

Provost's Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Programs
May 13, 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), Lorraine Denman (Dietrich – Humanities), William Garrison (SCI), Deborah Good (CBA), Adriana Helbig (Dietrich School – CGS), Paula Janikowski (OTP – Staff), Adam Lee (OTP – Chair), Michelle Sobolak (SOE), 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), Nicole Cecchini (SEPC), Luke Condra (GSPIA), Dawn Drahnak (UPJ), Nicola Foote (Frederick Honors College), Jonathan Helm (Office of the University Registrar), Toya Jones (SSW), Kathy Kelly (SHRS), Martha Koehler (UPG), Matthew Miscio (UPG – Student), Camren Price (UPB/UPT – Student),

Substitutes

Kathy Kelly (SHRS) – unable to attend – substitute Kevin Conley (SHRS), Jonathan Helm (Office of the University Registrar) – unable to attend – substitute Jennifer Phillips

Guests

Dr. Steven Little, Distinguished Professor and Department Chair, Department of Chemical and Petroleum Engineering – Swanson School of Engineering

Dr. Robert Enick, Professor and Assistant Chair of Research, Department of Chemical and Petroleum Engineering – Swanson School of Engineering

Dr. Ross Kleinstuber, Professor and Interim Division Chair of Social Sciences – University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown

Dr. Joshua Gunn, Associate Professor of Business Administration and Area Director for Accounting – Pitt Business

Dr. Dawn McCormick, Director of the English Language Institute (ELI)

1. Announcements/Discussion Points/Updates

- a. April 15, 2025, Minutes Review/Approval
Adam noted that due to the number of proposals to review and a presentation that the minutes from the April meeting will be distributed via email to the committee for review and approval.
- b. Update on PACUP Actions from Academic Year (2024-2025)
The proposal from March 18, 2025, meeting from the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown to modify the major in Respiratory Care leading to the Associate of Science degree is currently with Provost McCarthy for review/approval. UPDATE – approved by Provost McCarthy.

2. Academic Planning Proposal Review

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

Steven Little and Robert Enick gave a brief overview of the proposal and answered questions from PACUP.

Steven Little noted: the field in this area has been split.

- Those trying to create renewables programs – lots of interest from students, but job placement has been questionable in those programs.
- Traditional petroleum engineering programs – have been in question in multiple schools and some have been shut down, some have threatened to shut down.

Program SSOE is putting forth is a holistic approach to looking at energy generation moving forward.

- Want to teach students of the basic principles of carbon-based resources, their disadvantages, and equip students to look towards a future using renewable energy sources.
- This program has the highest number of renewable energy credits currently required by any program of its type in the nation.
- This is something that ABET and the Society for Petroleum Engineering have embraced and have given their full support.
- Support from alumni, faculty, and have done significant market research and believe the student population will be there for this.

Bob Enick added:

- Intended to be an ABET accredited degree in petroleum engineering.
- Steered away “energy engineering” due to lack of internships in that area and there are several dozen companies to approach for internships for petroleum engineers.
- Wanted to do the curriculum right – hired Ron Hinn (who visited 18 departments as a petroleum engineering accreditation person.) Swanson noted they wanted to cut back the traditional petroleum, oil, and gas as much as possible and still get accredited, then maximize renewables.

Questions/Comments/Concerns

- The first thing you said is that programs like this traditionally did not have success with job placement.

Steven replied that they are only energy engineering programs, or renewables programs. There is still a huge market for petroleum engineers.

The market for renewables is not as robust and sustainable. Not because renewable energy does not have a future, it is the future – we believe it is the future, but for the next 25 years there is no indication that carbon-based resources will not be the #1 most affordable and most prominent resource.

Mary added that “energy engineering” is too broad of a brush.

A lot the major fossil fuel production companies are starting futuristic renewables wings of their organizations and graduates from this major will be perfect for those positions.

- Is the appointment stream/tenure stream proportion similar in other engineering programs?

We need the senior tenure-stream person from an ABET perspective – the oil and gas – a researcher who people will know, the appointment stream person is functional – need a lot of courses taught and trying to reduce the number of faculty needed. Beyond that a renewables person is needed.

- Was Geology was consulted since Geology courses will be used in the major?

Steven noted that extensive conversations were held between Bill Harbert and Josef Werne. Added a line item in the budget. Mary added that letters of impact were included in the attachment section of the proposal from Dean Leibovich and Chairperson Werne.

- Have you talked with your engineering student population? Are you going to be recruiting a new population for this or do you think you are going to see a flow out of other majors in the school into this major?

Steven urged PACUP to look at the market survey. Talked to students to gauge interest. Mechanical engineers are most interested in the new major. Huge number of freshmen coming in this fall, 30% interested in ME. Mary added that in the first-year students typically choose their program. So, there are no worries that the new major will take away from other majors.

- This is set for a fall 2027 launch, given the incoming class size, would there be any interest in having this set for a fall 2026 launch?

Steven noted he is still in conversations with the Provost about this. There would be an advantage of the large engineering class size. However:

- there is a robust marketing program to put forth to high school students to try to engage them to come to this program. There is a budget for it and good ideas for it.

- The laboratories will not be done in time – could wave this but not ideal.
- Each of the courses need development. Have the syllabi, but these were intended for fall 2027 start and to be part of faculty teaching assignment for development.
- There is no comma after “Renewables” in the title field of new major; but the comma appears in the proposal. Please verify with the school which way the name should appear if the proposal is approved.

b. University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown – modify the major in Criminal Justice leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree

Ross Kleinstuber gave a brief overview of the proposal and answered questions from PACUP.

The way the program currently exists is there are two different tracks students can take. One is a digital forensics track looking at cybercrime and digital security and the other is law and society focused. UPJ is reorganizing the existing tracks into the below three official Areas of Concentration so students will have a credential that will appear on their transcript.

- Law and Society
- Cybercrime & Digital Forensics
- Law Enforcement & Criminal Investigations

Questions/Comments/Concerns

- Adam noted that tracks are suggested optional paths through a program. When ARCOs are offered and noted on students’ transcripts, programs need to keep courses open for all the ARCOs in case students are enrolled in the program.

Does UPJ have the teaching resources necessary to keep three ARCOs for prospective students? Has UPJ thought about this perspective issue?

Ross replied that the program has been doing this in practice anyway. One of the retired UPJ police detectives is running the law enforcement courses, Ross has been teaching the law and society courses, adjuncts have been teaching the basic and advanced computer forensics courses, and the Computer Science division has been teaching the security courses. Most of the courses were already included as part of the existing tracks.

c. Pitt Business – modify the major in Global Management leading to the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree and terminate the undergraduate Certificate Program in International Business (CPIB)

Deborah Good (PACUP member) gave a brief overview of the proposal and answered questions from PACUP.

Deb noted that the International Business Certificate and the Global Management major were the two credentials that were not housed in an interest group within business. Instead, the Dean's office managed these credentials. This proposal began by moving the credentials into an interest group to have faculty responsible for them instead of them being housed within the dean's office.

There is a lot of overlap between the two credentials. This causes confusion for students deciding which program to take.

Normally, within Business, if a certificate existed and a major was then established in the same area, the certificate would then be terminated. This did not happen with the CPIB certificate when Global Management was established.

Modifications to the major that are proposed:

- Reduce the number of credits for the major from 21 to 18 credits
- Removed 5 prerequisites

Terminating the certificate:

- International Business – this brings students in as an interest area but when it comes to job placement there is not an understanding in the market of what international business is.
- Business advisors advocate whether a student takes the certificate or the major in Global Management that they pair it with another major.

Questions/Comments/Concerns

- Doesn't a certificate and a major serve a different population or is that not the case with the structure in the Business School?

Deb noted that is not the case with the structure in Business.

- You removed five prerequisite courses from the major. How will that impact student preparation for the Global Management major?
Deb noted the intent was for students to sample different areas. The core serves that purpose, so they decided to clean that up and this will provide students more flexibility.
- Might the certificate be good for another school?

Business might propose an International Business certificate for non-business majors (as they do with the minor) in the future, however this certificate is not appropriate for non-business students.

d. Pitt Business – establish an undergraduate certificate in Public Accounting

Joshua Gunn gave a brief overview of the proposal and answered questions from PACUP.

Joshua noted that the certificate is in response to forthcoming regulatory changes. Since the early 2000s across the country the requirement has been 150 hours of college credit to become a public accountant. This works well with an undergraduate degree and a master's degree. The requirement is changing. It is expected within the next year that almost all states will be back to only requiring a bachelor's degree (120 credits). The school now must shift some of its curriculum. Currently, students go into the Master of Accounting (MAcc) program following their bachelor's, now that won't be viable. However, there is so much content on the CPA exam, you cannot fit it all into a traditional accounting major.

The certificate is only for accounting majors. It would require students to go beyond the minimum credits earn a bachelor's degree. It would help students prepare for the CPA exam and for a career in public accounting.

Questions/Comments/Concerns

- Is there allowance for double dipping between the major and the certificate?

Joshua responded that the most efficient path through the certificate would require three classes or 9 credits beyond what the accounting major requires. A typical accounting major has about 16 credits "extra" to use and often students either double major or fill these with interest areas/electives. They can use these for the certificate.

- Does this certificate make sense outside of the accounting major?

It is specifically an add-on to the accounting major.

- How would you assess the relative preparation for the workforce of previously completing an accounting degree and then a master's degree and now completing the accounting degree and a certificate?

Joshua noted this is a big concern. In terms of preparing for the workforce – CPA exams pass rates – Pitt students are the best in the state in terms of passing the CPA exam – at about a 60% pass rate. The nationwide average is below 50%. It is a difficult exam to pass. From the perspective of employers, it is a tradeoff – the reason the regulation is changing is

because of the barriers to entry. The firms are having difficulty filling jobs. In accounting firms people start out as staff, get promoted to senior, then manager on a very set time schedule. Part of that timetable is passing that exam. Firms have had an uptick of employees who are not passing the exam and stop advancing.

Joshua noted that the 150-hour rule has been in effect for around 25 years and people have assessed the tradeoff and have decided it is time to go back.

- Deb noted this has not yet passed the Pennsylvania legislature, but Joshua's team has done a great job of taking lead on this to be ready to go when this does get passed.
- Is this something you are looking to move forward unconditionally or are you looking to have this ready if/when it passes?

The school is looking for the certificate to be in effect for fall 2025. The bill has now made it to the PA legislature and is on par to pass in early 2026.

- Would this be appropriate for external non-degree seeking students?

The way it is designed it is very much just an add on to accounting major. The school is working on how to redesign the Master of Accounting program in response to the regulatory changes. The MAcc will change path to serve a different population (international students with limited accounting backgrounds, non-traditional students, etc.)

e. Pitt Business – establish an undergraduate certificate in Fundamentals of Business (Dietrich, SCI and Public Health)

Deborah Good (PACUP member) gave a brief overview of the proposal and answered questions from PACUP.

- This started because Business recognized that the minor in business for non-business students is much more analytical than some students would like.
- The certificate is designed to teach basic management concepts to individuals who very early in their careers will need some management skills.
- The Business School designed this in conjunction with different disciplines within Dietrich and within SCI and Public Health.
- The Business School will provide the courses for the foundation of the basic management concepts and each of the home schools provide courses in each specialty area.
- If other schools would like to participate, they should contact Business.

- There are experience-based concept courses/capstone courses that student will have to take.

Questions/Comments/Concerns

- Are seats held in any of these courses for Pitt Business students?

Deb noted there should not be any difficulties with students enrolling in the courses and Business will adjust as needed. Business will maintain certification of the classes. The advising will be in the home school.

The Dean's letter notes joint decision-making between the schools.

- Regarding the rationale behind the in-discipline course selections – some of the courses within the Dietrich School seem to have a professional component but some others seem to be just introductory courses in the discipline – what is the connection to fundamentals of business?

Bill responded for SCI that as students go into an area, they will be working with people and managing teams – positioning – thinking across the two disciplines – the goal is to get students exposed to the working methods of the discipline – the student's goal in the discipline moving forward.

Ada added for SPH that although Fundamentals in Public Health may be an introductory course it teaches students about the different paths students can take within public health, and the courses that follow are from each one of those disciplines.

f. Pitt Business - establish an undergraduate certificate in Artificial Intelligence

Deborah Good (PACUP member) gave a brief overview of the proposal and answered questions from PACUP.

Business has looked at disruptive technology particularly in the analytics major and know that it is impacting every facet of business. As an example, in the Human Resource area, AI can help screen and interview, which can impact existing job functions. This certificate can make students aware of the disruptive nature of AI in individual areas of business. This can also inform managers how to make more informed decisions on how to incorporate AI into their area or how to plan for replacement of jobs by AI. There are courses in SCI that can complement the Business courses. There are more courses in Business to be developed in each Business' functional areas – finance, supply chain, etc., which will come into play later.

Questions/Comments/Concerns

- How many students do you anticipate taking the certificate? And is the certificate only for business majors?

The certificate is only for Business majors now; however, Business is currently collaborating with SCI for courses. Business anticipates at least 30 students in the first semester and after that at least two sections of each class after that.

- Why make Introduction to AI an elective?

This is a SCI course and is very technical in nature. The course requires prerequisites. This is true for a lot of the courses that are listed from SCI. These courses may be more targeted towards students in Business who are also taking a computer science minor which is common.

- What is the AI content for some of the electives? Accounting Information Systems? IT Architectures and Platforms? IS Consultancy? Do these have AI components to them?

Yes, these already do, and this would be an expansion of those things. These courses are usually for the IS majors or Business Analytics majors. These courses are the courses business can start the certificate with and then add courses from other majors (finance, etc.)

- Is there a core of research-active faculty in AI right now?

Deb responded that business is still in the “management” phase of how they manage the problem of AI right now.

3. Presentation

a. **Report on English Language Institute (ELI) English Placement Test (EPT) pilot from the Director of the ELI, Dr. Dawn McCormick**

Dr. Dawn McCormick reported on the English Language Institute pilot to use TOEFL, Duolingo and IELTS scores for recommended ESL classes rather than the EPT. The initial results of the pilot were positive. ELI will continue the pilot in fall 2025. The Office of the Provost aims to request that the related university policy (AC07) is decommissioned so that it can be updated.

A question was asked about what the average score for Duolingo was on the pilot. Dr. McCormick responded by sharing the below link with members of PACUP.

[English Language Proficiency Test](#)