
Report of the Senate Committee on Students and Educational Policy (SCSEP)

General Committee Charge

The Committee oversees and advises the Executive Committee on matters relating to the University's policies and procedures on the admission and instruction of students, including academic integrity, admissions policies and administration, evaluation of teaching, examinations and grading, academic experiences, educational opportunities (such as study abroad), student records, disciplinary systems and the campus environment. In general, the Committee deals with the matters covered in section IV of the University's *Handbook for Faculty and Academic Administrators*.

2012-2013 Specific Charges

1. Continue the dialogue that has been established with the Dean of Admissions. The SCSEP should consider with the Dean the admissions strategies that are likely to yield applications from academically gifted students with disadvantaged backgrounds. As examples, the SCSEP should get progress reports on efforts to expand Penn's reach in local Philadelphia high schools as well as in targeted community colleges, in Florida and elsewhere.

2. Develop a FAQ list for faculty and students on Intellectual Property, Copyright Policies, and new Conflict of Interest Policies of relevance to the academic mission. Robert Terrell, Associate General Counsel, has agreed to guide this effort. The SCSEP should decide how to make this information widely available.

3. Discuss the goals, administrative structure and faculty involvement for Coursera with Provost Price. Monitor faculty participation in Coursera and use of the platform in Penn's courses.

4. Meet with Lauren Steinfeld, from the Office of Audit, Compliance, and Privacy to review the *Guidelines for the Use of Social Media at Penn*.

5. Continue to monitor the online course evaluation system and consider whether slated improvements address faculty concerns.

6. Continue to get updates on courseware options in consultation with relevant administrators from Penn's library.

7. The University Council on Academic and Related Affairs is continuing discussions on Best Practices for Academic Integrity with Vice Provost for Education, Andy Binns. Consider engaging with the University Council on Academic and Related Affairs in this discussion.

8. Review and discuss this Committee's general charge, as provided in the Senate Rules, and identify what you believe to be the most pressing issues facing the Faculty, students and educational programs over the next few years. In light of your discussions, recommend to the Senate Executive Committee two or three high-priority charges for the Committee on Students and Educational Policy to undertake in academic year 2013-14. In explaining these charges, outline any appropriate actions you suppose the Senate might conceivably take after its review.

Accomplishments

1. SCSEP Meeting with Dean of Admissions, Eric Furda

The Committee held one meeting with Dean Furda. The Admissions office has noted an increase in the number of applications in Engineering, as well as in Physics and Math. Conversely, applications from students expressing interest in Economics, Political Science and the Arts have been decreasing. Recent changes in the Penn website and improvements in pro-

motional materials were intended to attract a more intellectually curious student. However, Dean Furda believes there is more work to be done to make Penn most appealing to the "life of the mind" student.

In its effort to create a diverse student body, Penn Admissions considers socioeconomic factors, first-generation college status, parent employment, zip code and other factors. Penn is part of the Questbridge program, which is a national outreach effort that identifies high-achieving students from a lower socioeconomic background. Penn is shifting attention to the Southeast as that population of college-age students is increasing, whereas the college-bound population in the Northeast has started to decrease. Dean Furda noted that in the past four years Penn has increased the number of Hispanic students, but that to achieve national representation of Hispanic students at Penn would require matriculation of 120 additional students per class.

SCSEP Recommendations

The Committee recommends greater dialog between Admissions and Penn faculty on issues regarding admitted student academic profiles, as a changing composition of the studentbody can have a large impact on individual departments.

The SCSEP notes that many of Penn's peer institutions have fared much better in recent years in increasing student diversity. The SCSEP believes that Penn must learn from successful strategies at peer institutions and then adopt policies to increase the pool of applications from qualified under-represented minorities and first-generation college students, and to improve student recruitment in this very competitive arena. Penn has a very dynamic urban campus and broad course offerings that should appeal to a diverse student body, but many high school students outside of the mid-Atlantic region are still not familiar with Penn as an Ivy League university.

2. Develop a FAQ List for Faculty and Students on Intellectual Property, Copyright Policies and New Conflict of Interest Policies

The Committee met on two occasions with the Associate General Counsel Robert Terrell, Scholarly Communication Librarian Shawn Martin, and Associate Librarian—Collection Development & Management Martha Brogan. In consultation with the SCSEP, a draft FAQ list was generated that provides helpful guidance on intellectual property and copyright policies that are often confusing to faculty and students. The SCSEP is working with Shawn Martin to finalize the FAQ list, and this list will be posted at the Library website in the next few months. This one-page list will help to guide users to a large number of online resources provided by the Penn Library.

SCSEP Recommendation

The SCSEP encourages Penn faculty to spend time reviewing the FAQ list when it becomes available online, as these are important and complicated issues that impact many aspects of teaching and scholarly work.

3. Discuss the goals, administrative structure, and faculty involvement for Coursera with Provost Price

The SCSEP met with Professor Ed Rock, Director of Open Course Initiatives. He hopes that faculty using Coursera will use technology or other non-traditional methods to disseminate knowledge. He also suggested that Coursera may be a catalyst to improve teaching at Penn, for example,

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in the creation of “flipped” classroom experiences.

Professor Rock explained the first call for Coursera proposals, which appeared in October, 2012. Each proposal must be reviewed and signed by the Department Chair and Dean. To produce each Coursera course costs Penn roughly \$50,000, which will be shared by the school and Provost. A Coursera Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) has been established, which will serve two functions:

- Act as a consultative body for Ed Rock and the Provost to consider issues and programs related to online learning.
- Review and select all proposals for new courses, within the Provost’s budget.

Professor Rock opined that it is too early to establish metrics for Coursera course “success.” He noted that one type of success was evident in courses attracting tens of thousands of enrollees, and the high level of student engagement.

SCSEP Recommendations

The SCSEP has concerns that the Coursera course selection process will bypass the curriculum committees established in the different Schools. Professor Rock stated that the Coursera FAC will act as a curriculum committee, but it will be important to make sure that courses have sufficient intellectual merit and are not redundant with other Coursera offerings from Penn. There may be issues as Coursera grows, about course redundancy with Coursera offerings from other schools.

There are growing pressures for Penn faculty to make lectures available to students online and to adopt teaching methods that promote student activity in the classroom. SCSEP believes that it will be important to track course reviews for faculty who are flipping their courses, with a goal of identifying best practices. Are student learning outcomes improved for all subjects and for both small and large courses?

The committee notes that due to the time and resources required to produce and run Coursera courses, it will be more realistic for the majority of Penn faculty to use the Canvas platform to disseminate interactive educational materials to Penn students.

4. Meet with Lauren Steinfeld, from the Office of Audit, Compliance, and Privacy to review the Guidelines for the Use of Social Media at Penn

The SCSEP met with Lauren Steinfeld in October, 2012. She highlighted a new document, Guidelines for the Use of Social Media at Penn, which addresses issues that may arise regarding the responsible use of social media in the context of Penn’s teaching, research, service and administrative functions. The SCSEP endorsed this document.

5. Continue to Monitor the Online Course Evaluation System

The Committee met with Vice Provost for Education Andy Binns, to learn about the status of the online course evaluation system. Student response rates are much higher for the online course evaluations and students have reported that they feel less time encumbered. There is a working group that meets with Rob Nelson, Director of Education, to address technical and academic issues with the online course evaluation system. The University courseware will be moving from Blackboard to Canvas, which has put planned changes to the online course evaluation system on hold.

SCSEP Feedback

There appears to have been little change (or improvement) in the online course evaluation system in the past year. SCSEP has ongoing concerns about the lack of control that faculty have over when students evaluate the course, and the types of questions that are posed to students.

SCSEP members also noted that questions for the online evaluation system vary across schools. There is currently little faculty consultation concerning the question selection for each school’s online course evaluation system. Vice Provost Andy Binns stated that he will ask Rob Nelson to strongly encourage the working group to consult with faculty.

The course evaluation system has identified student cheating in some courses. It will be important for faculty to be able to pose additional questions within the course evaluation system that will help to identify pat-

terns of cheating.

6. Get Updates on Courseware Options from Penn Library Administrators

This issue was tabled due to the impending decision for Penn to go with Canvas.

7. Consideration of Penn’s Procedures for Treating Academic Dishonesty

Vice Provost Andy Binns updated SCSEP on recent developments concerning Academic Integrity. The Office of Student Conduct is now fully staffed and has a new staff member who is an experienced mediator.

VP Binns explained that the Committee for Undergraduate Education (CUE) in the School of Arts & Sciences drafted a report on Academic Integrity recommending that the Charter of the University of Pennsylvania Student Disciplinary System be revised to reflect the greater flexibility and leniency in the current disciplinary system. Also recommended in the CUE report were changes to the current academic disciplinary system, to facilitate reporting of student disciplinary issues and detect repeat offenders.

SCSEP Recommendations

The Office of Student Conduct should continue its outreach efforts to inform students and faculty of the services it provides.

SCSEP endorses CUE’s recommended changes to the Penn Charter. SCSEP also supports the creation of new online resources to lower faculty barriers to reporting incidents of student academic misconduct, and new software to identify student repeat offenders.

8. Consider Charges for the Coming Year

SCSEP identified areas for continued work in the coming academic year:

- Continue discussing with Dean of Admissions the strategies that are likely to yield applications from academically gifted students from under-represented groups, including those with disadvantaged backgrounds. Is progress being made to expand Penn’s reach in local Philadelphia high schools as well as nationally in targeted community colleges?

- Work with the Library to finalize the Intellectual Property and Copyright Policy FAQ list, and help to disseminate this information to faculty and students.

- Continue to monitor the online course evaluation system, and consider whether slated improvements address faculty concerns. Continue to advocate for the inclusion of new polling features in the online course evaluation system.

- Meet with the Coursera Faculty Advisory Committee to learn about its involvement in overseeing Coursera. Meet also with Professor Ed Rock, Director of Open Course Software, to consider the academic outcomes from Coursera, and the impact that faculty involvement in Coursera is having on Penn’s on-campus students. The SCSEP is interested to meet with Penn faculty who are experimenting with flipped classrooms.

- Continue to get updates on courseware options in consultation with relevant administrators from Penn’s library.

- Consider faculty concerns within the professional schools that there is more training that should be provided to prepare students for the competitive job market.

SCSEP Membership 2012-2013

Emily Blumberg, Perelman School of Medicine/Emergency Medicine
 Christine Bradway, School of Nursing/Behavioral & Health Sciences
 Ivan Dmochowski, *Chair*, School of Arts & Sciences/Chemistry
 Ellis Golub, School of Dental Medicine/Biochemistry
 Jorge Santiago-Aviles, School of Engineering and Applied Science/
 Electrical & Systems Engineering
 Michael Weisberg, School of Arts & Sciences/Philosophy
Ex Officio Members:
 Susan Margulies, School of Engineering/Bioengineering,
Senate Chair
 Dwight Jaggard, School of Engineering/Electrical & Systems
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