

**Faculty Assembly Meeting Minutes  
Via Zoom**

**Wednesday, April 1, 2020**

AGENDA ITEM	ACTION
<p><b><u>Call to Order</u></b></p> <p>The meeting was called to order by President Chris Bonneau at 3 pm. Bonneau reminded everyone about muting their mics and asked Molinaro to take a roll call.</p>	<p>The meeting commenced at 3:00 pm</p>
<p><b><u>Approval of the Minutes of the Past Faculty Assembly Meeting</u></b></p> <p>The Minutes of the March 4th were approved.</p>	<p>Approved</p>
<p><b><u>Items of New Business</u></b></p> <p>Bircher suggested using the chat box for the formal roll call: at the beginning of a meeting ask everyone to sign in his/her/their name, and then create the file of that chat to have the list. We will use this method during the next meeting.</p>	
<p><b><u>Report of the Senate President,</u></b> <b><i>Chris Bonneau</i></b></p> <p>Can you believe it has only been a month since we have met? The past several weeks have given a whole new meaning to the phrase “March Madness.” When preparing my report each month, I go back through my email since the last meeting to ensure I don’t forget anything that has come up. Usually, that task can be accomplished relatively quickly. This time, I counted over 400 emails dealing with issues surrounding COVID-19. I don’t say this to complain, but rather to emphasize just how involved the officers and I have been in university discussions and decisions during this pandemic. Simply put, even though the situation was fast changing and many decisions had to be made in a short time period, the faculty were involved in all stages of the process. I know there is a narrative being circulated that faculty have been excluded from the decisions that were made, but let me say, unequivocally, that is false. And I have the receipts to prove it.</p> <p>I have sent out regular updates to try to keep everyone informed, but I recognize there has been information overload and it is easy to overlook some things. So today, I want to highlight some of the most important decisions that have been made before opening it up to questions and concerns. Please consult the faculty page on <a href="https://www.emergency.pitt.edu/covid-19/faculty">emergency.pitt.edu</a> for further details: <a href="https://www.emergency.pitt.edu/covid-19/faculty">https://www.emergency.pitt.edu/covid-19/faculty</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Huge thanks to Cynthia Golden and the Pitt Center for Teaching and Learning for everything they have done (and continue to do) to help luddites like me transition to online teaching.</li> </ul>	

- The semester is not going to be extended. Class will end on the same date as originally scheduled and final exams will occur according to the schedule set by the registrar's office. Just because classes have moved online does not mean that faculty can schedule their final exams whenever they want since doing so could conflict with other exams that have been previously scheduled.
- Students will have the opportunity to take any of their classes as satisfactory/no credit in consultation with their academic advisor. The Provost's office has issued guidance to academic advisors about how this will work; faculty will simply enter in the letter grades on the grade roster as normal.
- On a personal note, please be mindful that our students may be experiencing additional difficulties with the move to online classes. This can be anything from technology limitations, lack of suitable space to conduct academic work, physical and mental illness, increased caregiving responsibilities, financial issues, etc. Add to that the abrupt end to the semester, or, for the seniors, their collegiate experience. In sum, everyone is dealing with a lot of shit right now. So, I would hope we would all be understanding when it comes to attendance policies, deadlines, etc.
- The search committee for the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, Development, and Diversity is soliciting nominations and recommendations. As you know, this position is of vital importance for faculty and, for many issues, is our primary interface with the administration. Laurel Roberts and I are on the search committee and we would be happy to hear about anyone you think would be good for the job. The job description can be found here: <https://www.provost.pitt.edu/vice-provost-faculty-affairs-development-and-diversity-search>
- Despite the riveting demonstration from Rob Rutenbar and Bill Yates on the new conflict-of-interest portal at our recent meeting, recent events have postponed the roll-out of My Disclosures. Additionally, the deadline for disclosing conflicts of interest has been delayed from April 15 to a yet unspecified date. According to Pitt Research, the disclosures you made in 2019 will continue to be accepted as valid for grant submission until a new deadline is established.
- Student evaluations of teaching will still be distributed, but no faculty member will be required to submit them for contract extension, promotion and tenure, or evaluation purposes. If you want to do so, you can. But failure to do so will not be held against you. Those colleagues who are in the tenure-stream but are not yet tenured have the option to request an additional year on their probationary period. Please see the Provost's letter on this for more specific information, such as deadline for requests, etc.: <https://www.provost.pitt.edu/extending-tenure-clock>
- The topic of budgets and fiscal health are on the minds of a lot of people. I can tell you that Pitt is in good fiscal shape, both short-term and long-term. The refinancing of debt that occurred at the end of last year turned out to be very fortuitous given the current situation. Obviously, the Commonwealth's finances are also uncertain and are likely to be so for

some time since they delayed the tax filing deadline to July 15. Of course, we are not alone: every state and every public university are in the same situation. Additionally, the situation has resulted in unexpected expenses (e.g., returning a percentage of student room and board costs), some unexpected savings (e.g., not spending all of a unit's operational budget), and some temporary savings that could become expenses later (e.g., postponing commencement). What does this mean? To paraphrase Donald Rumsfeld, "There are known knowns, known unknowns, and unknown unknowns."

- Only "essential" personnel are permitted inside campus buildings. Are you essential? Well, we all think we are. But, as it was explained to me, if you haven't been told you're essential, you aren't.
- There is no university-wide hiring freeze; several ongoing searches are proceeding as normal.
- In the "life goes on" category, elections for Senate Officers and Faculty Assembly begin today and run through April 16<sup>th</sup>. The link is on your my.pitt.edu page. Thanks to Frank Wilson and the Elections Committee for all of their work finding candidates to serve.

Later on I will turn to Vice President David Salcido, who has some information about a "virtual plenary" that we are going to be conducting in lieu of our postponed plenary (which we are hoping to reschedule for September).

Finally, I want to close with a note of thanks and appreciation to all of the faculty. Many of us have had to pivot from in-person to online classes in a short time period, without any experience. And this has been done largely with good spirit and without complaint. But Pitt faculty have done so much more. The *Pitt News* recently highlighted some of the things our colleagues have done to assist in the treatment of those suffering in this pandemic. Several people have donated lab supplies and materials to hospitals. Indeed, David Vorp coordinated a truckload of personal protective equipment donated by 50 labs after Carla Ng emailed him asking how she could donate supplies. Still others, like Goetz Vesper, have transformed their labs into making hand sanitizer. There is the Benedum Hall Makerspace, which is using 3D printers and laser cutters to fabricate facemasks and face shields. And that doesn't even take into account all of our medical faculty who are treating sick patients, or working in the Center for Vaccine Research to develop a vaccine for COVID-19. In sum, I have found the efforts of our faculty to be inspiring and a model for how a university should behave in the face of a crisis like we are experiencing.

In closing, no contribution is too small: checking in on our students and colleagues and making sure they are okay, and trying to keep a connection between them and Pitt can go a long way toward alleviating anxiety and stress. We all cannot donate masks or treat patients. But we all can reach out and ensure that our colleagues and students are doing well. Thank you for all that you do, and have done, to keep this community functioning. And please, continue to stay safe and be healthy.

*Bonneau* added that item #5 on our agenda (Tenure Clock Extension Discussion) is not

<p>needed since the issue had been resolved (see <a href="http://www.provost.pitt.edu/extending-tenure-clock">http://www.provost.pitt.edu/extending-tenure-clock</a> ) and we will go straight to David Salcido and the Virtual Plenary Panel Discussion. Before Salcido could take the floor, members of the Assembly had more questions and requests for clarification of the items discussed in the President’s report, and so the discussion revolved for a while around the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is there analogous option to delay for renewals of AS faculty? [Provost memo from March 27 on tenure clock extension has clear instructions how to apply for extension E, it is applicable to all tenured faculty and all schools TS/AS guidance not provided yet, but Provost Office is currently working on solution for AS faculty with research responsibilities]</li> <li>- The access to offices on campus for non-essential staff and the conditions under which access might be granted [access for essential personnel only, letter should be carried at all times, you may ask police for access, but do not keep your hopes high]</li> <li>- Should we ask for evaluations if we are not going to use them? [yes, you should get students evaluation, but you do not have to use them]</li> <li>- Are there any plans at Pitt to delay fall admissions (especially for graduates)? [there is no delay for undergraduates, orientations are virtual, there is no decision for graduates programs yet, SOM cancelled all summer programs; ]</li> <li>- Salcido suggested an idea for the summer graduate research. He said that a lot of data in our labs could be analyzed at home if one has an appropriate software.</li> </ul> <p>From the lengthy discussion, questions and examples provided by faculty it was obvious that there is a general concern that people might be penalized for a situation, which is beyond their control.</p>	
<p><b><u>Reports by and Announcements of the Special and Standing Committees of the Senate</u></b></p> <p><b>Virtual Plenary Panel Discussion</b>  <b>David Salcido, Senate Vice President</b></p> <p>Salcido gave a brief report on Plenary. The Senate Plenary has been cancelled, our keynote speaker could not obviously come, but we will have a virtual panel on mental health this month with the same five panelists. Since we cannot distribute now the 100 copies of a book we purchased for the Plenary, ULS purchased the electronic version of "An Unquiet Mind" by Kay Redfield Jamison with 100 concurrent seats  <a href="http://search.ebscohost.com.pitt.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&amp;AuthType=ip,uid&amp;db=nlebk&amp;AN=721004&amp;scope=site&amp;ebv=EK&amp;ppid=Page-1">http://search.ebscohost.com.pitt.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&amp;AuthType=ip,uid&amp;db=nlebk&amp;AN=721004&amp;scope=site&amp;ebv=EK&amp;ppid=Page-1</a></p> <p>The date of the panel has not been set yet, because the panelists are busy, but it will be done soon.</p>	
<p><b><u>Unfinished Business and/or New Business</u></b></p> <p><b>Center for Teaching and Learning Update</b></p>	<p>Discussion and Vote</p>

Golden gave a rundown of what the Center had to do in order to enable teaching without face-to-face instruction. Remote teaching is temporary. Not all courses have to be high tech. Among available resources is our Instructional Continuity website (teaching.pitt.edu). Contacts for remote teaching identified at each school and center. The Center has a newsletter with updates, 24 virtual workshops, virtual office hours, phone call help and consultations, and extended hours in order to support teaching online at Pitt.

It was possible because we had a week to prepare and our faculty was really great and flexible. Next, we will focus on the support for testing and assessment and preparing for summer teaching (still remote teaching)

After Golden’s presentation, the questions and discussion focused on three issues: LMS, Zoom security, and Sodexo layoffs.

1. LMS (Learning Management System) - the switch to Canvas was delayed, Blackboard is available through summer; options for remote proctoring are available through commercial software, but it raises student’s privacy questions and there are some technology problems, so no, in the short term we will have no University wide solution for proctoring; guidance for any issues with intellectual property rights for faculty putting their materials into LMS (Golden will make sure that the website has the information on the subject)
2. Zoom – to prevent “zombombing” follow the rules provided by CTL (passwords, not sharing ID, etc., using Pitt Zoom not Zoom) online help at <https://www.technology.pitt.edu/content/alert-security-and-data-privacy-considerations-zoom-users>
3. Earlier, *Bratman* had asked if there were any categories of staff who are not being paid (see article on [Sodexo layoffs](#)). This started a discussion in a chat box. He was asked by *Bonneau* to summarize the discussion prompted by his initial question and going on in the chat box simultaneously with the live discussion. The laid off Sodexo workers are part of our community and require our help. Maybe faculty could contribute to some relief fund for them. We could start with general resolution of support while we find out the circumstances. *Bonneau* will check with administration whether Pitt stop paying Sodexo when the facilities were closed or paid them until the end of the contract. What kind of motion would be appropriate?

We, the faculty assembly, urge the administration to ensure that all contract workers continue to be paid throughout the duration of the COVID-19 crisis.

The motion was made and voted on. *Bonneau* will advocate for the issue with Administration.

**Announcements**

Senate Elections started today. Please vote. You can vote until April 16 , 2000

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<p>Historically, we do not meet in June, but considering the current situation, next FA meeting is scheduled for May 6.</p> <p>The next Senate Council meeting will be held on <u>Thursday</u>, April 16 via Zoom</p>	
<p><b><u>Adjournment</u></b> Meeting was adjourned at 4:50 pm</p>	<p>Moved and accepted at 4:50 pm</p>

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: Adams, Almarza, Anderson, Beck, Becker, Berenbrok, Bickford, Bircher, Bonneau, Bove, Bratman, Brodt, Buchanich, Bunger, Chirimuuta, Conley, Cousins, Dahm, Darnell, Denman, De Vallejo, Falcione, Fort, Frieze, Goundappa, Gramm, Haley, Hall, Henker, Jeffrey, Jeong, Jones, Judd, Kanthak, Kaufman, Kaynar, Kiesling, Kiselyov, Klem, Gregg-Byers, Kucan, Labrinidis, Landsittel, Loughlin, Molinaro, Morel, Mostern, Mulvaney, Murphy, Murtazashvili, Nelson, Poljak, Potoski, Rauptis, Roberts, Salcido, Sant, Scott, Smolinski, Spring, Stoner, Swigonova, Taboas, Vento, Weinberg, Wilson, Wood, Yates

Members not attending: Aziz, Bachman, Cassaro, Infanti, Irrgang, Kohanbash, Kory, Kovacs, Long, Martin, McGreevy, Miller, Mulcahy, Munro, Popovich, Triplette

\*Excused attendance: Sukits

Others attending: Bridges, Golden, Gribble, Harding, Harrell, Jones, Kirsch, Pil, Tuttle, Zwick

\*Notified Senate Office