

**MINUTES OF Tenure and Academic Freedom Committee Meeting on**  
**June 1, 2022, 11 AM – 1PM EDT**  
**Zoom**

**Present:** Abbe De Vallejo (Co-Chair), Maria Kovacs (Co-Chair), Carey Balaban, Jane Cauley, Kirill Kiselyov, Ergin Kocyildirim, Elizabeth Mulvaney, Don Ulin, Nick Bircher (Pro-Tem), Barry Gold (Pro-Tem), N. Alex Cutsumbis (incoming member), Lev Khazanovich (incoming member), Robin Kear (Senate President), Kristin Kanthak (Senate Vice President), Lu-in Wang (Vice Provost Faculty Affairs), Donald Yealy (SOM liaison), James Miller (Staff Council), Shannon Wells (University Times)

**Absent:** Caroline Arena (Student Rep), Cristina Espinosa-Diaz (Student Rep), Stephen Jacobus (Student Rep), Monica Costlow (Staff Council), Chris Bonneau (Senate Liaison),

**Excused** [notified co-chair by email or auto-reply at Zoom invitation]: Mark Paterson (Secretary), Karin Warner, John Kirkwood (Pro-tem), John Wallace (Vice Provost Faculty Diversity)

1. Roll Call, quorum met, meeting called to order by Abbe 11am
  - a. In the absence of Mark who is out of the country, Elizabeth was requested to take minutes for this meeting.
  - b. Introduction of two new voting members who will officially begin on the Committee on July 1<sup>st</sup>, Lev Khazanovich (School of Engineering) and N. Alex Cutsumbis (School of Rehab Sciences); and Shannon Wells from *University Times*.
2. Minutes from meeting of March 24, 2022, was approved unanimously without corrections.
3. Discussion of Draft Resolution on Academic Freedom
  - a. Co-chairs presented background on Academic Freedom at Pitt, and from several other universities and the AAUP. A background document was sent to members prior to the meeting. Abbe made a PowerPoint presentation to summarize the background.
  - b. Abbe mentioned that lines 33-37 of the original marked copy of the resolution (distributed earlier to members) have been deleted in line with original suggestions from members.
  - c. Abbe screen-shared “clean copy” of the revised draft to enable live editing.
  - d. Suggestion to add a definition of academic freedom at the beginning of the resolution. Discussion ensued and statement was added citing definitions set by the University’s 2003 statement (<https://www.provost.pitt.edu/statement-academic-freedom>) and the well-recognized definition by the AAUP.
  - e. Explored topic of institutional and individual scholar’s rights and agreed to the draft language. Kept the language as proposed.

- f. Discussed and agreed to assuring that academic freedom is extended to all scholars within the university, not only those with tenure or in the tenure-stream. No change was made to the language.
- g. Lines 35/36 in the draft document about contemporary society were deemed by some as unnecessary and was deleted.
- h. There was lengthy debate on Resolution Statement #1 about recommendation to add academic freedom to the University's 6-point Mission Statement. There was discussion that reflect that academic freedom is necessary to accomplish the stated missions. However, some expressed apprehension that adding academic freedom in the statement may prompt others at Faculty Assembly to also add other elements that they might feel needed and effectively hold up approval/endorsement of this resolution. It was concluded, however, that the language remains and be consistent with spirit of the resolution to make academic freedom more visible. It will be up to university administration to decide whether academic freedom be mentioned in the mission statement.
- i. There was discussion on Resolution #2 about recommendation to university administration to develop policies and procedures on academic freedom. One member suggested that the resolution explicitly states a need to have policy/procedure specifically on academic freedom. Subsequent discussion pointed out that several of our peer institutions have codified academic freedom in their statutes and policies/procedures including redress procedures.
- j. The language of Resolution #2 was subsequently modified to "...develop specific policies and procedures on academic freedom as it applies to all University scholars and actions necessary to maintain it..." to make academic freedom applicable to all "University scholars" not just tenured/tenure-stream faculty.
- k. One person suggested possibility of skipping the resolution process and moving forward with administration to do the work. Others felt the resolution was the best first step to get the work done. Others thought it is okay for the Faculty Assembly to have a robust discussion of this topic as well.
- l. Motion (and accept) to end discussion.
- m. Motion to accept the resolution as corrected.
- n. Voting members present (7) passed the resolution unanimously.

#### 4. Announcements

- a. Endorsement of the Provost Statement of Academic Freedom by Faculty Assembly and Senate Council
- b. Nomination for Co-chairs and Secretary for the coming AY 2022-2023
  - i. Abbe announced he is not eligible to be voting co-chair due to term limit (3 consecutive years) and he is also term-limited (6-consecutive years) as voting member of the Faculty Assembly
  - ii. Marika, who remains elected member of the Faculty Assembly, is eligible for the role again as pro-tem co-chair.
  - iii. Co-chairs cannot be both pro-tem.
  - iv. Email will go out to all the current voting members to nominate people.

v. Nick Bircher has agreed to oversee the nomination and voting process.

No closed session meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Elizabeth Mulvaney and Abbe de Vallejo.