

Senate Council Meeting Minutes
Via Zoom
Thursday, December 9, 2021

I. Call to Order

President Robin Kear called the meeting to order at 3 pm and asked to notify Lori that you are in attendance if your name does not appear on screen.

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

She asked for motion. Chancellor moved to approve, and Scott seconded the motion. The minutes from the November 11, 2021 meeting were approved as written.

III. Items of New Business

No items of new business were raised.

IV. Report of the Chancellor, Patrick Gallagher

Chancellor Gallagher opened his last report of this year with his best wishes for all and reminded everyone to take care of each other and of yourselves. Then, he acknowledged those graduating now and said that their celebration might seem more modest this year, but their achievements certainly were not. The winter recess period was extended by the University Administration as a way of appreciation for all the faculty and staff work.

The vaccination requirement is in effect, and we are tracking down those who do not comply. Most of enforcement will happen next year. We are chasing the details and contacting people. We hope that the numbers will change before we get to the disciplinary part. Disenrollment will happen for those who do not comply.

He said that though our campus numbers are not alarming, the local community spread is high at the 80% level of last December. What we are struggling with now is the lack in staffing the hospitals, but vaccines boosters are effective. CoVax Center will host two mass vaccination clinics at Peterson Center coming up (on December 16 and January 12). For students travelling - it is a no-cost testing site in the parking lot next to Carnegie Museum

Chancellor also shared some exciting news about:

- \$100MM grant from the Mellon Foundation to build BioForge, the biomanufacturing facility
- University purchased Residence Inn, which will be converted to furnished apartment style residences for students (in short term helps with student housing, in long term will fit in our Master Plan for Pitt). De Jong added that it will also help with recruitment of international graduate students
- James W. Gallaher, Jr joins the University as VC for Human Resources on December 1, 2021

He finished report by naming recent accolades:

- William Clark and Steven Little from Swanson School of Engineering named Fellows of the National Academy of Innovators,
- 2018 Pitt alum Joseph Kannarkat is the recent Schwarzman Scholar
- Heisman Trophy finalist – Kenny Pickett

- Pitt volleyball team is playing to advance to NCAA finals as we speak
Chancellor concluded with wishes of safe and happy holiday season.

There were no questions for Chancellor Gallagher.

V. Report of Senate President, Robin Kear (submitted in written)

Congratulations to the student athletes on Pitt's football team for winning the ACC championship title. I know they and their families have worked very hard for this, and I wish them the best as they complete their fall term schoolwork and train for the upcoming Peach Bowl.

- *I had the opportunity to attend one Pitt football game this fall with my family, and I was reminded of the ferocity of Pitt's community of athletic fans, the pressure that our student-athletes confront at a relatively young age, and the fabric of Pitt sports in the city and region.*

Winter Wishes

As we push through the final days of the fall term, I wish you peace and I thank you for educating our students. Whether you are teaching in the classroom, working behind the scenes, managing facilities or technology, administering policy, coordinating schedules, researching in your lab, checking out materials in the library, recruiting new experiential learning opportunities, being present in our community, or doing one of the millions of other tasks we do that create Pitt every single day, I wish that you find joy in the work.

As we turn inward this time of year to our families, friends, neighbors, and different faiths, to nurturing and strengthening the bonds that help us through the rest of the year, I wish that you find moments of joy, contentment, and reflection. As we turn the page to a new year, I wish that you find hope for the future.

These are my wishes for all of us as we continue living through difficult, sometimes traumatic times.

Other Updates

I gave many updates at last week's Faculty Assembly on working items, so I will not repeat all of them here, and two policies and procedures are up for a vote later in our meeting. Two items I wanted to mention are:

Campus Safety Concerns

- *SGB President Harshitha Ramanan expressed serious concerns related to campus safety, communication, and climate at the last Senate Council meeting.*
- *SAAA will be examining these issues at their December 15th meeting and hearing from OEDI, the dean of student affairs, and Pitt Police.*
- *I have asked SAAA and Educational Polices to examine an SGB resolution regarding Lauren's Promise and its addition to syllabi. Lauren's Promise is a simple but powerful statement. (Lauren's Promise – I will listen and believe you if someone is threatening you. <https://www.laurenmccluskey.org/>)*

Spring Plenary

- *Vice President Kanthak is working with the Community Relations and Research Committees to plan the Spring Plenary. It will be based on a community-engaged scholarship, and we encourage people to attend and/or participate in the community-engaged scholarship forum on March 1st. More details will be forthcoming in the new year.*

Best of luck for the rest of this term, have a wonderful winter break, and thanks to Pitt for giving us all an extra three days for downtime.

There were no questions for President Kear.

VI. Reports of Student Members of Senate Council:

A. Student Government Board (SGB), Harshitha Ramanan

Ramanan gave a very brief report saying that athletics is helping them with all the stress with their recent wins. The Board is wrapping up the year, focusing on final and accomplishments. They will post newsletters with information on projects they are working on. Once they come back in the new year, they will be joining other ACC schools.

B. College of General Studies Student Government (CGSSG), Ryan Yeager

Yeager gave very brief updates:

- that they have had a non-traditional student week
- appointed two students to the Board
- met
- planning to make changes in their constitution

C. Graduate and Professional Schools Student Government (GPSSG), Morgan Pierce

Pierce delivered a short report:

- Executive meeting held last week
- Revamping the website
- Gradsgiving event was a success
- Today's Holiday Happy Hour is our last event of the year
-

VII. Report of the President of the Postdoctoral Association, Dave Gau (submitted in written)

Good afternoon, Senate Council members, hope everyone is well. The UPPDA board met with our Faculty Advisory Board yesterday and had a great discussion on some of the challenges our organization and postdocs face. Topics we discussed focused on postdoc employee benefits and salary, communication, and postdoc guideline uniformity. We have been working closely with Dr. Godley on these issues as well. We will continue our discussions with her on these challenges.

On the programming front, we held a successful webinar on US immigration recently. We will be hosting a follow-up Q&A session to the webinar with OIS next month. We are also hosting a career development program focusing on working in startups vs large companies. We will also be joining the Office of Academic Career Development in the upcoming Career Symposium. Lastly, we will be starting a writing accountability groups for postdocs to help generate achievable writing goals.

That concludes my report.

VIII. Report of the President of the Staff Council, Angela Coldren (submitted in written)

Good afternoon, President Kear, Chancellor Gallagher, Senate Council officers and members of Senate Council.

*The ad hoc **Staff Council Endowed Book Fund Committee** has been created. More details to come.*

*Our **Staff Relations Committee** hosted John Kozar at their December meeting and discussed opportunities that, if completed, can add to employee's HIA's (health incentive accounts).*

Also, wearing my former hat as SR Chair, employees have wanted electronic W-2's for years, and it is now here.

*The **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee** chairs have taken a lead with the **Staff Council Spring Assembly** which has been set for March 9, 2022, from 9 a.m. – Noon – Yoga Roots on Location AntiRacist Professional Development. This is the week of Spring Break. The Assembly will be virtual. More information to come. The Spring Assembly this year was made possible by an award from OEDI Mini Grant Program.*

*The **Staff Life Committee** continues to work on parking concerns. They are also looking into Campus Food Pricing which is relevant timing considering that we have a new vendor in PantherExpress, America To Go which allows departments to order food for small to medium groups from local caterers and restaurants.*

We welcome and are excited to begin working with the new VC of Human Resources, Dr. James Gallaher. We would like to thank Mark Burdsall for his work as interim VC of Human Resources, meeting with us on a regular basis, always making himself available and speaking with us candidly. Thank you also to Dave DeJong for his discussions with us and making himself available at any time. I am sure we will continue to work with all of you.

We would like to thank the senior leaders for recognizing the efforts of the employees and granting 3 additional days off which have been added to the Winter Recess. It seems that everyone can use some additional time off around the holidays and the end of the year.

Thank you, Chancellor Gallagher, for allowing the SC Officers to share last evening's performance by the Heinz Chapel Choir. They sounded amazing, almost unreal. And to think they sang with masks on the entire time.

Staff Council members continue to be asked to serve on various committees across the University – most recently the Just Communities Committee.

Our next (open) general meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 19, 2022, at 12pm. This meeting, and future meetings for at least 6-12 months, will be held virtually. If you would like to attend, feel free to reach out to Lola at sc@pitt.edu for a virtual invitation. This concludes our report. Thank you for your attention and patience and I wish you a wonderful, safe, healthy, and relaxing holiday!

IX. Reports by and Announcements of Standing and Special Committees of the Senate

None

X. Unfinished Business and/or New Business:

A. Draft Policy on Protection of Children from Abuse - Professors Linda Tashbook and Lorraine Denman

B. Draft Policy on HIPAA - Professor Linda Tashbook, Benefits & Welfare Chair (submitted in writing)

I am here with two draft sets of policies and procedures for you all to vote on, but first I want to give a personal note of thanks to Dr. Gallagher for building the Office of Policy Development and Management which, in my observation, is doing a wonderful job of ensuring clarity in language, quality of content, consistency of components, and a sensible organizational scheme in which to locate policies. And Dr. Cudd, I was at your online interview on Tuesday when you talked about Provosts working on a lot of crisis management and needing stamina. I think that you must feel especially drained this year, as many of us do, but I hope that our momentum on policy development is a good source of support to you.

These two draft policies are both non-controversial and are about legal compliance:

Draft Policy and Procedure on Protection of Children from Abuse

- 1. Calls for employees, volunteers, and students whose activities at Pitt include “routine interaction” with minor children (but not prospective or matriculated students who are under age 18) to have three background checks before taking on those activities:
a) FBI Criminal Background Check;
b) Child Abuse History Clearance; and
c) Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Background Check.*
- 2. These three background checks combined cost around \$50 and are considered valid for 5 years. These clearances belong to the person who is the subject of each clearance, not to the University. So, when a student with clearance graduates or an employee with clearance leaves the University, the clearances go with them. Responsibility Centers may opt to pay for the clearances, but the policy indicates that “Typically, new employees requiring Child protection clearances are responsible for any associated costs for obtaining the required clearances.” The matter of cost as a burden for new employees and for students was discussed in both committees and at the Faculty Assembly and each discussion ended in a conclusion that the policy should not presume to allocate unpredictable and potentially exorbitant funds from Responsibility Centers.*
- 3. While schools and departments will identify students needing these clearances, the Head of each Responsibility Center will identify the employees who need to have background checks and will coordinate with Human Resources to initiate the clearance process/obtain copies of current clearances, document clearances, and arrange clearance-related training. Human Resources will also deal with re-certification of these clearances.*
- 4. Employment, appointment, or volunteer service will be denied by the University if the background checks reveal that within the past five years the applicant has a record of child abuse or a drug crime or any of the 21 crimes listed in the procedure.*
- 5. Finally, the policy and procedure set forth the steps for reporting suspected child abuse by an existing employee, student, or volunteer.*

Tashbook stopped for questions on the draft of first policy.

The questions and comments revolved around student involvement and possible support for the students who have trouble paying for clearances. Kear and Ramanan will talk about financial support, but policy was put for vote as is.

Vote: YES – 37, NO – 1, ABSTAIN – 3

Passed.

Then, Tashbook continued with her presentation of the second policy.

Draft Policy and Procedure on HIPAA

- 1. HIPAA consists of a privacy rule and security rule that applies to protecting the information contained in medical records.*
- 2. Each University unit that is covered by HIPAA ("Covered Component") must designate its own privacy officer and its own security official to handle HIPAA compliance. These covered components include such entities as student health, the dental school (because of its clinics), any units conducting medical research on human subjects, and information technology. The list of covered components is maintained by the Chief Privacy Officer, Laurel Gift.*
- 3. The Security officials and privacy officers from each covered component will collaborate with the University's Privacy Officer and Chief Information Security Officer to ensure University HIPAA compliance. (Just to clarify-- Pitt IT and the Chief Information Security Officer have in place appropriate administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to protect the integrity, confidentiality, and availability of EPHI that is created, received, transmitted, or managed by the University's Covered Components.)*
- 4. As part of their general employment orientation with the Office of Human Resources and/or the Office of the Provost, each new member of the Covered Components' workforce must be trained on HIPAA privacy policies and procedures—as appropriate to their job functions. In addition, all employees of the Covered Components must receive annual HIPAA training, including supplemental training updates when there is a substantial change in relevant privacy policies and/or regulations.*
- 5. Each Covered Component must perform annual technical security assessments of potential risks and vulnerabilities related to the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of electronically protected health information. (EPHI)*
- 6. Each Covered Component is responsible for making its own policies on limiting authorized access to EPHI and notifying their security official about security breaches involving EEPHI.*
- 7. In the event of a data breach, the HIPAA security official in a Covered Component will instigate the necessary notifications and actions to comply with the University's data incident response plan.*

No questions or comments were offered.

Vote: YES – 35, NO - 0, ABSTAIN – 3

Passed

XI. Announcements

Tashbook had two announcements: She invited everyone to the event on the retirement investments oversite on December 14 organized by B&WC and reminded everyone of a great place to de-stress – Center for Creativity.

Kanthak announced that Pitt volleyball team won the game.

XII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:54 pm.

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

<https://www.univsenate.pitt.edu/senate-council>

Respectfully submitted,

Małgorzata (Gosia) Fort

Secretary, University Senate

Members attending:

Bonneau, Bonner, Brodt, Bungler, Coldren, Conley, Cudd, Denman, DeJong, De Vallejo, Doty, Floyd, Fort, Gallagher, Gregerson, Henker, Judd, Kanthak, Kear, Kieselyov, Kleebank, Klem, Labrinidis, Maier, McCormick, Molinaro, Murtazashvili, Newman, Pacella-LaBarbara, Paljug, Pierce, Potoski, Ramanan, Rauktis, Rutenbar, Sant, Sastry, Schuster, Scott, Shekhar, Taboas, Tashbook, Washington, Wood, Yeager, Zack

Members not attending:

Almarza, Bench, Buchanich, Cilli, Hall, Jeong, A. Jones, Kesbhat, Khan, Kiesling, Kory, Kovacs, Mulcahy, Murphy, Oyler, Roberts, Vento, Yearwood

*Excused attendance:

Gau, Paterson

Others attending:

Ayars, Congleton, Dostilio, Fike, Frieze, Harding, Harrell, Hitter, Jones, Lalo, Lancaster, Moran, Panzella, Pope, Radziwon, Roadman, SantaCasa, Seldin, Staresinic, Supowitz, Tananis, Tenney, Ying-Tung

*Notified Senate Office