

Provost's Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Programs Meeting Minutes

January 20, 2026

The minutes from the December 16, 2025 meeting were approved.

Academic Program Proposals

Establish a major in Public and Professional Writing leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree (modality – online) in the College of General Studies

The College of General Studies proposed to establish an online major in Public and Professional Writing leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree. The major already exists as a successful in-person program and undergraduate certificate in the Dietrich School. CGS students will complete the same courses in an online asynchronous format. CGS students will have access to most electives available to in-person students, with online versions of the most popular courses already developed. Two required courses (History and Politics of the English Language and Group Seminar) have not yet launched online but faculty are ready to develop them. The proposal includes a Bridge seminar functioning as a senior seminar or capstone course. Students can cross-register between CGS and Dietrich offerings based on availability. This program, along with the Strategic Communication for Media Professionals major and an Undergraduate Certificate in Social Media and Digital Creation, will eventually replace the existing Media and Professional Communication major. Based on a survey of 240 CGS students, approximately 60 would be interested in the PPW major. The anticipated effective term is Fall 2027.

PACUP reached consensus to recommend this proposal to the Provost. Some concerns were raised regarding the broader online ecosystem. These concerns will be discussed further by Provost's Cabinet.

Establish a major in Strategic Communication for Media Professionals leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree (modality – online) in the College of General Studies

The College of General Studies proposed to establish an online major in Strategic Communication for Media Professionals leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree. The proposal was designed in conjunction with the Department of Communication with the original mission of the Media and Professional Communication major in mind. The program is tailored to serve aspiring and current media professionals or professionals in strategic communications, reflecting ongoing changes in the Communication curriculum. Classes in the first year of curriculum are already being taught, and faculty members are prepared to adapt existing courses for online use. The program is designed primarily for online delivery to CGS students, though elements are reflected in the Department of Communication's

undergraduate curriculum. Introductory courses (Media and Society and Communication and Society) will have 40-student online sections rather than the 160-student in-person lecture sections. Interpersonal Communication and writing intensive courses will be capped at 25 students. No CGS courses will exceed 60 students. The anticipated effective term is Fall 2027.

PACUP reached consensus to recommend this proposal to the Provost subject to the same considerations as the PPW proposal.

Modify the major in Digital Narrative and Interactive Design leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree in the Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences and the Bachelor of Science degree in the School of Computing and Information

The Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences and School of Computing and Information proposed modifications to the jointly-offered major in Digital Narrative and Interactive Design. The modifications ensure that students have a level of technical sophistication that is necessary for success in the capstone course and beyond. After three years of teaching the capstone course, the schools realized students were graduating with design skills but limited technical implementation skills. The proposal converts suggested electives into a focused core requiring students to take three or four technical courses from different categories within the Human Centered Computing Core (human-centered computing, web design, user interface/user experience design, and game design). Students must now complete Intermediate Programming rather than Introduction to Programming to count toward the major. The modifications do not increase the total number of credits, time to degree, or impact students' ability to enter the program later in their academic career. Market analysis conducted during development of a related graduate ARCO indicated the changes should not negatively affect enrollment.

PACUP reached consensus to recommend this proposal to the Provost.

Presentation

Guidance on AI Program Naming

Dr. Michael Colaresi, Strategic Advisor to the Provost and Director of the Hub for AI and Data Science Leadership (HAIL), presented AI Program Naming Guidelines. The guidelines were created in response to a request from Provost McCarthy to coordinate program names so students and employers can better understand and navigate the interdisciplinary and rapidly changing AI landscape. The naming guidelines apply to programs, not classes. Program names should have three parts: Level – AI term (as specific as possible) – Field (e.g., Foundations of Generative AI in Climate Science). The guidelines aim to avoid

duplication and enhance coordination across programs. HAIL will roll out a glossary of terms including Foundation, Application, and Advanced levels.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 PM.

Attendance

Members Attending: Mary Besterfield-Sacre (SSOE), Brian Batell (Dietrich – Natural Sciences), Betty Braxter (SON), Jonathan Chitiyo (UPB/UPT), Luke Condra (SPIA), Lorraine Denman (Dietrich – Humanities), Dawn Drahnak (UPJ), Ryan Felesky (UPJ – student), William Garrison (SCI), Deborah Good (CBA), Adriana Helbig (Dietrich School – CGS), Jonathan Helm (Office of the University Registrar), David Hornyak (Frederick Honors College), Paula Janikowski (OTP – Staff), Logan Johnson (UPG), Kathy Kelly (SHRS), Adam Lee (OTP – PACUP Chair), Denise Schiff (Pharm), Michelle Sobolak (SOE), Sybil Streeter (SEPC), Belkys Torres (OTP), Liann Tsoukas (Dietrich – Social Sciences), Kelly Wagner (DenMed), Ada Youk (SPH)

Members Absent: Kylie Engdahl (UPB/UPT), Brandon Grace (Pittsburgh SGB – student), Toya Jones (SSW), Matthew Miscio (UPG – student)

Guests: Dr. Gayle Rogers (Andrew W. Mellon Professor, Chair, Department of English, Dietrich School), Dr. Jean Grace (Teaching Professor, Assistant Chair, Department of English, Dietrich School Director, William S. Dietrich II Institute for Writing Excellence), Dr. Calum Matheson (Associate Professor, Chair, Department of Communication, Dietrich School), Dr. Dmitriy Babichenko (Clinical Professor, Department of Informatics and Networked Systems, Director, Undergraduate Program for DINS, School of Computing and Information), Dr. Michael Colaresi (Strategic Advisor to the Provost and Director of the Hub for AI and Data Science Leadership)