

Minutes - Senate Budget Policies Committee  
Friday, December 13, 2019  
2:00-4:00 pm in 817 Cathedral of Learning

**Members in attendance:** Elia Beniash, Tyler Bickford (co-chair), Yolanda Covington-Ward, Mackey Friedman, Jennifer Lee, John Mendeloff, Emily Murphy (co-chair), Yashar Aucie (GPSG), Jennifer Elizabeth Jones (UPPDA), Adriana Maguiña-Ugarte (SC), John J. Baker, Frank Wilson, Amanda Brodish, David DeJong, Thurman Wingrove, Stephen Wisniewski, Chris Bonneau, Sue Jones (UTimes).

**Absent:** Panos Chrysanthis, Wesley Rohrer, Ashima Agarwal, Brian Smith (SC), Melanie Scott, Beverly Ann Gaddy, Phil Wion, Richard Henderson, Narahari Sastry.

Call to order shortly after 2:00 pm.

1. Approve November minutes

November minutes were approved unanimously, pending correction submitted by Amanda Brodish (who did not attend the November meeting).

2. Matters arising

Jennifer Jones introduced a new matter by requesting a Post Doc salary report, with benchmarking similar to that created for faculty.

Stephen Wisniewski offered to look into what governs that realm, and what data is available.

Elia Beniash indicated that Health Sciences has guidelines about Post-Docs, but most salary decisions are made by the Principal Investigator (PI) of the research a Post-Doc is linked to.

Tyler Bickford would like to know if Pitt has overarching standards to follow. It becomes a topic to begin investigating. In addition to the above, following a matter arising from the October meeting regarding guidelines with explicit, written criteria for faculty to prepare during annual evaluations.

3. Staff job classification re-structuring and benchmarking (D. DeJong, HR)

Dave DeJong starts his presentation by referring to his strategic plan, as presented earlier this month in Alumni Hall. Regarding the Annual Performance Evaluation process, staff does not meet faculty standards in two areas:

- (a) Compensation/job classification: job classifications are not comparable (Administrator II in unit X may have more or less responsibility than another Administrator II in unit Y); the entire classification system needs to be modernized.
- (b) Faculty have the Provost Maher Memo that outlines the expected performing standards; staff does not have such parameters. HR will need to fix this.

Benefits, work-life balance, wellness, flexible work arrangements, affinity groups, community engagement are all very relevant, and staff are actively asking for this.

The Office of Human Resources (OHR) will be deeply engaged rolling out this new approach: it wants to benchmark jobs based on duties/compensation. OHR it will engage

staff in January-February through open meetings (4 on main campus, one on each regional campus). By March-May OHR will come back to constituents to report. By the summer 2020, OHR will start rolling out changes. Then FY21 will be used to educate all on the new system, particularly administrators and supervisors.

Currently, the staff job description consists of a series of bullet points called “duties and responsibilities”, but in reality they are “tasks”; to change job & salary jobs get bullet points added. This makes jobs non-comparable to other jobs internal or external to Pitt = can’t benchmark them.

A change to more sensible job families (e.g., accounting) will make all parts of it more transparent, more comparable and benchmarkable.

When families are fitted-out = benchmarking can happen.

Current system has 26 classification buckets which is problematic; job stacking happens which is problematic. The “administrator” bucket has too many, too diverse a population. It stacks diverse jobs with different duties and levels of expertise/authority within the Admin family.

After determining families, OHR will work with units to make sure the new system works.

Elia Beniash asked how would employees paid with soft vs hard money (which pays employees differently) be considered? And what about staff that teach? What about those descriptions/classifications? DeJong indicated that special cases will be considered carefully.

Yolanda Covington-Ward inquired whether there was turn over data that is useful. DeJong said that yes, there is but at the unit level, not by job family. Office of Research has a high turnover rate; staff tend to find similar jobs in CMU which pays better, and it informs OHR that Pitt needs to be more competitive (at 60-80 percentile). Exit interviews are useful; A&S does it and DeJong would like to make them universally used.

A working group will help carry out performance evaluations on a system that is not disliked, that is easy to use. OHR wants to see 100% compliance by next cycle. It will take random samples to monitor evaluations. Staff deserves a system that works.

Mackey Friedman inquired about promotion tracks. Does HR foresee a system that allows promotions? DeJong answered “yes, absolutely”. The new system of families will make it clearer how to go about promoting by meeting goals.

DeJong shared that holdbacks on salary pool reflect the lack of confidence on performance evaluations.

Beniash shared that in his area he has experienced that when staff leave for better pay, the unit is not allowed to counter offer, or hire new staff for more salary if there are similarly ranked staff.

Adriana Maguiña-Ugarte shared information Staff Council has always heard about “hiring salary caps” for Pitt staff who apply to other jobs within Pitt, which on occasion has resulted in a low salary increase. Staff who declined to accept such new job (due to low or capped salary increase) have seen the hiring unit offer the job to external candidate with a higher salary than top Pitt candidate received as an offer. Maguiña-Ugarte expressed the council’s opinion that such hiring caps should not exist, so staff can compete fairly with external candidates.

DeJong will also be looking into the application of benefits such as flexible work arrangement; not all units are taking advantage of this policy. Maguiña-Ugarte shared that

Staff Council is organizing a Panel Presentation for February 20 on “Flexible Work Arrangements at Pitt”. DeJong wholeheartedly supports the event.

Friedman inquire about what reallocation of resources within OHR meant? DeJong explained that OHR was reallocating its own human resources (i.e., its staff) to better address and redirect questions, issues, etc.

As the presentation wrapped up, the consensus from the committee members was very positive; all appreciated the great initiatives, and felt they represented a great step forward.

Bickford inquires whether there is a salary policy target for staff, and whether it can be shared. DeJong said yes to both questions. Salary will be benchmarked; it will basically create a salary philosophy where salary is ranked by family.

In clarifying the Pitt employee buckets: faculty, post-docs, and researchers are handled by the Provost office; staff is handled by OHR; union employees follow their CBAs. Staff salary reports will be much more granular and meaningful than current salary report.

#### 4. Cost of Living Adjustments (Amanda Brodish, Provost’s Office)

Amanda Brodish presented data for the Pittsburgh campus based on AAUP data from FY19 (most recent data from fall 2018). There are 34 peer institutions, all public institutions (although it does not include Texas A&M because they did not submit their data that year). Also, she clarified that the University of Utah (UoU) was a new public institution in FY19; since they don’t have past data UoU is not included in this report either. Starting next year, UoU data will be included.

ACCRA cost of living, composite index was used; it follows costs of groceries, housing, utilities, transportation, health care, among other such items.

All faculty ranks improved noticeably when salaries were adjusted for inflation.

Regional campuses are compared against IPEDS data from FY18 (most recent data from fall 2017). The regional campus benchmark groups 107 institutions; Sperling’s Best Places indices are used. Bradford is normalized to 100.

All faculty ranks go up significantly when salaries were adjusted for inflation.

Chris Bonneau expressed that a small investment on lecturers/instructors would seem to have a great impact on ranking.

Frank Wilson asked whether Sperling’s indices had ever been used to analyze main campus salary data versus the results obtained with ACCRA’s indices. Brodish indicated that she had not done it formally; that ACCRA data is more stable and reliable.

#### 5. PBS oversight surveys review and discussion

Bickford summarized for the committee that three surveys had been administered in the recent past: in 2013 it went to heads of committees; in 2016 it went to all faculty and staff (it was more about measuring awareness of the system); and 2018 when it went to all PBS participating members.

The 2020 surveys will go to the heads of the committees asking about the composition of the membership, then it will go to all members.

Bickford would like to see more granularity in the data about location of members. Wisniewski counter that doing that will reveal too much about the identity of the individuals and therefore hinder answers.

Bickford clarified the purpose of the survey, in relation to the oversight charge this committee has: to learn whether people know that they receive all the planning and budget

information they need to participate, to make sound recommendations, and make decisions. The Budget Policy committee's oversight is first and foremost related to whether PBCs are following the policy outlined in the PBS document. Then there is a need to understand if there are outlying PBCs that are not following said policy.

Discussion ensued about usefulness of PBC operations, how people are not interested in participating when administrators don't show pertinent budget data and take over the entire process of planning and budgeting upon themselves. What sort of discussion, if any, takes place in those type of meetings?

Beniash suggested holding town halls to help educate. Bickford showed enthusiasm about that idea, but he also feels it is important for members of BPC to meet with PBC members.

Discussion continued around whether we want to identify members of PBCs that are reporting issues. Last time there were no issues reported.

Wisniewski added that he would like to see longitudinal data starting with the last survey. Changing /adding questions modifies the survey making results unique to that particular survey. He wants to get data that builds on past data.

Adjournment at around 3:45 pm