

Minutes - Senate Budget Policies Committee
Friday, April 17, 2020
2:00-4:00 pm via Zoom meeting

Members in attendance: Elia Beniash, Tyler Bickford (co-chair), Yolanda Covington-Ward, Mackey Friedman, Jennifer Lee, John Mendeloff, Emily Murphy (co-chair), Wesley Rohrer, Melanie Scott, Frank Wilson, Jennifer Elizabeth Jones (UPPDA), Adriana Maguiña-Ugarte (SC), Brian Smith (SC), Amanda Brodish, Richard Henderson, Thurman Wingrove, Stephen Wisniewski, Chris Bonneau, Sue Jones (UTimes), Donovan Harrell (UTimes), Cyndee Pelt, Robert Goga (IR)

Absent: Panos Chrysanthis, Beverly Ann Gaddy, Ashima Agarwal (SGB), Yashar Aucie (GPSG), John J. Baker, Phil Wion, David DeJong, Narahari Sastry.

Call to order shortly after 2:00 pm.

1. Approve March minutes.

Minutes were submitted prior to the meeting. Minutes were approved as submitted.

2. Matters arising

None.

3. Mean and Median Salaries (IR)

Robert Goga presented the annual report on Mean and Median Salaries of University of Pittsburgh Full-Time Employees (salary of faculty with less than 12-month contract are converted to Full-Time Equivalent-FTE for reporting purposes, as it is customary). This report is for FY19, which means that the snapshot data was collected on October 30, 2018. Goga reminded us that the Deans' salaries are collectively listed under the Staff category labeled "Executive, Administrative, and Managerial".

Tyler Bickford inquired about the change in titles for Lecturers/Instructors, and where it might be noted/reflected.

Chris Bonneau clarified that the change is meant to go in effect AY20-21, with a prior June meeting of the Board for approval.

4. Salary Increases for Continuing Faculty (IR)

[this topic was covered quickly enough for Adriana to miss; she experienced a power outage at home at 2:25 pm. She rejoined by phone first at 2:28, but this conversation was ending]
[if anyone has notes to include, please do share them with Adriana]

5. General Update due to COVID-19

Stephen Wisniewski started his presentation by acknowledging that the main take away is that the community has done an amazing job.

He shared that there was a survey sent to faculty related to remote learning, research, communications, faculty affairs questions, among others. It was an internal survey; he was not aware of other universities (peers) doing the same.

Wisniewski also mentioned that performance evaluations were starting, with a big push from HR to be 100% completed. But evaluations are not going to be used for raises this year.

In relation to federal funds, they are to be distributed to students as soon as Pitt receives the funds. It is an urgent matter, but Pitt has just submitted its application earlier this week.

Someone asked whether the federal funds (faculty research funds), that are ostensibly not being used, would expire by the end of this fiscal year (June 30). It was speculated that they may be extended. Too soon to say.

Melissa Scoot inquired about whether the university is reducing capital spending.

Wisniewski indicated that the Parameters Committee of the UPBC is working on it now. Thurman Wingrove added that FY21 (starting on July 1) may have funds from FY20 that have not been used because of the mandate to halt construction jobs across the Commonwealth. All is currently being reviewed.

Wisniewski indicated that the university is also looking at all scenarios to return to campus in the fall. For example, international students with closed borders in their home country or other such impediment, will most likely need to start online.

There is also a staff hiring freeze; requests for exception can be made. There is no faculty hiring freeze, as Pitt is currently very competitive to attract new hires (peers are not hiring, so better candidates are available).

PA State Appropriation is expected to be at similar levels than last year, but it is thought that the impact on the state budget will be felt/clearer a year from now.

John Mendelson asked whether the salary increase this year will be 0%.

Wisniewski indicated again that all scenarios are being studied/analyzed. On the one hand enrolments and admission numbers are at expected levels if not higher, but Pitt is worrying about is the “summer melt”, the period of time between admission and commitment, and the start of the AY, when students may decide to cancel. It happens every year, but there is no way to know the extent of it this year.

Bonneau said he was looking very closely at what the state is doing budget-wise.

Bickford inquired whether there is or not a commitment to use reserves to keep promises of levels of funding? IS Pitt planning to use the revenue that is coming in?

Wisniewski said that it will depend on what the revenue looks like. If it negatively affects one area more than others, then something might need to be done where deficits are bad.

Bickford: what about the quasi-endowment? Can it be tapped into? Can it be used creatively?

Wingrove: that quasi-endowment supports Operating budget at the tune of \$75M (mostly as financial aid). Using the tricky is tricky because then the amount producing the interest will be affected.

Elia Beniash inquired for more details about the recruitment of Pitt graduating class for the professional MA/MS programs. Wisniewski said it had just been announced today, so there are no numbers yet; there is a sense that there is great interest. Recent graduates with BA/BS looking for work in the current labor market, will want to register instead. There are high discounts for Pitt graduates.

6. Nomination of officers for 2020-21

Bickford announced that Emily Murphy’s term as member of the committee is coming to an end. He will nominate her for a pro-tem seat the table. She expressed interest in coming back as pro-tem.

Bickford opened the nomination period to start today up until the next meeting (May 15) when the Chair and the Secretary positions need to be voted on. Bickford (current co-chair) self-nominated for the Chair position. Adriana Maguiña-Ugarte is not running for another term as Secretary, so the committee needs at least one nomination. Nominations will be accepted via email after this meeting.

Adjournment at around 3:30 pm