

**Senate Council Meeting Minutes  
(Hybrid format)  
Thursday January 18, 2024**

**I. Call to Order**

President Robin Kear called the meeting to order at 3:01 pm

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

On a motion duly made (Parker) and seconded (Stoner) the minutes from the Senate Council meeting on December 7, 2023, were approved as written.

**III. Items of New Business**

No items of new business were raised.

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

We will start with my report as the Chancellor is in an adjacent room on an important call. She will give her report later in the meeting.

Welcome back to the spring term. I hope you are all staying healthy and ready for some more snow.

**Provost's memo on DEI and CES in Tenure & Promotion**

- I am happy to again share this information as I did last week. 18 months ago, Faculty Assembly passed guidance related to Community Engaged Scholarship and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in promotion & tenure processes. In the intervening time period, agreement has been achieved with the union on this guidance, with no changes.
- Interim Provost McCarthy has shared a Provost's memo with the Academic Leadership Team, including Deans and other units, that schools and units can now work on implementing this guidance into their schools, departments, and areas through their shared governance processes.
- These recommendations will need time to be fully implemented, but this is a huge step forward for Pitt and should be recognized as such.
- The Senate EIADAC Committee discussed these last Friday, and they are willing to consult with any faculty member, school or unit that is looking to see how these types of scholarship can be acknowledged in existing processes.

**Testing Accommodations Issues**

- At last week's Faculty Assembly, I described pressures on the DRS (Disability and Resource Services) Testing Center. They have frequently been at capacity, especially during peak testing times and are looking for ways to mitigate that pressure. Suggestions and options emailed to high-use classes were not mandatory and were meant to help find any flexibility.
- Since last Wednesday, I have talked with Interim Provost McCarthy to discuss the issue and the next steps. There are various short and long term solutions being discussed, including more resources for the Testing Center in the short term.
- Discussion of this issue will continue in the Senate Educational Policies Committee.

**New PostDoc Scholars and PostDoc Associates New Minimum Salary**

- As I detailed last week, on December 19, interim provost Joe McCarthy sent out a memo to the Academic Leadership Team announcing a new minimum salary and maintenance increase for University of Pittsburgh postdoctoral scholars and postdoctoral associates.
- *Effective July 2025, the minimum salary for postdoctoral scholars and postdoctoral associates at the University of Pittsburgh will be set at the National Institutes of Health National Research Service Award (NIH NRSA) minimum annual salary—which is currently \$56,484—and adjusted annually.*
- *Although the new postdoctoral salary minimum and maintenance increases will be required starting in July 2025, it is strongly recommended that units implement the new minimum salary and maintenance increases in July 2024.*
- *Effective January 1, 2024, all new proposals for external funding for postdocs should use the NIH NRSA base level stipend and account for annual maintenance adjustments.*

### **Pitt IT and Email Security**

- There is still great concern over the use of email forwarding (non-UPMC forwarding) from Pitt IT. I have been in discussions over alternatives, but those are hard to find, and the email forwarding and other fixes will be implanted with Alumni email accounts first.
- However, I am not optimistic on the possibility of keeping email forwarding for faculty. There will be more opportunity for feedback this spring, please let me know if you are interested in providing this.

### **Senate Plenary**

- Thursday March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023 in the William Pitt Union Assembly room starting at 12 noon.
- The topic will be, Bringing Disciplines Together to Solve Big Problems, focused on how this can and does happen here at Pitt and in the Pittsburgh education community. We are still working on the speakers and fuller description. If you have any ideas on this topic or interdisciplinary teams to approach, please let me know.

### **Provost Search Committee**

- The provost search is ongoing and in a confidential phase.

### **Dependent Care Ad Hoc Committee Report**

- Anna Wang-Erickson, Chair, presented the concluding report of the two-year Dependent Care Ad Hoc Committee at November's Faculty Assembly.
- Anna and I discussed the 4 main recommendations from the report with HR and Financial Operations for implementation with non-represented faculty and staff. I think it was a productive discussion, and the next step is for this to be considered further by administration and HR.
  - *Change FN28 to allow dependent care expenses from all available funding sources (internal and external)*
  - *Establish a new Dependent Care Voucher fringe benefit*
  - *Establish a Dependent Care Professional Development Grant*
  - *Add 1 FTE to Human Resources to administer these new Dependent Care programs. Many other universities have multiple staff dedicated to managing dependent care or work/life programs.*

- The final report is posted on the Senate website under Ad Hoc Committees.

#### **University Policy Open for Comment**

- There are 2 Policies open for comment.
- **Assistance Animals, Therapy Animals, and Pets** - Available for comments from January 9, 2024 to February 7, 2024.
  - [Policy](#)
  - This policy will move through EIADAC before coming here.
- **FERPA: Access to and Disclosure of Education Records** - Available for comment from January 9, 2024 to February 7, 2024
  - [Policy](#)
  - [Procedure](#)
  - This policy will move through Educational Policies.

#### **Decommissioning Policy**

- In late December, I shared Senate feedback on a proposal to decommission [Policy ER 04, Domestic Partner Benefits](#), which I detailed last week.
- In consideration of all feedback received, Pitt administration has decided not to decommission this Policy, but to revise it with current practice.

#### **LRDC (Learning Research and Development Center) Director Search**

- The Senate is assisting with the voting to elect four members of the search committee for the next LRDC Director. Four members affiliated with LRDC have been elected to the search committee: Jennifer (Jen) Iriti, Natasha Tokowicz, Angela Allie, and Elizabeth (Liz) Rangel.
- The Senate's role in that search committee has concluded.

**As a reminder, the February 7<sup>th</sup> Faculty Assembly will be completely virtual.** This is because the room here in Posvar is unavailable due to Board of Trustees meetings that week.

Thank you all for your service and dedication to shared governance.

Any questions or comments on my report?

No questions.

#### **V. Reports of Student Members of Senate Council:**

##### **A. Student Government Board (SGB), Ryan Young**

- Happy new year! I hope everyone had a restful break and has been having a good start to the Spring semester.
- As mentioned in my previous Senate Council report, we had recently submitted a proposal to restructure parts of our student leader remunerations system which currently provide stipends for positions of high student leadership on campus. We are happy to announce that this proposal has been approved by Student Affairs! We will be working with Student Affairs to implement a panel to hear petitions to create new stipend student leader positions this semester.
- Last Tuesday, we held a Town Hall on the planning for renovations of our student unions.

We were happy to host a number of students and provide a space for them to give direct feedback to the architects currently producing plans for updating the space.

- Next Monday, a few Student Government Board Members, including our Vice President of Operations Sarah Siddiqui, Vice President of Initiatives Katie Fitzpatrick, and Board Member Ashley White who are here today, will be attending the College Day of Action in Harrisburg organized by Governor Shapiro. We are excited to meet with members of the administration and network with other student governments from across Pennsylvania.
- We will also be attending ACC Advocacy Days in DC on February 4th through 6th! We will be hearing from speakers with other ACC schools and we are currently working with the Office of Government Relations and Advocacy to book meetings with members now.
- We will be hosting our annual Majors and Minors Fair on February 22nd from 12-3pm in the WPU Assembly Room! Many participating academic departments will be in attendance giving students a space to explore their academic opportunities at Pitt.
- We will also be co-hosting more Tenant Town Halls on February 22nd and 28th. These town halls will provide a space for students to hear from community partners and ask questions about navigating the process of moving off campus and renting in Oakland.
- In a similar vein, we are collaborating with Pitt BRIDGES mentoring and the Office of Off Campus Student Services to host a renting workshop January 26th at 4pm. We will also be regularly tabling with renting resources this semester and are currently planning a Town Hall related to food accessibility in Oakland.
- Over the break, we continued work on our restructuring proposal, and have drafted new bylaws to include with our constitutional referendum.
- Members of the Student Government Board, including our Vice President of Policy Sarah Mayer who is here today, have been working on an initiative born out of a collaboration with the Staff Council on increasing AED accessibility around campus. We have worked with Environmental Health and Safety to get AEDs in Sutherland moved and are currently working on AEDs in the Clapp/Langley/Crawford complex. We are also working on promoting stop the bleed kits and staff and faculty AED training.
- We recently moved our Student Legal Services to a new platform! For those who don't know, we offer free legal consultations to all undergraduate students not solely enrolled in the College of General Studies, and we hope our new scheduling platform will help make the program more accessible and allow us to collect better data on the usage of the service.
- Our Elections season has begun! Candidates are now collecting signatures to be eligible for the ballot. Our Election will occur on February 27th!
- Finally, I will conclude with some updates on our Allocations process:
  - Our Allocations process has moved to ExperiencePitt, the new club management platform being implemented by the Office of Involvement and Student Unions! Our old process was very manual and we hope this new platform will provide a centralized location for the entire process that allows student organizations to better track their requests and funds. The SORC is currently working on moving certain payment and reimbursement functions to the platform, so it will soon be a one stop shop for club finances!
  - As I've discussed a couple times during my report, we have been receiving an

extremely high volume of Allocations requests this year. I am happy to announce that Student Affairs has approved a one-time expansion of our Allocations budget by \$200,000 from previously unspent student activities fees. This increase puts us on track to maintain our current approval rate through the end of the fiscal year!

- Finally, our Allocations Policy and Procedure Task Force has begun meeting and is now considering major changes to our funding policies to meet the increased demand in a more long term way.
- With that, I will end my report, and I am happy to take any questions.

#### **B. College of General Studies Student Government (CGSSG), Skyler Cheevers**

Hi everyone, Happy New Year!

So, let's get right into it!

Immediately after returning to campus, CGSSG has taken off guns ablazing planning our event calendar from now until graduation. I would like to take this time to outline CGSSG's tentative plan for the spring semester:

- February- We are currently working on launching a contest for CGS students to redesign the official CGS logo. We are aiming to announce the contest by the end of the month and give students until the end of February to create an original design to become the new logo for CGS. We think this will be a fun and rewarding way to get students more involved in the CGS community and aware of what CGSSG is (and, of course, who doesn't love the chance to win a prize... right now we are thinking about gifting the winner an iPad and merchandise with their design)!
- March- Also this spring, CGSSG will be hosting an Excellence Reception on March 21<sup>st</sup> to honor CGS faculty and staff who have made a difference in the lives of CGS students. Open to nominations from all CGS students, we are extremely honored to be hosting this event, and cannot wait to take the time to demonstrate our formal appreciation for everything CGS faculty and staff have done to positively impact our college careers!
- March- This same day, we will be assisting the Alpha Sigma Lambda Honor Society with their induction ceremony for their new members! For those of you who are unaware, ASL is the nontraditional student honor society that CGSSG sponsors.
- April- We are also working on planning a larger event for CGS students in the spring (most likely in April when the weather starts getting better) and funding either a music group or a comedian to come to campus. While this event is currently still up in the air as we need to sort out the logistics, we are determined to provide students with some sort of free entertainment to congratulate them on all their hard work this academic year!
- April- As crazy as this sounds, we have also begun conversations regarding CGS's Senior-Send Off ceremony that will take place prior to the University-wide commencement on April 28th!
- CGSSG is also working on hosting self-defense lessons with the Pitt police for students. This was something we discussed last semester, but unfortunately, it did not work out. However, we have been in contact with Officer Heather Walker, and are in the process of securing a couple of time slots in both February and March!

Outside of event planning, we are also working on revising our current Constitution, working on

constructing a concrete definition of “nontraditional student,” beginning conversations regarding our upcoming election process, and are looking forward to our upcoming meeting with the Chancellor regarding how CGS fits in the Plan for Pitt!

That being said, CGSSG is definitely going to be busy this semester and I am sure time is going to fly by! As always, I will keep you all updated on our progress! Thank you!

No questions.

### **C. Graduate and Professional Schools Student Government (GPSSG), Claire Dunning**

Hello everyone, I am Claire Dunning, the Executive Administrator for the GPSSG. I am stepping in for our President Rithika Behera today as the GPSSG representative.

It is cold these days, but for our upcoming events, that is fine.

- We have an upcoming Coffee Hour with a hot breakfast and drinks for students to enjoy before class. Our previous coffee hours have been popular, so we expect a good turnout. We will give out some merch to students.
- In February, we will be selling tickets for a Penguins Game with a Happy Hour before the game. These seats have a great view and will come with food and beverages for the students who attend.
- We have already started planning our annual Spring Fling for April and it is expected to be held at the Rivers Casino again this year. This is a great event for graduate and professional students to dress up and have a great time with their friends and other students they have never met before. This will be the largest event that we host, so we are very excited.
- We will also be collaborating with Career Services and hope to hold some virtual workshops to help graduate students prepare for a career once they graduate. They attended our Assembly Board meeting held yesterday and spoke about what services they provide to graduate and professional students.

Our elections are also coming up soon, so we are forming an Elections Committee to assist in overseeing the elections process. It is our goal to be as transparent and accurate as possible. The newly elected Executive Board will be selected in March so they can receive training in April.

Thank you for your time, and I hope everyone can stay nice and warm.

### **VI. Report of the President of the Postdoctoral Association, Rachael Rush (was not present but sent the report below)**

We are ramping up our planning for the 17<sup>th</sup> annual University of Pittsburgh Postdoctoral Research Symposium (formally known as the Data & Dine event) that will take place in the William Pitt Union from 2-5 pm on April 15<sup>th</sup>. We are contacting various department chairs and institute directors to fund professional development awards for winners of the poster session. We were able to give out 12 awards to postdocs in 2023 and hope to continue that trend this year.

We are excited about the recent [announcement](#) from the Provost's office regarding postdoc salaries matching the NIH minimum across Pitt. We have received feedback from many postdocs primarily about

this issue in years past and count this as a win towards maintaining successful and productive postdocs here at Pitt.

We are continuing to hold in person social events for postdocs to connect with the larger community, and this week held a successful winter “fun”derland boardgame night.

We look forward to some upcoming events including:

- Career Conversation series with postdoc alumni from Pitt
- Non-health science postdoc orientation with Dr. Godley’s office
- World Culture Diversity Day potluck in May

We wish everyone a happy new year and start of term. Please as always feel free to reach out with any thoughts or feedback regarding postdocs at Pitt. This concludes our short report and please reach out with any questions.

## **VII. Report of the President of the Staff Council, Lindsay Rodzicz (submitted in writing)**

- **Happy New Year** and start to the Spring 2024 term! It’s always nice to return to campus after winter recess with a renewed energy for the upcoming year.
- **I wanted to introduce Joy Hart our new Staff Council VP of Public Relations.** Joy Hart is the Manager of Strategic Initiatives in the University Center for Teaching and Learning. She replaces Scott Szypulski mid-term. Scott was promoted in his role in the School of Public Health. Please join me in welcoming Joy and congratulating Scott!
- **Staff Council Highlights from the Last Month:**
  - a. Thanks to everyone who joined us for the **Staff Council Spotlight with Laurel Gift Assistant Vice Chancellor for Compliance, Investigations, and Ethics.** In case you missed it and want to learn more about her office and the Concern Connection, the recording is on our website.  
[Coffee and Conversation and Staff Council Spotlight Sessions | Staff Council | University of Pittsburgh](#)
  - b. The Staff Council January general meeting was closed to members only as we focused on strategic, mission aligned planning for the 2024 calendar year. The mission of Staff Council is to **represent the interests of and advocate for all staff** at the University of Pittsburgh as well as **provide opportunities for comprehensive professional development.**  
Our conversation focused on these 4 topics with our membership and we look forward to implementing some great ideas over the upcoming year:
    1. **Active Staff Council Participation**
    2. **Shared Governance Advocacy**
    3. **Membership Mentoring and Networking Opportunities**
    4. **Internal Meeting Structure and Format for Effectiveness and Efficiency**

Staff Council serves as a center for **input and dissemination of information** and provides **communication between staff and other Pitt community members**.

- **SC Newsletter --- Be on the lookout for our January SC newsletter! We have a new format which will hopefully allow us to further grow our readership with easier ways to subscribe. If anyone here isn't on our newsletter and wants to be, you can register on our website or please let me know!**
- **We have some great upcoming Staff Council Events:**
  - Coffee and Conversations:** Coffee and Conversations are booked until July 2024! All are encouraged to attend and bring along a colleague.  
**Dr. Andrea Hergenroeder, Director of the Pre-Health Resource Center**  
January 22 at 10:30am  
Alumni Hall, Connely Ballroom
  - February – two – Coach Narduzzi and Kris Davitt, SVC for PAE
  - March – Ted Fritz, VC for Public Safety and Emergency Management
  - April – Anatha Shekhar, SVC for Health Sciences
  - May – Carla Panzella, Interim Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students
- **The Next Staff Council Spotlight is February 26<sup>th</sup> at noon on Zoom with the Vaccination and Health Connection Hub.**
- Our next **OPEN SC General Meeting** will be Wednesday, February 21, 2024 12:00 - 1:00 pm via Zoom.

If you have any questions, please email [sc@pitt.edu](mailto:sc@pitt.edu)

Register Here:

[https://pitt.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_82jGwkUwae37XUi](https://pitt.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_82jGwkUwae37XUi)

- **Save the Date for our Staff Council Spring Assembly on May 8.** It will focus on Lifestyle Benefits and the vast offerings that are a part of what make Pitt a great place to work.

**All are welcome to any of our events, and you can register through the Pitt Events Calendar!**

Thanks to Chancellor Gabel for her updates on the **Plan for Pitt**. Staff Council looks forward to meeting with you in the next few weeks to discuss further.

**This concludes our report. Thank you**

#### **VIII. Reports by and Announcements of Standing and Special Committees of the Senate**

Access to and use of University Computing Resources

Ms Angie Zack, CITC Chair

Zack presented the revised policy which was approved by CITC in September and initially presented to Faculty Assembly in November when questions were raised concerning the definitions of political



activity. The policy was updated and presented to Faculty Assembly again in December when it was approved. This is an update of existing policy, and updates include: fair and equitable use of resources, privacy language and the responsibilities of the users and the University regarding the use of University-owned computers and resources. It also specifies that personally owned computer resources are not governed by this policy.

Kear: Thank you. Any questions about this policy?

Vote: Yes 38; no 0; Abstain 1.

The policy is approved.

Kear: Thank you. We will come back to the second policy as the Chancellor is here and we will hear her report.

### **IX. Report of the Chancellor, Joan Gabel**

Good afternoon, everyone.

Welcome back. I hope everyone had a restful, rejuvenating break.

- Thank you to Interim Provost Joe McCarthy for presenting at Senate Council Report in December.
- I had the honor of attending **COP28** and representing Pitt at the United Nations Climate Conference
  - I participated in a panel discussion on the role of universities **innovating for sustainability**.
  - Honored to represent Pitt and its interests at COP28 (there will be opportunities for partnerships and to move our strategic planning efforts forward).

It's a short week, with the observance of **MLK Jr. Day** on Monday.

- **January 15** was also the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a **PEACEFUL TAKEOVER OF PITT'S COMPUTER CENTER**. We had a very moving acknowledgment of that day.

On that day, in 1969, 40 members of our **Black Action Society**, peacefully staged a sit-in in the Pitt Computing center and presented a series of demands to then Chancellor Posvar, which included:

- More **equitable Black representation** among Pitt **students, staff, and faculty**.
- **Campus programming** of interest to the Black community.
- A formal **Black Studies academic program**—which we all know now as the **Department of Africana Studies**.

Within 24 hours, then-Chancellor Posvar agreed to their demands:

This was a very important moment in Pitt's history, and it was a wonderful event with several participants in the sit-in in attendance. They remain active and engaged Alums of the university. Many thanks to Clyde Wilson Pickett and Carla Panzella who helped organize this great event.

### **News and Updates**

**Winter Commencement** was a huge success.

- **SINCERE THANKS** to everyone involved—Special Events, Student Affairs, Facilities, Communications and Marketing, Office of the Provost.
- **Congratulations to the graduates.**
- I was thrilled to participate in **my first Pitt Commencement**.

#### **Recent News:**

**SVC and CFO Hari Sastry** will step down on **March 1** to become CFO at Georgetown University.

This is a loss to the Pitt Community, but we are very happy for Hari to have this opportunity to return to his alma mater and we wish him every best.

**Thurman Wingrove, the University's controller**, will serve as **acting CFO** starting in March.

- I am very thankful for his willingness to take on the responsibility, and we are actively working towards planning the search for his successor.

#### **PROVOST SEARCH:**

- The committee is reviewing applications and conducting multiple rounds of interviews over the next month or so.
- This means that we are on schedule, and we anticipate concluding the search later this winter.
- Many thanks to the search **committee members**; the Chair **Anantha Shekhar**; and **Pitt community members** who have participated in this search.

This search has been an invaluable opportunity for me to learn about Pitt. I'm impressed and inspired by the strength of our collaboration and by the commitment to academic leadership that extends across the Pitt community.

#### **DEAN searches:**

**Swanson School of ENGINEERING and School of EDUCATION**

- position profiles developed.
- Now receiving applications.
- Interviews to occur during the current semester.

#### **School of LAW:**

- Committee being formed now.
- Committee members will begin work during current semester, and the interviews will occur later in the semester.

Overall we hope that when folks come in for interview the Provost search will have concluded and they will know who the new Provost will be.

#### **Vice Provost for Student Affairs:**

- We are currently finalizing the search committee.
- That group will begin its work this week.

**LRDC Director search committee** is coming together now.

We expect the search to launch in late January.

That is a lot of searches but this is happening around the country – and it may be related to the pandemic when people put off changing jobs.

#### **Other news:**

Kaigham “Ken” Gabriel

- **Named inaugural CEO of Pitt BioForge**
- **founding director of Pitt’s Advanced Biomanufacturing Institute**
- He will oversee the **design, construction and operation** of the planned **biomanufacturing facility at Hazelwood Green**.

Welcome to Ken, and Congratulations to all who had a hand in moving this exciting project forward.

#### **OTHER UNIVERSITY NEWS:**

**March 5:** Pitt’s annual **Community Engaged Scholarship Forum** presents an opportunity for Pitt community members to:

- present community-engaged work,
- discover new avenues of partnership

This year’s theme: “Progress Through Partnerships: Beyond a Thousand Points of Light.”

**January 24: Pitt’s 2024 DIVERSITY FORUM,**  
headlined by two dynamic speakers:

- **Feminista Jones**, an award-winning writer, public speaker,
- **Rev. William Barber II**, activist and founding director of the Center for Public Theology and Public Policy at Yale Divinity School.

Thanks to Clyde Pickett and his team in the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for putting together this program.

**THEME: “Amplifying Our Voices Through Active Listening and Constructive Dialogue,”** which builds on Pitt’s **Year of Discourse and Dialogue**.

Yesterday, our **Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion** announced the winners of the **UPSIDE** and **CREATING A JUST COMMUNITY** Awards.

- honorees will be recognized at the **Social Justice Luncheon** next **Friday, January 2:**
- **UPSIDE Award: SAFE Peer Educators**, who are cultivating conversations with fellow students around relationship and sexual violence.
- **Creating a Just Community Award: Ron Idoko**, Associate Director of the **Center on Race and Social Problems**

#### **STUDENT NEWS:**

I attended my first Blue and Gold Society meeting last week. Wonderful to meet those highly engaged and accomplished students.

The **U.S. State Department** has named **15 Pitt students** as winners of the **Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship**, which supports **undergraduate students with up to \$5,000 while they pursue study abroad**.

- I won’t name them all—You can read their names in Pittwire.
- Their destinations: the United Kingdom, Mexico, Brazil, Ghana, Argentina, Senegal, Ireland, Belgium, Japan, Germany, 2 to South Korea, and 3 to Italy.

**Congratulations to those students!**

**REMINDER:** Frederick Honors College's **Office of National Scholarships and Post-Graduation Success** will support any Pitt student in applying for prestigious awards like the Gilman Scholarship.

**FACULTY HONORS (apologies if there are any we missed)**

**Prashant Kumta**, Distinguished Professor of Bioengineering, and **José-Alain Sahel**, Distinguished Professor of Ophthalmology were elected fellows of the National Academy of Inventors.

They are the **13th and 14th Pitt faculty** named NAI Fellows since 2015.

Dr. Sahel was also appointed to **French President Emmanuel Macron's** new **Presidential Council for Science**.

- A member of the **French Academy of Sciences since 2007**, he is a global leader in vision restoration.

**Amir Alavi** received a prestigious three-year Trailblazer Award from the National Institutes of Health.

**5 Pitt faculty** chosen for the **2024 ACC Academic Leaders Network** program.

- **Kevin Conley**, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
- **Kyaie Conner**, School of Social Work
- **Erica Owen**, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs
- **Vanitha Swaminathan**, Katz Graduate School of Business
- **David Vorp**, Swanson School of Engineering

**If you are a fan of NBC's TODAY show:**

- **School of Education alumnus Ryan Hardesty** featured in a "**Day in the Life**" of a teacher segment earlier this month.
- Ryan was selected because he earned **PENNSYLVANIA'S 2023 TEACHER OF THE YEAR Award**.
- He proudly wore the Pitt script on his chest for parts of the interview.

Lastly, I would like to give you an **update** on our refresh of the Plan for Pitt.

What we are in right now is highlighted on the timeline is an incremental step that is between the high-level articulation of this is how we're going to translate these values into actionable, measurable, impactful initiatives and action items. And the 100-hundred percent on the ground, here's how we'll measure to see whether or not it's working. But before we go from a hundred thousand feet, which is where we left things in September to the ground, we've got to spend a little time at 30,000 feet. Because measures don't mean anything if you don't have a very shared sense of what it is you want to measure. Otherwise it just feels like yet another spreadsheet. And that's not the intent. The intent is that this plan helps us tell our story, it gives us some inspiration for the direction in which the institution is going, and it gives us some tools to see how we're doing. So we're gradually moving into the next phase. What do I mean by that is we start to define what each of these pillars mean in terms of the actual actions that the university will take.

- Over recent months we engaged widely with the aim of fine tuning action items for the plan.
- We are moving from values to action.
- We shared this timeline and values with you last Fall.
- Now we are working to answer what is the plan?

I will take you the five pillars that we defined initially and go through what we are thinking about for all these.

- What do we mean by student success?
  - Develop upstream enrollment plan
  - Improve accessibility and affordability
  - Improve retention, not only for first-to-second year retention but also we want to think of our graduate and professional students
  - Enhance support services, to ensure student wellbeing. Housing came up a lot in our conversations, both on and off campus. We are also wondering if we are providing the right kind of academic support for our students
  - Ensure excellence in preparation and academic programming, to ensure that students are prepared for their first job and entire career.
  - Increased distinguished student awards, including Fulbright, Gilman, Goldwater and Truman scholarships, and maybe a Rhodes Scholar
  - Improve graduation rates
  - Strengthen post-graduate success
- What do we do to propel scholarship, creativity and innovation?
  - Increase research
  - Elevate multi-interdisciplinary discovery and collaboration
  - Promote innovation and tech transfer/commercialization
  - Expand corporate engagement
  - Amplify the arts, humanities, social sciences and professions
  - Increase distinguished faculty awards
- What does it mean to be welcoming and engaged?
  - Represent the communities we serve and expand opportunities.
  - Cultivate belonging and a welcoming culture, which can also mean supplier diversity and working with minority owned businesses with intentionality.
  - Be an employer of choice and think about the wellbeing of the many people who work here, so that they can progress the way they want.
  - Increase engagement across the communities we serve
  - Expand global engagement
- What does it mean to hold ourselves accountable and promote trust?
  - Enhance fiscal transparency and operations. We put the master plan of the university in here.
  - Optimize physical and digital infrastructure
  - Elevate enterprise risk management
  - Ensure safety
  - Amplify our story, including rankings, philanthropy and athletics
  - Promote the free exchange of ideas
- What do we mean that “It’s Possible at Pitt?”

These are things that we think we can do uniquely well, play to our strengths, play to our location, play to what we hope to be able to accomplish including as examples:

  - Lead the Life Sciences Century (BioForge)
  - Champion sustainability and deepen understanding of health impacts
  - Transform Assistive Technologies
  - TBD?

We plan to present action items at Feb Meeting , and before the Feb meeting we plan to meet with student, faculty, staff, alumni representatives After the February meeting we will build out metrics and measures. There will be another full round of consultation between the Feb and April BOT meetings and we are aiming for BOT approval of the plan at the April meeting.

Now I am happy to take any questions or comments.

Songer: The timeline seemed to indicate that the spring term here is bringing in the community into this process. I just wanted to ask you how your vision of the community contributing to this process will go carry out?

Gabel: So there are really two responses to that question. So we have another set of surveys and engagement that we'll do when this is more than me just rattling off of my chicken scratch notes in my folder for feedback. If that doesn't feel substantive enough, we could do a town hall.

So far it's been pretty well received in the asynchronous way in which we've been providing the information, but we're open to diving deeper if it starts to feel like it's not. And we'll do that at each step that you saw in the timeline. So what we talked about today will take its shape and then be sort of proposed in February for a more formal feedback with it on documents.

It's still a little premature for me to have that by a couple of weeks from now. It'll be in much better shape. And we'll do 30,000 feet, again, 30,000 feet plus if you will, in February. Take in feedback, have that inform any edits or tweaks that we might make if it's edits or tweaks. If it feels stronger than that, then we may go back to the drawing board, which is fine.

The deadline is self-imposed. So if we need more time, that's fine. Assuming that the 30,000 foot process goes well, then we'll do a loop through to start populating the metrics, talk about them here, do different feedback loops. If we need to do them in person, we can do that too.

And then once the plan exists, there's an assumption that we have several initiatives or space for initiatives in the plan that we'll need process, and that the process should have a shared decision making on how we even set up the process. So that will be community engaged as well.

Kear: Chancellor Gabel will also be at our Faculty Assembly session in February to talk further about it.

Gabel: It will be a little more evolved by then.

Kear: we now go back to our policy discussions.

CS28 Vaccinations and Immunizations Requirements  
Professor Tom Songer, Faculty Affairs Committee

Songer: The purpose of this policy is to bring together all of the vaccine policies that existed previously into one policy. The essence of the policy reflects those previous policies. Student vaccination and blood borne pathogens policies are combined in this policy. Details of the requirements for each of these categories can be found in the Appendices. The exemption process is now included in more detail in this policy, along with the contact details for any questions This was discussed in Faculty Affairs and there was broad approval. It was presented to Faculty Assembly last week and a couple of issues were raises. One concerned the meningitis vaccines requirement and whether the committee had considered

requiring the type B meningitis vaccine, as some other schools are. This was addressed by the policy office as PA law only requires the quadrivalent vaccine for students. The policy does allow for the addition of further vaccine requirement if the need should arise. The other issue was that the links to the exemption procedures should be provided. These were addressed and the policy was approved by Faculty Assembly.

Bonneau: I would like to know more about how exemptions are being given and I am concerned we are too permissive in view of recent measles outbreaks in Philadelphia, for example. The other question is why is the COVID vaccine no longer required?

Hitter: The exemptions are listed in the section 3B. There is a medical exemption and a medical/strong moral belief exemption. In the event of an outbreak the Student Health center would have these exemptions handy in order to protect the community from people who are not vaccinated. The committee gave the COVID question a great deal of thought. We used to require this vaccine but the situation has changed. Now the recommendation is to get a yearly vaccine, analogous to the flu. In addition the public health emergencies have expired. The vaccines that are required for students are all statutorily required but the Covid vaccine is not. The CDC does not require the Covid vaccine, it is highly recommended. The committee decided it was best to comply with the CDC. In addition, the physicians involved in the CMRO did not think the vaccine should be required. Rather they suggested that Pitt encourage people to get the vaccine by making it available at the Hub, and vaccines can be obtained there.

Bonneau: Are the exemptions statutorily required as well?

Hitter: I believe so.

Bonneau: I am concerned about the strong belief exemption leads to an increase in people requesting this and endangering the community.

Hitter: We did not see an increase in requests for exemption even during Covid.

Washington: this is the same process we used throughout Covid and we did not see a big increase in requests. So we decided to stay where we are, but this can always be revisited.

Kear: I was on this policy committee, and we had robust discussion about whether or not to include the Covid vaccine, and for the reasons that Tom mentioned we decided to not include the vaccine. There as consensus and it went through Benefits and Welfare and faculty Affairs committees.

Issermoyer: I am a student here and many of my concerns have been raised. I was wondering what the vaccination rates for Covid are among students. We have seen nationally that these rates are going down.

Songer: nationally 17% have gotten the latest booster. The risk is not the same for every person and there are age-related risks.

Hitter: we do not have the data. The existence of the Hub has increase the number of students getting these vaccines

Vote: Yes 34; No 0; Abstain 0.

The policy is approved.

**X. Unfinished Business and/or New Business:**

None

**XI. Announcements**

None

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 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: Adams, Almarza, Bell, Bonneau, Boulder, Cheevers, Cousins, Damiani, DeJong, Fitzpatrick, Fort, Gabel, Gregerson, Hart, Jenkins, Kanthak, Kear, Kelley, Mahboobin, Massaelli, Mauk, Mayer, McCarthy, McCormick, McCullough, Molinaro, Morel, Morris, Murtazashvili, Nguyen, Panzella, Parker, Pitetti, Reed, Rodzicz, Rutenbar, Sastry, Shekhar, Siddiqui, Songer, Stoner, Washington, Young

Members not attending: Archibald, Behera, Burton, Cutsumbis, Dallal, Jacobs, Kohanbash, Lemery, Lewin, Melnick, Potoski, Rush, Schmidt, Scott, Shafiq, Swigonova

\*Excused attendance: Jones, Tudorascu

Others attending: Ayars, Brown, Conner, Dostilio, Dunning, Finder, Gallaher, Graham, Haldeman, Harding, Hart, Hitter, Issermoyer, S. Jones, Kelley, Kushon, LaBar, Lisenbigler, Mucklo, Pelt, Pickett, Roadman, Schackner, Staresinic, Supowitz, Walker, Wells, Zack

\*Notified Senate Office