

## **Senate Community Relations Committee meeting**

**12:00 – 2:00 p.m.**

### **Community Human Services**

**January 21, 2014**

**Attendees:** Marissa Arlet, RCCO; Kimberly Barlow, *University Times*; Laurie Cohen, ULS, CRC Co-Chair; Megan Fabbri, OPDC; Maggie Folan, Pharmacy; Holly Hickling, Honors College; Mona Kazour, SGB; Hilary Scherer, OPDC; Tracy Soska, Social Work; Paul Supowitz, Community & Governmental Relations; Trevor Smith, CHS; Pamela Toto, SHRS; John Wilds, Community Relations

The minutes from November 19th were approved with no corrections.

We discussed our upcoming conference call with a representative from the Bradford campus next month. Last year, we spoke with Jodi Krasinger from Pitt Greensburg and asked her questions about what kinds of service projects the Greensburg students, staff, and faculty engage in throughout the year. We also shared some of the highlights of our campus projects, such as the United Way Day of Caring, Pitt Make a Difference Day, the annual food drives, Pitt's People for Pets, and the safe partying efforts in the three Oakland neighborhoods.

At our February meeting, we will hold a conference call with Tonya J. Ackley, who is the Coordinator of Community Engagement and the Wick Chapel at Pitt-Bradford. Kannu Sahni has made the arrangements for the call and the library conference room is equipped for teleconferencing. A list of the questions used in last year's teleconference will be mailed out to all members prior to the meeting.

**Discussion of ideas for April field trip:** Tracy has suggested that we meet with people from Uptown Partners, since their work takes them from the Lower Hill to Oakland. We have many mutual areas of interest, including the Fifth–Forbes corridor and how that might be affected by Bus Rapid Transit, the relationship between Pitt, UPMC, and Duquesne, the future of the Fifth Avenue School property and the Shanahan storage facility.

With all of these developments, there is a question of connecting social services to new ventures and taking steps to see that residents don't fall through the cracks. This is an area where we could learn more about the strategic plan for Uptown. Tracy will work on the details but we may schedule a van tour or walking tour, depending on the weather, and we might meet at Life's Work, which has been a Day of Caring site in past years.

**University Update:** Dr. Wilds said that Christmas Day at Pitt was highly successful this past December. A record 2000 people were served food, given gifts and listened to holiday music. The homeless and needy were brought to campus by bus through the Salvation Army.

Pitt's People for Pets campaign was also successful. More than 2200 pounds of pet food and \$2000 were donated to Animal Friends and the Chow Wagon program by Pitt students, faculty, and staff.

There will be a Spring Day of Caring this year and one of the projects includes preparing beds in community gardens. More details to follow. A second edition of the Student Guide to Campus Life was just published, and students from the Student Government Board volunteered their time on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day this year.

Related to the Day of Caring, there were some general questions and comments. One of the questions that have surfaced in the past has been last-minute volunteers wanting to join the efforts, or people unable to commit to a whole day's worth of activities. This creates a logistical nightmare for those who coordinate the transportation arrangements.

Dr. Wilds has been working with the Student Government Board to emphasize the idea of volunteering in the community, and Dean of Students Kathy Humphrey has been more involved in promoting service learning among the students, through the PittServes program. PittServes now has a staff of four people, including an outreach coordinator, program coordinator, director, and faculty mentor.

According to their website," PittServes will connect individual students and student organizations seeking service opportunities, with local and regional organizations that need volunteers for projects." PittServes is similar to the Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC) model, which was successfully implemented at the University. The model envisions students working in the community in a variety of ways such as work study, volunteering, internships, and special projects that might arise from a course or courses designed by faculty incorporating Service/Civic Engagement concepts as part of their course.

Pam Toto asked about service learning opportunities for undergraduates, since many of them require those credentials to be accepted into graduate programs. Mona Kazour spoke about partnerships on campus and spreading the word about these opportunities through social media sites like Facebook. There was also a question about creating an academic certificate for service learning. We also talked about using an online system of tracking service learning and volunteer hours for academic credit.

Trevor Smith asked what the purpose of the CRC was, and the general consensus was that it was a forum for discussion among interested faculty, staff, and students as to what is taking place in Oakland and the University's relationship to those activities. We serve as a forum for both discussion and dissemination of information relating to the challenges and issues of that partnership.

**New Business:** The committee welcomed Holly Hickling to the meeting. Holly took the place of Ryan Gayman, and she is the Academic Engagement Advisor in the Honors College. Ryan created a Community Based Research Fellowship, and there are currently nine students in attendance. They match themselves with an organization or business, so they are working with both a faculty mentor and an organization mentor. One of the projects is working on an iPad app for blind people to use.

Committee members went around the table and introduced themselves, which was especially important as we had some new members.

Trevor mentioned that CHS held a fundraiser at Mad Mex in Shadyside, and informed us that their administrative offices recently relocated to Centre and Morewood Avenues in Bloomfield.

**Construction Update:** In Benedum Hall, floors 9-12 are being renovated as part of Phase II of a project. Design work on replacing the Cathedral elevators is taking place. This will be a three-year project, beginning this summer. In David Lawrence Hall, a partition will be added to the main auditorium to permanently divide it into two rooms by this summer. The College of General Studies and the McCarl Center will be moving to Posvar Hall in the space vacated by the GSPIA/Econ Library, and the English Department is moving to the old CGS space on the fourth floor of the Cathedral of Learning. Cultural Studies, Jewish Studies, and Women's Studies will also move into part of the fourth floor space in the

Cathedral. The construction of dental medical labs in Salk Hall will be completed in the Fall of 2014. The complete renovation of Clapp Hall is also on schedule for the next year.

Paul Supowitz mentioned the recent passing of Bob Casciato Sr., an Oakland resident who was “a strong advocate for the people of Oakland and Panther Hollow,” according to his obituary.

Minutes submitted by Laurie Cohen, February 12, 2014

Next meeting on February 21<sup>st</sup>, from 12:00 – 2:00 p.m., in 272 Hillman Library