

Senate Council Meeting Minutes
(Hybrid format)
Thursday, December 8, 2022

I. Call to Order

President Robin Kear called the meeting to order at 3 pm and asked those on zoom whose names do not appear on screen to use chat for the roll.

II. Approval of the Minutes of the Past Senate Council Meeting

On a motion duly made (Kanthak) and seconded (Scott) the minutes from the Senate Council meeting on November 10, 2022 were approved as written.

III. Items of New Business

No items of new business were raised.

IV. Report of the Chancellor, Patrick Gallagher

Best wishes to all our students and faculty during this busy finals weeks. It can be stressful so please take care of yourselves and look out for those around you. ON the health side, we are not talking about Covid routinely but Covid is still there, there is now flu, RSV and covid are around and hospitals are busy. Please look at the reminders coming out and we continue to recommend vaccination, including flu vaccine. Also pay attention to notices about testing pre and post travel as there requirements for students living on campus. Be safe and have a great and healthy holiday.

Some announcements about our faculty and student achievements

- National Academy of Inventors just announced their new class of fellows. 169 members were inducted including two from the School of Medicine: Joseph Glorioso and Ron Montelaro. Congratulations
- Alex Firestine, senior in our Honors College, was announced as the 2024 George J Mitchell scholar. This the first Mitchell scholarship in Pitt's history. This award fully funds postgraduate studies in Ireland and is only given to 12 students in the US. Alex plans to study for a Master's in climate change agriculture and food security at the University of Galway. He has done a lot here already; he is a Chancellor's scholar, he is pursuing 3 majors in finance, accounting and business information systems and he also has certificates in business analytics and Leadership and Ethics and we are looking forward to seeing what he does next.
- The Panthers Forward class was announced recently. 150 seniors from across campus are part of that program. As a reminder, this is a debt relief program and these students will receive up to \$5000 in direct student loan relief. They also receive mentoring from Pitt alumni. The only voluntary agreement they make is to pay it forward so that future generations of students can have the same benefit. Since it started in 2019 the program offset nearly \$4 million of student loans for 600 students. Applications for the class of 2024 open in August.
- Sports highlights
 - Women's volleyball match starting in 25 minutes. This is the sweet sixteen and we are paying close attention! This is the third year in a row that they have made the tournament and we want to congratulate them, we are very proud of all those players

- I want to congratulate the Pitt Men's soccer team which is playing in the final four match tomorrow. If they win they will be playing in the Championship game.
- Staff Congratulations
 - Acting Vice Chancellor for Communications and Marketing, Kate Ledger, was named the American Marketing Association Foundation's Higher Education Marketer of the Year. Congratulations to Kate, we all know what a great job she does in student recruiting and admissions and now she's leading our communications
 - 2022 Chancellor staff awards were announced and there will be a reception to honor them in January. They each receive \$2500, and their names are displayed on a plaque in the Union. So, congratulations to: Tasha Peacock, Ron Idoko, Jill Harvey, Katie Belardi, Aurora Sharrard, Lisa Cherok, Katelyn Collinger, Andrea Zito and Stephanie Hoogendoorn.

Some News Items

- LifeX, our life sciences incubator for start-up companies, recently received a \$1 m grant from a brand new Commonwealth program designed to encourage early-stage financing of life science businesses. Our biotech start-ups are going to have access to new funding at that critical early stage. So this strengthens our capacity to seed new companies and innovations and positions Pitt as a leader in Commonwealth and hopefully in the country as a hub for this kind of biotechnology.
- On the sustainability side: we have been making steady progress on achieving carbon neutrality. Construction started on a major solar farm near airport. That solar farm will supply electricity to the University of Pittsburgh for the next two decades. It is a 60 acre site which should be online next year. It is one the largest solar farms in Western PA with 55,000 solar panels. Pitt has secured 100% of the project's energy for the next two decades. That is about 18% of university usage and it will save the University millions of dollars over that time.
- The Pitt Seed program is now accepting video proposals for projects from faculty and staff. Faculty and staff from all campuses are invited to submit a 90 second pitch by video that addresses one or more of the three Pillars for with the Plan for Pitt. If selected, you are invited to participate in training and additional rounds to move it forward. The deadline is February 1st 2023
- A final reminder that the United Way campaign is continuing and the deadline for January payroll deduction is December 14th.

Finally, Best wishes for the Holiday for everyone

There were no more questions for Chancellor Gallagher.

V. Report of Senate President, Robin Kear *(submitted in writing)*

I hope that you are making it through the end of the term. I am grateful to have attended a performance of the Heinz Chapel Choir earlier this week, the choir sings beautifully, and it allows space and time for quiet reflection.

I want you to know that I am trying my best, as are the other Senate Officers, to navigate the new environment for shared governance that we find ourselves in. We are doing our best to represent all faculty interests and interact with a new partial faculty union. During this private negotiation phase

between the union and administration, it is an especially difficult period with many possible outcomes. As shared governance is not part of this negotiation, we advocate and communicate with both the union leadership and the administration. We must interpret intention, motivation, and purpose.

The Union of Pitt Faculty's recent threat of unfair labor practice charges related to direct dealing has had a chilling effect on shared governance, including administrators' participation and the faculty voice of that consensus process. I outlined concrete examples of that effect last Wednesday.

To make our Senate position known to all, volunteers from Faculty Assembly, the Expanded Executive Committee, and the Senate Officers completed a position statement that was passed by Faculty Assembly at our Nov. 30th meeting. Thank you to the Faculty Assembly members present on November 30th for the open discussion and affirmative vote on our Shared Governance Principles document. It was a testament to our values of transparency and consensus-building. The final document is on the Senate website and was emailed to Faculty Assembly members. As was said during the meeting, it is an aspiration. A statement of principles for how we want to see shared governance operate into the future, indicating our spirit of working collaboratively.

However, we must find new ways of working towards the goals of shared governance within new limitations and parameters. Your Senate leadership team (myself, Kris Kanthak – Vice President, Penny Morel – Secretary, Chris Bonneau – Past-President) met with the Union of Pitt Faculty leadership team (Tyler Bickford, Chair of the Bargaining Committee, Melinda Ciccocioppo, Chair of the Communication and Action Teams, Marci Pearson, Chair of the Council of Representatives (COR), and Robin Sowards, USW staff member) for a spirited one hour discussion. I sincerely hope that future communication can be as open and direct going forward, and that our leadership teams will continue to meet.

Here is my synopsis of the discussion.

- We all believe in a robust form of shared governance as Pitt. We have shared goals for faculty.
- We discussed issues of direct dealing that occurs through the University Policy process ([AO 01 Establishing University Policies](#)) as limited by law.
- We discussed that the administration should exclude the union members from the current University Policy process and negotiate directly with the bargaining committee for policy in the areas of mandatory subjects of collective bargaining.
 - When I asked about the specific Union of Pitt Faculty mandatory and permissive subjects of collective bargaining, a list was not provided. It was suggested that they will be similar to the Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculties (APSCUF) and Temple Association of University Professionals (TAUP) current collective bargaining agreements. That content was sent as an attachment to Faculty Assembly members yesterday and is free to be shared widely.
 - From the discussion we had, my understanding is most of the articles on that list the Pitt union considers related to mandatory subjects (wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment). There are very few permissive articles there as though are difficult to bargain.

- The University Senate and the administration should continue moving University Policy forward for medical school faculty, those considered management, staff, students, and postdocs.
 - This means that University Policy that we are passing here will apply to those outside the bargaining unit, like today's Relocation Policy.
 - This is not the situation that we want, as evidenced by the recent shared governance principles document, but this is situation we are in. If you have concerns or questions about this and you are a bargaining unit member please communicate with your union leadership.
 - The Tuition Exchange Policy that made its way through the Policy process was approved by the Chancellor and will apply to those outside the bargaining unit. The previous version of the policy will apply to bargaining unit members until further notice.
 - This will mean changes to the membership of current and future policy charter committees to exclude bargaining unit members.
- The Senate leadership will inform the union leadership team (Bickford, Ciccocioppo, Pierson, Sowards) of forthcoming shared governance University Policies in these areas as they relate to members of the bargaining unit.
- There were concerns by the union that contract negotiations are moving too slowly.
- We requested a continuation of senate leadership and union leadership meetings for communication. Unfortunately, the union would not immediately commit to this. Bickford was open to this possibility, but the COR will be consulted.
 - These communications will address issues specifically related to the University Senate and shared governance.
 - Any broader issues related to union leadership communication with union rank and file ought to be addressed in a separate venue.
- Other networks of communication will also be considered in addition to leadership meetings.

There are still details to be talked through on what some of these components might entail, both with the union and administration, and among ourselves. I think that open discussions in committees can still occur, including with administrators, it will be that for some topics, what will change is where the outcomes of those discussions apply. We can continue talking about and advising on the topics that are important to us. There are new legal limits to how some of those topics could be implemented. There are still unanswered questions. I do not think this means that shared governance work stops, it means that it changes. If we are truly being representative of all faculty, it does include those in the bargaining unit, and we should continue talking about what is important to all.

Other matters:

- Regarding the academic freedom resolution from last meeting, I did pass it on to the Provost we talked through what can be done at this time. As academic freedom is a subject of bargaining, the Provost has stated that she cannot work with bargaining unit members on this resolution. She will meet with the two co-chairs of TAFC, who are both in the school of medicine, to discuss how to move forward with the goals.
- Discussion of the process for decommissioning University Policy with the Policy Office

- Usually, policies are decommissioned when they are replaced by a new University Policy. This process has discussion, input from stakeholders, and shared governance involvement built in.
- Sometimes, a Policy needs to be removed and is not being replaced by a new one. This may happen when another University governing document exists that supersedes that Policy (i.e., a University By-law), a policy may no longer be operationally relevant due to change in University structure or processes, or there is a change in law or regulation renders the policy irrelevant or non-compliant. In this case, the Policy Office will open up the 'recommendation for decommission' of a Policy including a rationale for public comment for 28 days. All members of our community would then have 28 days to submit feedback on that proposal to the Policy Office. The Policy Office would then take that feedback and the recommendation to the Chancellor. When they post policies for public comment, PittWire highlights it in their publication, and they reach out to interested stakeholders.
- In those 28 days, the Senate President would be responsible for consulting with a relevant Senate Committee for feedback on that decommissioned item. That recommendation would be sent to the Policy Office and included in the information for the Chancellor.

As this is our last Faculty Assembly meeting before winter break, I hope the end of your fall term goes as smoothly as possible. I hope that your winter break is restorative and relaxing.

Any questions or comments on my report?

Taboas: Am I understanding correctly? If our committees were composed only of SOM faculty and faculty with administrative positions then we would be able to discuss all matters as before as no one present would be part of the CBA negotiating unit.

Kear: that is theoretically a possibility yes, but I would say that committees should be representative of members of the university. The implementation is challenging now.

Taboas; I understand that we can't bargain but we can discuss. But on some matters the Provost cannot even discuss.

Kear: that is especially true at this time, during the negotiation period, until there is an agreement.

Taboas: One of things we voted on in our statement of shared governance was transparency. I was curious if when you met earlier this week (with union leadership) you were informed of the planned visit to the Provost on Wednesday.

Kear: No, not during that meeting.

Kovacs: is there any other way to survive this transition period? This seems crazy to me. It seems crazy that colleagues cannot directly contact the Provost on issues. I also have concerns about how the SOM will be affected by this.

Kear: It is the environment that we find ourselves and the vote has consequences.

Bonneau: Marika, your intuition is right that this is not ideal. This makes things more complicated for us and the administration. The fact that we can move policies forward that benefit faculty who are not in bargaining unit is a good thing. We would love to be able to advance policies that benefit all faculty, but

we are prohibited from making those agreements working collaboratively and cooperatively with the administration. We are not going to stop during our work. It is what it is, not by our choice.

Kovacs: Since this sometimes take years is there another way around?

Bonneau: These rules only change for a subset of faculty until there is a contract or the union changes its stance.

Further discussion continued on this topic.

VI. Reports of Student Members of Senate Council:

A. Student Government Board (SGB), Danielle Floyd (submitted in writing)

Good Evening Everyone,

- Finished Revised Surplus Proposal with Allocations Chair Hawk based on feedback from administration including Dean Panzella and Vice Provost Bonner
 - Increase SORC funding, increased internal allocation caps, and has reactivated the Student Leader Remuneration Task Force convened by Vice Provost Bonner.
- We finally Introduced a bill updating SGB Assembly. These modifications are intended to create a representative, functional, and effective body. Changes include:
 - New class-based representation
 - Expanding the number of representatives
 - Diversified power to better serve respective constituencies
- The Renters First Task Force (RFTF) continues to advocate for students off-campus. Action items include:
 - Creating Spring Block Parties
 - Setting up a webspace hub for all resources beneficial for students off-campus
- We have Connected with student organizations, Pitt Global Ties, and the Office of International Services to understand where we are with international students on campus and the experience of their time at Pitt.
 - With the support of the board and the Office of International Services, created the International Student Experience survey.
- Passed the charter for the Students Against Sexual Misconduct Ad-Hoc Committee, which, in collaboration with students, student leaders, and organizations across campus, will serve as a central hub for knowledge, resources, and support in the prevention of all forms of sexual misconduct.
 - Ultimately, the committee will produce a report documenting
 - Information on current student efforts to address this issue.
 - An evaluation of current efforts, with emphasis on the University's role and resources in these efforts, in their success and/or potential success to address the issue in equitable and humane ways.

● Academic Affairs:

- Organizing a Dietrich Majors and Minors fair for spring semester, currently have 22 tables confirmed representing over 60 majors and minors
- Serve as a student representative on Dietrich Undergraduate Council

● Community and Governmental Relations:

- Planning ACC Advocacy Days
 - The Board will be attending January 29th-31st

- Diversity and Inclusion:
 - Meeting with the Autistic Student Union in the next couple of weeks to continue drafting our Disability Resource Center Proposal
 - Received and awarded several more grants to bring our total number of grants awarded to 6
- Facilities, Technology, and Transportation:
 - Collaborating with Officer Heather Walker from Pitt Police to begin planning for and organize the Spring Safety Fair. Contacting organizations at Pitt and local Pittsburgh groups to attend the Fair. Exact date of the fair should be decided soon.
 - Working to establish a Commuter Student Ad-Hoc Committee that works to address the various unmet needs of our commuter population. Began drafting a charter for the committee and hoping to complete it by January 9th.
 - Continuing to host the Revamping the WPU Task Force meetings to help initiate a student-focused renovation process. Began drafting of the renovation proposal and hoping to complete it by early January.
- Wellness:
 - Working with SOOS Liaison Vaghela and representatives from Dr. Ward's sustainability class to write a proposal for the contraceptive and menstrual product distribution machine(s) initiative

Standing Committees:

- Judicial
 - The Board has convened a Constitutional Review Task Force:
- Elections
 - Worked with the Judicial Committee and the board to review and pass bills to revise the SGB Elections Code to allow for better understanding of how our election will work in the Spring.
 - Reached out to over 50 student organizations and continues to do so in recommending members run for board next semester.
- Allocations
 - As of 12/4, Allocations has received 125 supplemental requests, approving a total of \$209,448.35.
 - Fall budgets amounted to \$251,778.05. In conjunction with supplementals, SGB has allocated a total of \$461,226.40, putting us on track to use the entirety of the \$900,000 we are granted each fiscal year

Taboas: I missed what you said about contraceptive machines

Floyd: There is a sustainability class trying to work on this. One of the projects the students worked on was to get vending machines that contain contraceptives. They approached SGB to get our feedback in the proposal. Still in the early phase and nothing is decided yet

Lam: It is important to note that at this time, we are funding more organizations this year than we were last year. It is very exciting to be able to support all these great student organizations. We are having our organizational lab meeting tonight – with Chic-Fil-A – and everyone is welcome.

B. College of General Studies Student Government (CGSSG), Monte Labash (written report submitted)

The College of General studies saw an Increase in CGs student engagement during our fall events.

- Fall 2022 Events
 - Mental Health Awareness Month Tabling Event
 - Providing mental health literature, healthy snacks, and stress release gadgets
 - CGS Student Social with CGS Senior Leadership
- We will continue our efforts to increase student involvement into Spring 2023.

CGS SG will be sending out a culture survey to all CSG students including degree and non-degree seeking, certificate, and online students.

- We will be collecting data on student demographics, needs, and concerns that may pertain specifically to the CGS and/or non-traditional students.
- Goal: Improve services within CGS and to see how the CGS SG can better serve the student body.

CGS SG will continue to collaborate and support SGB and GPSSG.

No questions.

C. Graduate and Professional Schools Student Government (GPSSG), Sarah Malone
(submitted in writing)

Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you so much for having us today, I am Sarah Malone a current second year master's student in the school of education and the executive administrator for GPSG and I am stepping in for our president Jordyn Kamasa.

Report from November/December

- Added an additional staff co-Advisor – Dr. Karin Asher from Student Affairs
- Meeting with the chancellor and other administration to go over goals as a board in November
 - Including DEI efforts and enhancing the graduate student culture at Pitt
- November Assembly Board meeting reviewed topics of:
 - Continued SORC and funding issues within organizations and schools
 - We held a separate meeting to address these individual issues with DeV Vaughn Vincent-Bryan the Inaugural Director of Involvement and Student Unions. This was a productive conversation where some answers were given, and we have talks of continued meetings to address any continued concerns.
 - Cancellation of Tailgate event on 11/19. Our team has worked on putting tools in place to prevent the cancellation of events in the future. We do apologize about this, and we are thankful to the graduate community for the continued support.
 - We want to highlight the increase in collaboration between the graduate schools and organizations due to our great leaders on the assembly board.
- We had a very successful finals study event last week. We provided breakfast, professional headshots, 15-minute massages and a space to study and relax. We sold out our tickets at over 100 students and had great feedback. We plan to do this type of event again in the Spring for midterms and finals.

- We also had a great turnout for our Golf event earlier in November. With 100 students and guest playing high-tech golf like at Topgolf, arcade games and dancing. It was a great night.
- We have an ask from our Library committee and are looking for any feedback from graduate students in how to make spaces more accessible and welcoming to graduate and professional students. We have asked for feedback from our assembly representatives and students on our email list but if anyone has any other feedback you can reach out to the GPSG email
- Increase in use of travel grant in Nov with 24 students funded, the most we have seen in the past 3 years. We have 17 applicants this month, but applications are still open until 12/10/22.
- Last Upcoming Event of the year
 - 12/16 – Holiday Happy Hour at Sly Fox Brewery at 7:30pm

We have had a really exciting semester and are looking forward to the spring ahead. We wish everyone good luck on finals and happy holidays, we can't wait to see you next year! Thank you all for your time!

Paterson: what is issue with libraries? Is this a historic issue or a recent thing?

Malone: They're looking for feedback on how to get more students to utilize the space. What will make it more accessible to students, and maybe be less rigid. The focus is on how to get more professional and graduate students into the library space.

Kear: I assume you have library contact – I am in the library and let me know if you need help.

VII. Report of the President of the Postdoctoral Association, Stephanie Mutchler (submitted in writing)

Over the past month, we have had a couple developments to share. First, we held our annual faculty advisory board meeting that brings together faculty from across different parts of the university to help ensure we are meeting the needs of postdocs in all departments. With the board, we discussed the need to engage postdocs from outside of the health sciences, as they currently do not have the strong infrastructure in place for career development and networking opportunities that programs within the health sciences do. Together with Dr. Godley, we are working toward creating an orientation program to offer to new postdocs, similar to the one the OACD currently offers to health sciences postdocs. Additionally, we are actively recruiting postdocs from arts and sciences, education, and the school of computing and information to serve as liaisons that can connect postdocs in their respective departments with offerings for career advancement opportunities throughout the university.

We have a number of diversity and inclusion initiatives we are hoping to start in the new year. Dr. Godley hosted the first book club for female postdocs this semester, where we discussed *The No Club: Putting a Stop to Women's Dead End Work*. We had the final session this week with an opportunity to discuss our thoughts with one of the authors, Dr. Lise Vesterlund. It is our hope that we can carry the book club into the new year, potentially changing the focus to include other DEI issues. We also hope to be able to put our ideas to practice by arranging meetings with leadership across campus to discuss best practices for inclusion and ensuring advancement of women and minorities from training positions into faculty status. The UPPDA is also working to establish a paired mentorship program for Black and Hispanic postdocs, which are the groups least represented in postdoc positions at almost every academic institution, including Pitt. We hope this program will be established by early spring. This program will allow for one-on-one mentorship and also group meetings to help ensure awareness about

funding, including diversity supplements, that can help ensure postdocs from underrepresented backgrounds are able to efficiently move into faculty positions.

This initiative was suggested through our postdoctoral climate survey which we administered this past month. We received over 250 responses, and we are currently working on compiling data to inform other initiatives needed for our postdocs across campus.

Finally, yesterday we had the annual Science career symposium which gives postdocs and graduate students the chance to explore career paths both within and outside of academia. We included a new session this year about navigating employment issues for international postdocs, and we are looking to increase our services related to visa issues.

VIII. Report of the President of the Staff Council, Lindsay Rodzicz (*submitted in writing*)
Senate President Kear, Chancellor Gallagher and Members -

My report is brief today during this busy time of year as the Fall term reaches its end.

Staff Council Upcoming Events:

1. **Save the Date for virtual Staff Council Spotlight information sessions for Spring 2023:**
 - a. January 18 at 12noon: Title IX
 - i. With Zachary Davis, Gender Discrimination and Title IX Response Manager from the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and panelists.
 - b. February 8 at 12noon: Recruitment
 - i. With the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences Hiring Team, Stacey Williard and Maureen Lazar.
 - c. March 6 at 1:30pm: Parking
 - i. With Kevin Sheehy, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Auxiliary Operations and Finance
2. We'll have more details to share in the spring on several of our main SC events/initiatives the **Spring Professional Development Assembly, Kennywood, and our three Staff Council Signature Staff Awards** (Frisch Professional Development, Book Fund and Mentor Awards).

Staff Council call for new members open for onboarding in 2023. Staff Council exists to advocate for and advance the interests of staff members across the institution while providing opportunities for professional development. We aim to have diverse representation from all unit across the Pittsburgh campus to represent staff in shared governance of the University. Those staff interested in serving in shared governance can fill out the application on our website. <https://www.staffcouncil.pitt.edu/about-us/membership>

As we approach the end of the year, we want to highlight and appreciate the work of all of our dedicated University staff and specifically our Staff Council members. We are grateful for their work on behalf of the University. The Chancellor's Awards for Staff announced last week remind us that we are surrounded by amazing colleagues who care deeply about the work we do here at Pitt. The University is blessed with dedicated, amazing staff. **Staff Council would like to congratulate our own Tasha Peacock as she has received the 2022 Chancellor's Staff Award for Community Engagement!** Tasha, who started her career at Pitt within the Office of Admissions & Financial Aid, recently joined the Institute of

Politics in May 2022 as the Assistant Director of Student Programs and Community Outreach. She has been a member of Staff Council for two years.

Our next Staff Council Open General Meeting, will not be until February 15 at 12 noon via Zoom. All are welcome and you can register through the Pitt Events Calendar. Our December meeting will be a closed session for Staff Council members only as we strategically plan for the remainder of the fiscal year.

The University of Pittsburgh Staff Council wishes the Pitt community a safe, healthy, and relaxing winter break and holiday season! We hope that everyone gets time to rest, reflect, and recharge over recess.

This concludes our report. Thank you.

IX. Reports by and Announcements of Standing and Special Committees of the Senate

Management of University Facilities & Grounds Policy

Professor David Salcido, CUPS Co-Chair

This policy was approved by Faculty Assembly last week. This policy was brought to us by liaison, Scott Bernotas, who is a great partner with our committee and Tyler Tenney from the policy office. It was passed by our committee. It provides definitional landscape for describing construction and maintenance processes and comprehensively delineates responsibility for construction and maintenance at Pitt. It states the requirements for capital projects and provides appropriate safety standards. I want to note that when we discussed the policy last week someone raised the question about how the policy related to the Americans with Disability Act. I asked our liaison and got a prompt response. I had a conversation with Jodie Huang and I learned about the ANSI A117 standard and we will be talking more about this at our subsequent meetings.

Any questions?

No questions

Vote: Yes: 38; No 0; Abstain 3.

Relocation Policy

Professor Linda Tashbook, Benefits & Welfare Chair

This policy is about the system for reimbursing newly hired or transferring employees for certain costs associated with relocation to work at a job on any of our Pitt campuses. This benefit is only available to faculty or staff who are accepting full time employment with the university, and who have agreed to serve for at least one year in that position. This is not an automatic benefit, and it is up to individual units to offer the benefit to their new hires. This policy does not set forth any standards on when or how newly hired employees are informed of the possibility of being reimbursed for relocation expenses. It merely establishes the framework for paying the relocation expenses. Pages 3-5 contain a chart that list the predictable expenses that are either generally allowable or allowed following approval. The chain of responsibility begins within the hiring unit who is charge of offering the reimbursement and paying for it. Then payment processing and compliance will be involved in processing the expense reports. Finally, payroll will be arrange for the payment and the deducting of federal income tax, as this is a taxable benefit. Relocation reimbursement has been considered taxable income since 2018.

The layers of review built into our university system of policy development process has truly helped make this policy be a clearer and more complete policy than it otherwise would have been. I want to give a shout out and publicly praise Tom Hitter, Tony Graham, Sarah Houser and Tyler Tenner for their excellent routinization and coordination of policy development.

When Benefits and Welfare was sent this policy we had a long list of questions and I will tell you about two of them. The first was equity as we considered the possibility that people from some backgrounds might be reticent to inquire about the possibility of getting relocation reimbursement. Also, units may only provide reimbursement to people who ask for them. But we concluded that this highly likely scenario was outside of the context of this policy, since this covers what happens after the unit has decided to pay these expenses. However, to address this concern, Tony Graham from the policy office, is arranging for relocation reimbursement to be included in the equity and relocation guidance that comes from OEDI as part of the hiring process.

The second point was some members of the committee felt the length of commitment to employment for one year was too minimal, especially since relocation can be expensive. In response to this the policy office did some benchmarking at 15 other universities; 10 of those universities do not even mention a length of commitment and of the 5 that do 4 require 1 year and one requires 2 years. Based on this we decided to keep the one year.

Faculty affairs also look at this and had other concerns that were addressed.

Faculty Assembly looked at this last week and a faculty member noted that it appeared that the transport of service animals was excluded. Following discussion, it was decided that service animals should be specifically included and that any adaptive equipment needed for home or office should also be included as an allowable relocation expense.

The policy you see before you includes these improvements and I encourage you to approve it.

Questions?

Gallagher: this is a subject that could be part of the CBA and so I am asking that no members of the administration participate in the discussion or vote.

Vote: Yes: 31; No 0; Abstain 9.

X. Unfinished Business and/or New Business:
None

XI. Announcements

Bonneau: Thanks to Linda for work on this policy that is not going to apply to her

Kear: Several OEDI events are coming up in January. During MLK Social Justice week several events are planned including:

January 17th Night with Nikki Giovanni – get your tickets now!

January 19th The Creating a Just Community Award and UPSIDE Award Luncheon

This is a collaboration with student affairs to recognize faculty and staff who have made great contributions to equity and justice on campus.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:12 pm.

Documents from the meeting are available at the University Senate website:

<https://www.univsenate.pitt.edu/senate-council>

Respectfully submitted,
Penelope (Penny) Morel
Secretary, University Senate

Members attending: Bonneau, Bonner, Buchanich, Burton, Chagantipati, Conley, Cudd, Damiani, DeJong, Denman, Dressler, Floyd, Gallagher, Gregerson, Kanthak, Kear, Kleebank, Kovacs, Labash, Labrinidis, Lam, Mahboobin, Maier, Massanelli, Melnick, Molinaro, Morel, Mutchler, Oyler, Pacella-LaBarbara, Paljug, Paterson, Rodziewicz, Rutenbar, Sastry, Schuster, Shafiq, Shekhar, Songer, Swigonova, Taboas, Tashbook, Washington, Wood, Zack

Members Not Attending: Archibald, Cilli, Doty, Jones, Kamasa, Kohanbash, Lewin, Newman, Reed, Sant, Tudorascu, Yearwood

*Excused attendance: Bench, Nguyen

Others attending: Ayanna, Ayars, Balaban, Bernotas, Chapman, DeVallejo, Finder, Harding, Hitter, Houser, Jones, LaBar, Lalo, Lancaster, Ledger, Lippert, Malone, McCormack, Paul, Pickett, Roadman, Salcido, SantaCasa, Scott, Staresinic, Streeter, Supowitz, Tenney, Tokowicz, Wells

* Notified Senate office