discourse and dialogue. The Year of Discourse and Dialogue is in its second year (2023-2025), and there has been limited engagement with the Year-of-themed learning experiences. The provost requested assistance promoting the Innovation in Education Awards.

Additional Focus Areas:

- Diversity in Curriculum: Ensuring inclusivity within the course offerings.
- Large Enrollment Courses: Addressing the needs of high enrollment, often gateway, courses.
- Teaching Assessment: Recommendations on assessment methods and navigating management under CBA guidelines.

The Office of the Provost will send out the call for proposals for the Innovation in Education Awards in early December [target date is Dec. 8], and the deadline for application submission is February 16, 2025.

New: Elevating the Teaching Center's Partnerships

The Teaching Center is regarded as one of Pitt's best-kept secrets. To elevate its role, we aim to establish intentional partnerships with relevant university departments to enhance its visibility. The efforts will include:

- Building intentional partnerships with various university departments.
- Emphasizing core areas such as mentoring, teaching and pedagogy, and technology.
- Exploring ways the Teaching Center can support research innovation in the classroom.
- Implementing impactful digital tools.
- Identifying key partners to help increase the Teaching Center's visibility.

Discussion Points:

- Zsuzsa emphasized the importance of bridging teaching and research, envisioning a "two-way street" where teaching informs research and vice versa. This could involve scholarly publications that promote the scholarship of teaching. The provost acknowledged the value of this approach and shared insights into Learning Science and Artificial Intelligence (LSAI). Mike noted that the Teaching Center has not previously had a dedicated mission focused on teaching research.
- Research Hub Potential
Marie highlighted the extensive services provided by the Teaching Center and advocated for it to be a valuable resource hub for faculty and staff. She noted the need to reach out to those unaware of the available services. Laura shared information about the launch of an educational resource hub in the School of Nursing.

Next Steps

Mike outlined the actions for the academic year:

- Scheduling regular meetings.
- Planning meeting topics and agendas.

- Reviewing and updating the RFP for the Innovation in Education Awards, along with a reminder of the timeline that includes a three-hour, in-person meeting to discuss proposals and select finalists for recommendation. Most of this work will occur during the fall term and early spring.
- Teaching Center Services and Resources
An overview of the Teaching Center's extensive portfolio was provided. Pitt's Teaching Center is robust compared to similar centers, and there is a growing demand for testing accommodations and the administration of OMETS pre-course, midterm, and interpretive surveys. Discuss strategies for raising awareness among staff unfamiliar with Teaching Center offerings.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:57 p.m. with no further business to discuss.