

**Faculty Assembly Meeting Minutes
Via Zoom**

Wednesday, August 5th, 2020

1. Call to Order

President Chris Bonneau called the meeting to order at 3 pm. After usual Zoom etiquette reminders, he asked the Assembly for the approval of the minutes.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Past Faculty Assembly Meeting

The distributed minutes from the July 7, 2020 were approved as written.

3. Items of New Business

Since there was no new business raised, the meeting moved swiftly to the next Agenda item.

4. Report of the Senate President, Chris Bonneau (submitted in written)

Thank you all for coming today. I know many of you are busy preparing for the Fall semester, which begins in, uhhhhhh, two weeks! Since it is still 2020, I have several updates for you.

- *Reminder: we are in Elevated Risk Posture. This means that the vast majority of classes will be held virtually. The risk posture is evaluated every week, and at this time, there is no announcement about plans to move to Guarded. Thus, in terms of planning for the fall, testing out technology in the classroom, etc., I can tell you that I am planning for 100% virtual for at least the first few weeks. This seems to me the most prudent way to plan given the current state of affairs.*
- *The Board of Trustees approved the budget for next year on July 15. Despite challenging economic circumstances and continuing uncertainty over the next year, the budget for next year freezes tuition at last year's levels and contains a salary freeze for faculty and staff. Looking at layoffs, furloughs, and salary and benefits reductions in higher education across the country, as well as out senior administrators taking a 10%-20% salary reduction, supporting this budget was an easy decision for me. While we all would love to be in a position to discuss compensation increases that simply was not realistic this year.*
- *We had over 825 faculty participate in our Town Hall on July 23, where we heard from Provost Ann Cudd, Senior Vice Chancellor Geovette Washington, Chief COVID Medical Officer John Williams, Chief Information Officer Mark Henderson, and Associate Vice Chancellor Cynthia Golden. I hope this was helpful in answering your questions, the vast majority of which were asked in good faith by people seeking information and guidance about the rapidly approaching fall semester.*
- *The Diversity Forum this year had participation from almost 13,000 people (1249 Pitt faculty) and over 30,000 views of livestreamed content on YouTube. As a member of the planning committee for the Forum, I was energized by all of the great work our colleagues put into this and the participation from both Pitt affiliates and community members exceeded all of our goals.*

I want to thank those of you who submitted workshops, served on panels, or otherwise engaged with the Forum.

- *Earlier this year, we endorsed the new Conflict of Interest (COI) policy and reporting portal. While the implementation was temporarily delayed due to COVID-19, I am pleased to report that feedback on this new process has been overwhelmingly positive. On the first day the portal was open, over 23,000 COI emails were sent to individuals and 83% of people required to complete this disclosure did so; currently, compliance is at 86% and the Office of Research is in the process of following up with the remaining 13%. About 10,000 people had nothing to disclose, and there are about 6500 supervisor reviews in process. By disclosing conflicts clearly and early, we can avoid many of the situations we see in the media about faculty being terminated or prosecuted, which is almost exclusively what happens to people who hide their conflicts.*
- *Last month, I reported the Dwight K. Schrute was appointed Vice Provost for Vice Provosts. Unfortunately, Mr. Schrute has resigned his position after we received troubling reports of his behavior at a past employer, which included discharging a firearm in the office, starting a fire in the office, and engaging in hazing of new employees.*
- *In the next couple of days, you will be hearing from your Dean, Director, Department Chair, or other supervisor about the requirements to return to campus. In addition to requiring face coverings and practicing physical distancing, there will be a training module about COVID-19 that everyone will need to complete.*
- *Today, we will be hearing from Vice Provost and Dean of Students Kenyon Bonner on the Pitt Community Compact. This Compact, which was drafted by our students (undergraduate, graduate, and professional) is a commitment to uphold the health and safety of all members of our community. As you read it, you will note that it is a combination of (1) university policies by which we all must abide, and (2) model behavior that we hope will be engaged in by members of our community. We are asking a lot of our students in terms of their behavior during this pandemic. Minimally, we should hold ourselves to the same standards.*
- *Last month, we discussed the revised copyright policy and voted overwhelmingly to endorse it. Today, we have the completed new Intellectual Property Policy. This policy was developed by a committee consisting of faculty and staff, and we subsequently discussed by the Research Committee over two meetings. The co-chairs of the Research Committee Penny Morel and Pat Smolinski will present this policy for our endorsement later in the meeting. I have to say I am glad to see this on our agenda as it was the very first issue I had thrust on my plate during my first weeks as University Senate President. So, we have been working on this for about two full years and I think the current policy improves faculty rights and protections compared to the existing policy.*
- *Also, last month, we heard from Katie Pope about the new Title IX regulations. Since that time, Katie and her office, along with the Office of Policy Development and the Office of Legal Counsel, have been working to revise to develop and interim policy that will get us into compliance by the Department of Education's August 14 deadline. We met on Monday and I reviewed the interim policy. It is also being reviewed by various other individuals before the Chancellor approves it. In the fall, we will convene a committee to draft a new permanent policy following our existing policy development process. Given the incredibly short timeline to comply with the new rules, we had to implement something on an interim basis quickly.*
- *I want to conclude this portion of my report by recognizing that many of us are dealing with high levels of stress and anxiety about what is going to unfold both on campus and in the community over the next several weeks. Some of the "questions" posed at the Town Hall in addition to many of the comments on the YouTube stream of the Angela Davis talk demonstrated that, on the words of one of my colleagues, that "we should never underestimate the ability of disgruntled*

people to make any event all about themselves and their pet issues.” I believe that we all want to do what is best for our students, our colleagues, and our community. Because there are disagreements about what is, in fact, “best,” it is easy to assume those we disagree with are ignorant, selfish, stupid, etc. Besides Corona-truthers and anti-maskers (who are, in fact, all of those things), I have not encountered anyone in the Pitt community (including those whom I fundamentally disagree with) who has been anything but thoughtful and conscientious about their position on this pandemic. I want to encourage all of us to keep this in mind as we navigate the path ahead; we will have disagreements, but these disagreements should not cause us to question motives or impugn integrity.

That is it for the news. Now, I am pleased to turn my attention to the presenting of the Award for Service in the University Senate. Since 1999, the Senate Service Award has been given for “outstanding contributions to the University of Pittsburgh through service in the University Senate.” The winner this year is Robin Kear, a faculty librarian at Hillman Library. Since she is a librarian, I will deliver the rest of my remarks in a whisper while looking stern.

Robin has been at Pitt since 2007 and has an exemplary record of service, focused particularly on students. Many of you know her from her role as Senate Vice President from 2016-2019 or as the organizer for the 2017 Senate Plenary on The Role of Research Metrics in Faculty Evaluations. Prior to that, she served as an elected representative for Faculty Assembly and Senate Council from 2010-2016. Additionally, she was an elected member of the Student Admissions, Aid, and Affairs Committee from 2009-2016, serving as Chair or co-chair from 2013-2016. Robin also serviced as an appointed Faculty Representation to the Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees from 2015-2018. In the past year, during her “break” in service, she asked to serve as a pro tem member of the Faculty Affairs Committee and the SAAAC. More importantly than her impressive quantity of service has been the quality of it. Robin has been a tireless advocate for students and faculty, especially those whose employment is contingent. Personally, she was a fantastic resource for me during my first year as President and I relied heavily on her counsel and insight.

Please join me in Zoomplause thanking Robin for all of her service and congratulating her on this richly deserved award.

After introducing Robin Kear as this year recipient of the Senate Service Award, Bonneau asked her to say a few words and Kear obliged by talking about her experiences while serving on University Senate and thanking everyone for the honor. The ceremonial handing of the reward and the photo have to be dropped in the zoom set-up.

Smolinski: Will we have any waivers for faculty to sign?

Bonneau: No, we trust our faculty to make the decision whether to teach in person or remotely on their own. [Responding to Anderson’s question from the chat] No chair in any department can require a graduate student to teach in person if the student is concerned about his/her own health.

Loughlin: Is it the same for the students that they do not have to sign any formal pledge?

Bonner: Correct. They have to acknowledge that they read the Pitt Community Compact (at the time of

accessing the portal), but there is no official pledge to sign.

5. Reports by and Announcements of the Special and Standing Committees of the Senate
A. Computing and Information Technology Committee, Professor Michael Spring, Chair

The written SCITC report was distributed to FA before the meeting. **Spring** summarized it by pointing to many things happening this year which were in the center of committee's attention, such as the new CIO, migration to the new student software, Canvas, changes triggered by raising costs (switch to the MS Defender and plans to move away from Pitt Box)

Jones and **De Vallejo** asked about looking for the alternative data storage infrastructure. **Spring** explained that many universities are in similar situation and they are collectively pushing back. We are currently looking at Box vs OneDrive. From the initial comparison, IT identified features and uses that are not easy to accomplish in OneDrive, but I will ask for a broader comparison. SCITC will address the issue next year.

B. IP Policy, Professors Penny Morel and Pat Smolinski, Research Committee Chairs

Morel introduced the history of the proposed changes in IP Policy. **Rutenbar** stressed that the new policy is concise and has better language, and that it is written by faculty for faculty and improves the revenue sharing.

Anderson: If including course materials is only about continuity, why the language cannot reflect that narrow purpose?

Rutenbar: We do not own the course materials, but we have the right to use it.

Bove: I think many faculty are perfectly comfortable allowing their materials to be used by their department for the same courses if they are suddenly away from work, or choose to leave the university without enough time to be replaced before the course is offered. But the policy reads as though the university could take our teaching materials and use them for any purposes that may not relate to their original intent.

The above concern was shared by many others who were concerned that the policy does not protect faculty against the monetization of their course materials. The lively discussion on the subject ensued in the chat

Kovacs pointed to another flaw in the policy – the lack of grievance process.

Even if the abuse of the IP policy is unlikely, the grievance process should be included as it is in other university policies. Therefore, **Bonneau** suggested that Rutenbar and Facher should meet with the Faculty Affairs Committee to polish the language, focusing on the issues raised on behalf of the non-tenured and contingent faculty who also should be protected by this policy.

6. Unfinished Business and/or New Business

Pitt Campus Compact, Kenyon Bonner, VC & Dean of Student

Bonner talked about the new Community Compact created by student leaders, which is part of the campus culture, education and compliance efforts. It is a personal commitment to adhere to behaviors to protect our community. It will be required from all students and faculty to read and acknowledge the Compact. Students will have to fill the return to campus declaration, complete the video training for health and safety and pledge adherence to safety by reading the Community Compact.

At the request of **Loughlin, Bonner** talked about the social media efforts to communicate the requirements, safe behaviors, and sanctions for non-compliance to students.

Prompted by the question from **Karioris, Bonneau** pointed out that the messages change, when situation changes, but we would not hold people accountable for non-compliance if the information was not communicated.

Bonneau asked for the vote to endorse the Pitt community Compact. He asked those abstaining and voting “no” to send these through chat, the rest of the votes would be counted as “yes” votes.

The motion to endorse Compact passed unanimously.

7. Announcements

Stoner: In the interest of not making a verbal announcement (in respect of everyone's time), I wanted to make a plug for a new service offered by the University that allows faculty (and students and staff) to understand how to pronounce the names of students and others. This is called Namecoach, it is ready to go and it can be integrated in sig files, in Canvas, and in other ways. There was a presentation last week during the Diversity Forum about it and it is a timely opportunity to celebrate name diversity and do right by all the members of our community. You can get information here:

<https://www.technology.pitt.edu/namecoach>.

Bonneau: We will return to one hour meeting next academic year.

8. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 5:09 pm.

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

<http://www.univsenate.pitt.edu/faculty-assembly>

Respectfully Submitted,

Małgorzata (Gosia) Fort
Secretary, University Senate

Members attending: Almarza, Anderson, Bench, Berenbrok, Bickford, Bircher, Bonneau, Bove, Brodt, Buchanich, Bunger, Conley, Cousins, Darnell, De Vallejo, Falcione, Fort, Frieze, Goundappa, Gramm, Guterman, Henker, Jeffrey, Jeong, Jones, Kiesling, Kiselyov, Klem, Kohanbash, Kovacs, Kregg-Byers, Kucan, Labrinidis, Loughlin, Maier, Morel, Mostern, Mulvaney, Munro, Murtazashvili, Newman, Oyler, Paljug, Popovich, Roberts, Salcido, Sant, Schuster, Scott, Smolinski, Spring, Streeter, Swigonova, Taboas, Tashbook, Vento, Wilson, Wood, Yates, Zack

Members not attending: Adams, Aziz, Bratman, Cassaro, Chirimuuta, Denman, Judd, Kanthak, Kory, Miller, Mulcahy, Nelson, Pacella-LaBarbara, Paterson, Potoski, Rauktis, Stover, Sukits, Triplette, Yearwood

Others attending: Amato, E. Facher, J. Facher, Gillogly, Harrell, Houser, S. Jones, Karioris, Kear, Mauk, MBR, Moss, Newhill Rutenbar, Stoner, Zwick

*Excused attendance: Beck, Hall, Landsittel, Molinaro, Poljak

* Notified Senate office