

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE

Andrew R. Blair, Chair

September 20, 2011

Minutes

Present: A. Blair (Chair), M. Druzdzal, B. Falcione, M. Gubar, M. Kerr, M. Madison, P. Newman, M. Redfern, M. Roberts, C. Schunn, R. Venkataramanan, J. Wallace, C. Golden (Staff Liaison), and Provost P. Beeson.

1. Welcome and Introduction of Members (A. Blair): Dr. Blair welcomed new and continuing members of the Advisory Council, noting that about one-third of Council is new. He then explained the relationship between the Office of the Provost and the Center for Instructional Development and Distance Education (CIDDE).

2. Approval of the Minutes (A. Blair): Dr. Blair asked for a motion from continuing Council members for approval of the May 12, 2011 meeting minutes, which was offered, seconded, and accepted as written. The minutes will be posted to the ACIE website.

3. Provost's Charge to Council (P. Beeson): Provost Beeson remarked on the Council's significant impact in the last decade to promote the University's priority to have strong teaching and learning programs. She observed that the Council is an important committee and thanked the members for their work on Council's activities over the last year. Provost Beeson proceeded with her charge to Council. With respect to the Innovation in Education Awards, the Provost asked Council to help solicit and develop faculty proposals and to make decisions on which proposals are to be supported. She also suggested that Council consider, in particular, ways of looking at innovation when reviewing proposals for possible funding. Provost Beeson then asked Council to continue to review a way to conduct the OMET evaluations online. She noted that the Best Practices Committee and the full Council had recommended a pilot study of an online system to be conducted this Fall term, which she has accepted. The schools of Arts and Sciences and Engineering have agreed to participate, and the Provost is looking forward to receiving the results of this project as well as Council's recommendation on possibly implementing this process more broadly. She also asked Council's advice and support for CIDDE's continuing faculty development programs (e.g., Summer Instructional Development Institute, the faculty book and article discussions). In response to the Provost's invitation to ask questions, one continuing Council member asked the status of the Faculty Diversity Seminar report, and Provost Beeson responded that she and Dr. Blair have been working on this and will be implementing some of the recommendations. Dr. Blair will keep Council apprised on the status of this topic. Another member asked if the OMET student evaluation instrument is open to a review. The Provost responded that she would be receptive to additional input but wanted the Council to focus this year on the online process. The evaluation of the instrument would be a separate project. A second question about the student evaluations was posed: What does it mean to evaluate teaching—how would one know this has been achieved? The Provost suggested that Council may want to look at this at some point but that the student component was important information to retain. Ms. Golden said that she has been getting comments from chairs about these issues, and she will share these with Council. In response to a final question asking about

past assessments of the awards program, Dr. Blair replied that an impact study was done several years ago, and the results can be found on the ACIE website. At this point, Provost Beeson left the meeting.

4. Report of the Chair (A. Blair): (1) Council Committees: A list of the three Advisory Council committees (Faculty Development; Best Practices Implementation, and Instructional Grants) was distributed to members, along with the statement of the responsibilities of the committees. There are two standing committees (Best Practices and Faculty Development) that meet regularly, and Dr. Blair then asked new members to select one of the two committees on which they would like to serve. He also asked for volunteers for committee chairs. Dr. Blair noted that the committees report on their activities at full Council meetings and also provide agenda items for full Council discussion. For example, one of committee's activities discussed last year was the status of the Teaching Excellence Showcase, which was evaluated well by attendees, but overall did not have enough attendees to justify the many efforts expended for this event. The TES was originally developed to fulfill the reporting requirements of the funded project directors, which is now being replaced by a dynamic website maintained within CIDDE for the Council. Ms. Golden added that the website is a work in progress, depending on the individual project.

(2) *RFP 2012*: A copy of last year's *RFP* was distributed for reference. Dr. Blair noted that this year's *RFP* will need to be sent out soon so that it can be available for wide distribution to faculty on all five campuses in October. He briefly described the proposal review process, which will be discussed at greater length later in the year, and noted that as a result of the review process last year, several suggestions were proposed for 2012 which Council needs to consider. One suggestion was that Council may want to consider a specific category of proposals that they particularly like to see, i.e., proposals addressing large lecture courses. After some discussion, members present agreed to adding a sentence to the second full paragraph on page 1 of the *RFP* that would indicate Council's interest in reviewing proposals involving large enrollment lecture courses. A second suggestion, which was also agreed on, was to include a sentence about consulting with CIDDE, at the beginning of the Resources section.

5. Report of the Staff Liaison (C. Golden): Ms. Golden commented that the Council has been extremely valuable in giving advice and providing support for CIDDE. She then provided a brief report on the upcoming activities supported by the two Council committees. (1) Faculty Development: The fall book discussion is scheduled for Friday, October 7, and the session is already full (30 faculty have registered). Due to a conflict, the Summer Institutes was moved to the Fall and is now scheduled for Monday, October 10. The topic is "Half Time and You're Behind: Motivating Students In and Outside of the Classroom." Council member Chris Schunn will be a keynote speaker and Pitt basketball coaches Jamie Dixon and Agnus Berenato will make presentations on motivating students. So far, 27 faculty have registered. New Faculty Orientation was held on August 25; 136 out of 241 (56%) new faculty invitees attended. Information presented included topics of interest to new faculty, in particular, those related to instructional and research support at the University. Faculty members' comments from the sessions will help CIDDE to address faculty needs. (2) Best Practices: This committee has submitted a report to the Provost on the University's online student evaluation system recommending a pilot project to be conducted this fall, which was endorsed by the full Council

and accepted by the Provost. Ms. Golden will bring the results of this pilot to Council at its completion. Blackboard 9's upgrade was released last spring; faculty interest in using clickers in the classroom is growing. In closing, Ms. Golden informed Council that schools and departments may request on-site consultations with CIDDE staff to help with instructional technology or teaching issues (appointments must be arranged in advance).

6. *Adjournment:* With no further business, the Advisory Council adjourned at 2:30 pm. The next Council meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 13, 11:00 am, in Alumni Hall, and the primary agenda item is a tour of CIDDE's facilities.