

**Provost's Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Programs**  
**April 15, 2025, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m., 817 Cathedral of Learning**  
**Minutes**

**Members Attending**

Brian Batell (Dietrich – Natural Sciences), Betty Braxter (SON), Mary Besterfield-Sacre (SSOE), Nicole Cecchini (SEPC), Luke Condra (GSPIA), Lorraine Denman (Dietrich – Humanities), Dawn Drahnak (UPJ), William Garrison (SCI), Deborah Good (CBA), Jonathan Helm (Office of the University Registrar), Paula Janikowski (OTP – Staff), Toya Jones (SSW), Kathy Kelly (SHRS), Adam Lee (OTP – Chair), Denise Schiff (Pharm), Belkys Torres (OTP), Tessa Twyman (UPJ – Student), Liann Tsoukas (Dietrich – Social Sciences), Don Ulin (UPB/UPT), Kelly Wagner (DenMed), Ada Youk (SPH)

**Members Absent**

Mercy Akanmu (Pittsburgh Campus – SGB – Student), Nicola Foote (Frederick Honors College), Adriana Helbig (Dietrich School – CGS), Martha Koehler (UPG), Matthew Miscio (UPG – Student), Camren Price (UPB/UPT – Student), Michelle Sobolak (SOE)

**Guests**

Ola Johansson, Professor of Geography – Pitt-Johnstown, Mitzy Schaney, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies – Pitt-Johnstown, Boryana Dobrova, Director of Online Learning in the College of General Studies, Kelly Wagner, Program Director of the Pitt Dental Medicine Dental Hygiene Program, Mark Kelly, Director of Exercise Science Program – Pitt-Bradford, Jeffrey Johnson, Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs – Pitt-Bradford, Jonathan Chitiyo, Director of Teacher Education – Pitt-Bradford

**1. Announcements/Discussion Points/Updates**

- a. March 18, 2025, Minutes Review/Approval
- b. Update on PACUP Actions from Academic Year (2024-2025)
  - o The proposal from the January 21, 2025 meeting from the Dietrich School to terminate the major in Political Science leading to the Bachelor of Science degree was approved by Provost McCarthy.
  - o The proposal from the October 15, 2024 meeting from SHRS to establish a minor in Communication Science was approved by Provost McCarthy.

**2. Academic Planning Proposal Review**

- a. **University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown: modify and rename the major Environmental Studies leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree as Environmental Sustainability – BA**

Ola Johansson, Professor of Geography, Pitt-Johnstown, and Mitzy Schaney, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies, Pitt-Johnstown attended via Zoom and gave a brief overview of the proposal.

Mitzy Schaney noted that:

The larger picture at Pitt-Johnstown is that Geography and Environmental Studies have combined with Geology become the Geosciences and the Environment Department. The major in Environmental Sciences leading to the Bachelor of Science degree has already been approved by PACUP and by the Provost. This led to the desire to update the existing Environmental Studies – BA to differentiate it more from the major in Environmental Science – BS. Environmental Sustainability is a more modern term and is more attractive to students. UPJ is using the Environmental Sustainability name to encompass both Environmental Studies and Environmental Sustainability.

### **Questions/Comments**

Can you provide a summary of what is changing in the major – other than the name?

Mitzy Schaney replied:

- the structure of what is required is changing
- combined overlapping courses due to merging of program with department.
- Cartography and GIS are now required due to today's modern job market
- removed some courses that are no longer offered
- Now have 3 different "pools" of requirements environmental science, environmental policy, methodology.
- added some additional courses based on student interest and some were "redesigned" to include sustainability
- no change to the number of credits required for the major

PACUP members were supportive of the proposed program modifications.

**b. College of General Studies – modify and offer online the major in Dental Hygiene leading to the Bachelor of Science degree (Baccalaureate Degree Completion Program)**

Boryana Dobrova, Director of Online Learning in the College of General Studies and Kelly Wagner, Program Director of the Pitt Dental Medicine Dental Hygiene Program gave a brief overview of the proposal.

Boryana Dobrova noted that:

This program is an ongoing collaboration between CGS and the School of Dental Medicine. It is a Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene completion program and dates to the 1990s. It has helped advance careers of dental hygienists across the region. It is one of only two BS completion programs in Pennsylvania and one of twenty nationwide.

### **Modifications to the Program Include**

1. Modernization of Curriculum:

- Two new tracks – Community Engagement, Outreach, and Leadership; and Interprofessional Health Informatics – both tracks are designed to reflect evolving roles and specialization needs within the field
- The new tracks will replace the current Research track (has historically enrolled the fewest students)
- Existing two tracks that will remain Health Education, and Health Management (Health Management is most frequently selected)
- Expanding to four tracks strengthens the appeal of the program and alignment with industry trends
- Benchmarking identified these strategic opportunities and are confident that these changes will make the program even more compelling
- SDM has faculty expertise to support the revisions/financial implications are within manageable parameters
- Anticipated benefits – Increased enrollments and more interactive and robust academic experience for students

2. Courses for Online Delivery

- Essential step given the programs target student population – typically working professionals (licensed dental hygienists or associate degree holders) seeking to upskill or remain competitive in the changing field
- Bachelor's degree has become a standard expectation
- CGS is uniquely positioned to support this effort with its training in online education and programs tailored to the needs of non-traditional and adult undergraduate students
- CGS has a team of 5 instructional designers
- Will work closely with dental hygiene colleagues to develop new online courses that align with the proposed tracks while also ensuring students receive high-quality advising and support
- Online components of the program will be regularly reviewed and updated to support student learning
- Optimistic that the outstanding issue of the transfer of community college credits will be resolved soon as establishing clear articulation agreements is essential to expanding access and ensuring the program's long-term success
- Flexible modern curriculum that meets the needs of today's dental hygienist

**Questions/Comments**

Will the residential program remain? The residential program resides within the School of Dental Medicine and leads to the Associate of Science degree. This bachelor's degree completion program within CGS always had online

components to it but now the intention is to make the program available fully online to make it more accessible for the target student group.

How many new classes are you developing? Three new courses to be taught by faculty in the dental school.

Do you have any students enrolled in the track that is going away? No.

If this completion major becomes extremely popular once fully online, would you need to take on additional instructors for courses? This is always a possibility. Currently, existing courses are under enrolled and have capacity for more students.

How much general education does a student need in a typical degree completion program? Students in an associate degree typically come in with 12 credits of GenEd credits – Psych, Soc, Communication, and EngComp. Those credits and some of the Dental Med credits are applied to the GenEd credits and students typically end up with about 30 GenEd credits fulfilled.

Will this have impact on the in-person degree completion program? Will in-person students shift to online, or will this be additive? It was noted that all the students in this program are working dental hygienists so she thinks it will be purely additive.

PACUP members were supportive of the proposed program modifications.

**c. University of Pittsburgh at Bradford – modify the major in Exercise Science leading to the Bachelor of Science degree**

Mark Kelly, Director of Exercise Science Program, Pitt Bradford and Jeffrey Johnson, Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs – Pitt-Bradford attended via Zoom and gave a brief overview of the proposal.

Mark Kelly noted that:

The modifications include:

- Adding two new courses
  - 1-credit lab that would go with the 1415 ECG Interpretation Stress testing class – taken senior year
  - 3-credit course – Exercise as Medicine – 201 – exercise as a treatment for chronic conditions – one of the few in the country
- Adding a medical terminology course – this course was previously an elective – now adding it to list of required courses for the major. Students take during first semester. Provides critical background information and terminology for other courses. Exercise Science 0109
- One course had a name change to better describe what the course covers

- Discussions on UPB campus about pursuing accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) and the Committee of Accreditation of Exercise Sciences (CoES) – want to add a C- requirement for all of their EXSCI courses – currently only the EXSCI courses at 1300 or above have a C- requirement to adhere to the accreditation standards for when they apply.
- Increase in number of credits for the major from 65 – 70 credits.

### **Questions/Comments**

Is the C- part of the accreditation requirement? Mark replied that it is not set in the accreditation, however, with conversations on the campus they decided they wanted their students to be prepared. Adam noted that students could not graduate due to not passing a course in their senior year because of the C- requirement. Mark noted that they have had that requirement in upper-level courses in other majors for about 5 years and have not had any problems.

A member asked if there was any data on students struggling because of the C- requirement and time-to-degree. Mark noted that students on that campus tend to change their major if they are struggling and move to a field that is a better fit for them.

Jeff Johnson added that on a smaller campus there is very hands-on advising with pathway management to move students to where they will be successful.

PACUP was supportive of the proposed program modifications.

#### **d. University of Pittsburgh at Bradford – establish a major in Special Education PK-12 leading to the Bachelor of Science degree**

Jonathan Chitiyo, Director of Teacher Education, Pitt-Bradford and Jeffrey Johnson, Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs – Pitt-Bradford attended via Zoom and gave a brief overview of the proposal.

Jonathan Chitiyo noted that:

This is a much-needed program that is long overdue on the UPB campus. The other campuses, UPJ and UPG and Pittsburgh campuses all have a special education program. There is a need for special education teachers, especially in rural Pennsylvania where there is a shortage of special education teachers. When developing the program, we looked at the UPJ and UPG programs to align it with those when possible. Also tried to structure the program with as many existing UPB education courses as possible. There are a total of 8 new courses used in the major. The new courses cover information on special education that is not covered within the existing courses at UPB.

The total number of credits for the major is 78 credits for the major and 123 for the total degree. Admission into the teacher education program at UPB students must take a minimum of 28 credits with a 3.4 GPA. If they do not have a 3.4 GPA, they must take a basic skills test (PDE requires this). If students have a GPA between 2.8 and 2.99, they can take the basic skills test. However, if their GPA is below 2.8, they cannot get into the teacher education program.

### **Questions/Comments**

UPB has one faculty member who is a specialist in special education and will have to hire two adjunct professors for methods courses. How many courses in total will be new to the major that are under the category of special education?

Jonathan noted that they don't anticipate any problem covering the course load between him teaching and the new adjuncts that are hired. The standard teaching loads are higher on regional campuses. He noted the 4-year plan that is included in the attachments.

How many students do you anticipate enrolling into the program for the first cohort? Will any students from the existing education program go into special education? Jonathan noted maybe 10 students or more for the first cohort.

Are these net new students on the campus or students who would otherwise be pursuing a major within education at UPB? Jonathan replied – new students.

If a student majors in special education, are they only certified to teach special education or is it an additional credential? Can they go into any classroom or only be in a special ed role? Jonathan said special education Pre K - 12 if they would want to do another content area, they would have to double major.

How much overlaps with another education major? A lot of overlaps. Students might need an additional semester or year, but it is very marketable if they take the extra.

PACUP was supportive of the new program with a slight concern about the teaching and development load for one faculty member.

### **3. Academic Policy Review**

#### **a. Definitions Related to Distance Education**

- 3.31.25 Distance and Online Learning Pitt DefinitionsPACUP.pdf (email attachment)

Adam noted the following regarding Definitions Related to Distance Education

- These are pulled directly from federal policy

- Been though Provost's Cabinet and UCGS already
- Distance Education – What does distance education mean?
- Distance Education Course – Follows the prior definition
- Fully Online Program – All distance education courses
- Hybrid Program – At least 50 % distance education courses
- Will allow us to better keep track of what we need to with enrollment and distance education, and compliance with regulations NC-SARA and other regulations.
- Tracking these courses has been challenging but having these definitions should help.
- Pitt's MSCHE accreditation allows for an in-person program to be up to 50% online courses – the question after that is “What happens after that?”

### **Questions/Comments**

Do we have a standard way in PeopleSoft of understanding which courses are hybrid or distance education? We have course attributes and courses that have a room designation of “web”. Jonathan Helm provided the following website that is on the OUR website under Instructional Delivery Method: [Course Attributes](#).

Are we headed in the direction of having more hybrid and online programs in the undergraduate space? We are in the “finding our way” space.

#### **b. Credential Overlap Regulations**

- DRAFT – Credential Overlap 2025-04-10 – for PACUP.pdf (email attachment)

Adam noted the following regarding Credit Overlap Regulations

- Whenever possible this regulation allows credit overlaps between credentials. If students are meeting the learning outcomes for a particular credential, we should not force them to take another class on principle.
- High-level changes in terminology that came out of benchmarking
  - Standardization for permissible credit overlaps
  - Remove 150 requirement that exists for second undergraduate degree
  - Incorporate guidance that showed up in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs, Regulations Governing Graduate Study, and other Provost Area regulations, but were not in any other policy and have it come together in one place.

### **Questions/Comments**

There was discussion between members of the committee about whether some existing credit-overlap rules are within Pitt schools or are University-wide and the

difference in opinion on how schools view double-dipping with credits between degree programs.

A question was asked if the 150 dual degree program will be eliminated. Is this still offered elsewhere? Will this put the University at an accreditation risk? Other schools still do offer and eliminating it will not put Pitt at an accreditation risk.

A question was asked about credit overlaps between undergraduate and graduate credits for students who could basically get their bachelor's and master's degrees at the same time. Adam noted that we cannot give full-time undergraduate financial aid to students who are not actively satisfying undergraduate requirements in a full-time capacity. This puts us at Title IV risk.

#### **Academic Planning Proposal Review (cont.)**

- a. Swanson School of Engineering: establish a major in Natural Gas, Renewables and Oil Engineering leading to the Bachelor of Science in Engineering degree**

Adam alerted the committee that a lot of proposals are expected for the May agenda.

The meeting was adjourned.