

GPSG Committee Reports-November

Senate Library Committee

Questions were raised about increasing/decreasing library data; these changes were relatively small and consistent with national trends. Pitt and ULS are seen as the national leaders in open access publishing. Focus groups conducted about the usage of space at Hillman. Barco Law gift to the library has helped the library to provide more service activity with individual faculty and students in Law than is possible for the liaisons. Law librarians teach courses to the law students which are required for credit and are also supported by the guest lectures in regular law classes.

Women's Concerns—Provost's Advisory Council

The committee is working to identify women leaders, either as staff, faculty or student. Discussion focused on doing a pilot study at one of the campuses outside Pittsburgh to determine feasibility. There will also be a panel discussion in March on women's leadership

Calendar Committee

Discussed the 2018-2019 calendar. Looked at 25Live calendar presentation and then had lengthy discussions on the different calendars for the different campuses as well as putting deadlines on the calendar. Discussion was had for students having 3 finals within a 24 hour period rescheduling a final. Discussion also called upon starting the week prior to Labor Day, as opposed to 2 weeks before and a 3-4 week gap prior to the spring semester starting. Problems also came up that spring term starts needed to be looked at to reduce probability of students returning on New Years weekend prior to a Monday start.

Community Relations Committee—University Senate

Introduction of New CRC Members, SGA reps, Community Partners and guests. Motion to accept minutes from September. Updates from Community Relations Office and Engagement Office at Pitt and a discussion of Carnegie Community Engagement Voluntary Classification

Mental Health Task Force

We went over the turnout of the mental health awareness week for the undergraduate students. Comments on how to make further additions to improve counseling services for international students

Student Research Committee

J. Woodward stated the Conflict of Interest Policy was sent back to the Conflict of Interest subcommittee to review that the intent had not been altered by the SVC legal counsel. There was a general discussion of various aspects of effort reporting with specific questions on certification of effort of personnel at other institutions. P. Morel introduced the draft of the Pitt Principles and stated that in her view the sentence under the pursuit of Knowledge statement, "The University appreciates and recognizes excellence in all form so scholarship encourages the production of socially useful knowledge in cooperation with partners in academia, in the public and private sectors and in society at large" seems to imply that research that has no immediate application to society is not valued. M. Goodhart stated that was not the intent and the application was being denigrated. M. Spring suggested that the statement be reworded as "The University appreciates and encourages the production of socially useful knowledge in cooperation with partners in academia, in the public and private sectors, and in society at large." A motion was made that his rewording be suggested to the University Senate. The motion was seconded and approved with a unanimous approval.

Student Admissions, Aid and Affairs

The large topic discussed was graduate student unionization. Pitt administration is using Penn State as a model for what may happen since they have recently gone through this process and just had their hearing (result TBD). Dr. Urban recently became the new Vice-Provost for Graduate Studies and has been working diligently to hear and address graduate students needs/concerns. One example is the new monthly emails to all graduate students and organizations and welcomes any students to contact him with any comments or issues. The committee discussed some of the student concerns, which brought up such as how to deal with toxic mentors, which is especially an issue for PhD students since sometimes the mentor is the only person the student knows who to talk with if there are any issues. We also discussed graduate students being overworked and undercompensated (an issue with some who depend on TA position but end up being able to work on their dissertation because of teaching overload.). Some on committee voiced that this seemed to be more departmental issues, rather than University-wide issues and unionizing graduate students to set a flat standard across departments will be challenging since every department does their own thing. Committee asked if the problems appear to occur in certain schools or are student concerns widespread? Another question from the committee is who is the bargaining unit, i.e. who does the graduate student union want to represent. Is it all GSR, GSA, RA full time only? FT

and PT? Are students on federal fellowships included as well and how would a union represent federal fellowship students on wage issues?