FACULTY ASSEMBLY MEEING
Wednesday, March 6, 2024, 3 p.m.
Hybrid format

1. **Call to Order**

President Robin Kear called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm.

2. **Approval of Faculty Assembly Minutes of February 7, 2024**

On a motion duly made (Stoner) and seconded (Parker) the minutes of the January 10, 2024 Faculty Assembly Meeting were approved with the noted amendment.

3. **Introduction of Items of New Business**

None

4. **Report of the President, Robin Kear**

Hello all and welcome back, I hope you are all doing well and enjoying the spring weather. I hope you enjoy spring break next week.

Provost Announcement

- If you haven't seen the news, I am pleased to congratulate Joe McCarthy on becoming our next Provost. I think he is an excellent choice to be our next Provost and I look forward to our continued partnership.
- I am also happy to drop the 'interim' part of his title.
- It was my pleasure to be part of a great search committee, I learned so much from the other members.

Senate Plenary

- Tomorrow, Thursday March 7th, 2024, in the William Pitt Union Assembly room from 12 noon to 2 pm. Doors open at 12 noon and the program will start at 12:15.
- The topic will be, Bringing Disciplines Together to Solve Big Problems, focused on how this can and does happen here at Pitt and in the Pittsburgh education community.
- Interdisciplinary research and teaching are key to working on society's most thorny issues and to educating our students for a changing and complex future. When we can speak and work across disciplines to find shared goals and understanding, we are working towards the fundamental mission of higher education, to make a positive impact on our students and our communities. Join us for the Senate Plenary to learn how Pitt does interdisciplinary work well, discuss how Pitt can improve, examine why we are poised to make greater strides, and understand how interdisciplinary work benefits our entire academic ecosystem and communities.
- Six great speakers:
    - Melissa Bilec, Engineering and co-director of the Mascaro Center for Innovation
    - Shelome Gooden, Linguistics and Assistant VC for Research in the Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences and Related Fields

- o Nicola Foote, Dean of Honors College and professor in GSPIA
  - o Lisa Parker, public health, Director of the Center for Bioethics & Health Law, and leader of RESI (Research, Ethics, and Society Initiative)
  - o Dave Sanchez, Engineering and Associate Director for the Mascaro Center for Sustainable Innovation
  - o Abdesalam Soudi, Linguistics and leader of the Humanities @ Work project, as well as the Creator of Humanities in Health (HinH)
- Immediately adjoining the Plenary, from 2-3 pm in the same space, we are partnering with the Year of Discourse and Dialogue Research Committee to hold a tabling workshop titled: 'How to Interdisciplinary'. Join us for an interactive workshop to discuss how we can co-create programs and infrastructure to support communication across the disciplines at Pitt. The workshop is meant for researchers currently engaged in interdisciplinary work and for those who seek interdisciplinary teams, but don't yet know where to look. The workshop is meant as a kickoff event for a future working group focused on cultivating opportunities to cross disciplinary silos and to communicate across the disciplines. Faculty, staff, and students are welcome to attend. Thanks to Kris Kanthak for leading this effort.

Senate 2024 Elections
- In late February, the Senate committee for elections met to review the self-nominations and the slates. This is chaired by the past president of the senate.
- Elections will be as follows:
  - o Secretary and Faculty Assembly Members– April 4-19. All faculty will receive the ballot for secretary, and only faculty in those units electing faculty assembly members will receive those.
  - o Senate Committees: April 26-May 8. Elected faculty serving in the Senate receive these ballots.
- The available positions for election this year are:
  - o Officer of the Senate: Secretary (two-year position)
  - o Member of Faculty Assembly (three-year position) for units with a representative whose term is expiring.
  - o Member of a Standing Committee (three-year position) – 3 positions on each committee

Committee Work
- I want to commend our Senate committees and the work that our chairs and members accomplish throughout the year. A few recent highlights out of committees:
  - o While working with EIADAC, Budget Polices voted to change the data reporting from the Provost's Office for faculty salaries by gender equity to a greater frequency, every other year instead of every third year, starting later this Spring. This salary data report will also now include faculty salary equity by race and be intersectional as well. The goal is to better monitor and alleviate differentials.
  - o EIADAC is working with Staff Council and HR to receive the same salary equity data for staff by gender and race on the years in between the faculty data.
  - o Faculty affairs addressed a question around tax exemption and will hear from CFO representatives at a future meeting.

o SCITC and Faculty Affairs will hear from Pitt IT around recent Zoom questions. You may have been approached for feedback on video conferencing software from your department chair or dean. The renewal for this software is approaching and deans will be given a choice of which level of Zoom to support for their schools.

Testing Accommodations Issues
- Discussion of this issue continued in the Senate Educational Policies Committee at their meeting on February 23rd. John Stoner will give us a short update after my report.
- The Teaching Center (Mike Bridges and Erik Arroyo) and Disability Resource Services (Leigh Culley) presented information, data and various short and long term solutions. Some short term solutions include additional space and staffing for the Testing Center in the short term during the busiest times, some automation processes are helping to streamline the process, and some faculty flexibility for text timing on the same day of a test would be helpful, such as before, after and during the regular test time. Long-term solutions include a new permanent space with a larger footprint, some assistance from faculty/departments with the extra time accommodation as is feasible, universal design for classroom renovations and course design, and incentives for re-designing testing/assessment that is not timed.
- I am encouraged by the attention this issue is receiving and I think there will be progress.

General Education Task Force
- The General Education Task Force has been established and includes Senate representation from Senate Educational Policies.
- The Task Force is seeking input as it begins conversations with students, faculty, and staff about re-visioning our general education curriculum. All faculty and staff members are welcome to attend, learn more about this initiative, and provide feedback on your experiences with the general education curriculum at Pitt. The schedule includes both in-person and virtual options.
- They start on March 20th and there are 9 sessions for faculty/staff through April 22nd. Visit https://www.provost.pitt.edu/general-education-reform-task-force/gen-ed-task-force-events their website to register.

University Policy Open for Comment
- There is 1 Policy open for comment.
- Policy FN 29 - Unit Level Payments to Research Participants and Students
  - o available for comment from February 8, 2024 to March 7, 2024
  - o This had a policy charter under a slightly different name 'Using Stored Value Cards and Electronic Payments Policy'
  - o Will be reviewed by the Research Committee

Thank you all for your service and dedication to shared governance.

Any questions or comments on my report?

Good: What is the timeline for the decision on the video conferencing change?

Kear: we do not know yet. I do know that the IT head will be talking to Deans tomorrow about the options for each school. He will answer questions. I don't think it is any time soon. It will be a budgeting decision for each school.

Kear: John Stoner will now present some more information concerning the testing center and student accommodations.

Stoner: EPC had a one hour presentation from Executive Director of UCTL Mike Bridges, Director of Academic Support Services Erik Arroyo, and the Director of DRS, Leigh Culley. They talked about the difficulties in coping with pen and paper timed testing done at the testing center. The demand is increased during finals week. We need to accommodate students who have documented needs as this is federal law. There is an increasing demand for these services, which increases the need for funding for proctors and rooms etc. A few statistics in 2014 the center administered 5776 exams and 1732 were related to student accommodations which amounts to less than 30% for students with accommodation needs. In 2022 7900 of which 7278 were DRS exams, almost 90% of the exams. The other types of exams the testing center would administer have been crowded out by the accommodation needs. They anticipate that needs are going to continue to increase and it is anticipated to double by 2026/2027 to about 14000 exams/year. Some of this is a funding issue.

Pitt is not alone in this, as other universities have similar issues. 46 out the 50 universities that have a similar testing center have seen increases, but only 6 of those see a similar volume as Pitt.
What to do about this? There is a lack of funding and passing the burden on to faculty is not a realistic option, Other solutions to consider are to give fewer timed tests, and UCTL is happy to work with faculty on this. If you need to give timed tests, consider doing this as flexibly as possible concerning the timing for example. They are ready and willing to work with faculty to take pressure off the testing center in the short and medium term.

Kear: Thank you, any questions? We will be following this and we will be keeping your informed on any developments.
We will now move to the discussion of the policy.

5. **Reports by and Announcements of Special and Standing Committees of the Senate**

Assistance Animals, Therapy Animals, and Pets Policy
Professor Bridget Keown, EIADAC Co-Chair

Leigh Culley and Tony Graham attended the EIADAC meeting February 9, 2024, to describe the work and discussions that led to the current Service Animal Policy. From this discussion we came to appreciate the time, effort, sustained discussions and multiple edits and revisions that have contributed to this policy.

We understand that this policy represented several years of work, not only because of the changes necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, but also because the committee came to appreciate and consider the other roles that animals on campus play, including "assistance animals," including service/support animals and animals in training to fulfill service/support roles, and therapy animals, including the support dogs in the Cathedral on Tuesday evenings We appreciated that they invested the time and insight necessary to negotiate the presence and roles of these animals on campus.

We also noted the way that the committee understood the many levels of responsibility and regulation that such a policy requires, from the individual to the institutional, as well as the local to the federal in terms of regulations and requirements. As a result, this policy acknowledges and relies on existence university regulations, ADA regulations, and other institutionalized policies where necessarily, and remains flexible enough to accommodate individual student needs and requests when those regulations do not extend far enough. It also incorporates the community by specifying appropriate behavior around these animals, and the kinds of questions that can be asked about a service animal is a specific place.

In our discussion with Tony and Leigh, we were pleased that they had already addressed our questions, which included limits on the kind of animals that people can bring on campus, and how the issue of allergies should be negotiated (if someone is allergic to the species/breed of animal). In addition to having clear answers for these issues from within the policy, Leigh noted that there is also an FAQ in development, built from the public comments received thus far, and hopefully that will provide high-level answers for broad issues that are coming up more often, including the "what ifs", or how people navigate these policies (like "dueling disabilities"). In addition to our confidence in the policy, this discussion provided confidence to the members of EIADAC that this policy is a sustainable one for the future. Our move to support the service animal policy passed a quorum vote.

Kear: Are there any questions? I am glad to see that issues that you raised were addressed by the committee. It was a long process but it was delayed by the pandemic

There was some discussion of some wording and grammar corrections (suggestions made by Stoner, Tashbook and McCormick) to be made to the document, which will be corrected.

Tashbook: Could you provide more clarification concerning the governance for how complaints will be handled? Maybe you want to keep procedure separate from policy. It would be good if there was statement to say that The DRS on each campus will handle these.
Kear: there is a hyperlink to DRS to access these resources
Graham: The definition describes what DRS is, whereas under governance there is a description of where to go which can appear duplicative.
After some discussion it was suggested that the governance section should state that each university office will be responsible for the governance. The links to individual departments can be found in the contact section.

Wood: is it necessary to specifically mention miniature horses?
Keown: these are mentioned in federal law, which is why they are mentioned.

There was further discussion about how animals would be removed and restored, and it was answered that these details will be found in the procedures. This was considered an acceptable answer to the question.

Kear outlined the requested changes to the document and called for a vote.

Vote:
Yes 33; No 0; Abstain 2.
The policy is approved.

6. Unfinished Business and/or New Business

<u>Pitt Identity and Brand Positioning Project</u>
Rachel Richelieu, Vice Chancellor Communications & Marketing

Kear introduced Rachel Richelieu, the Vice Chancellor of Communications who will talk about the new branding for the University.

Richelieu introduced herself and described that she joined Pitt in May and moved from the DC area in August. She is new to higher ed and her background is in non profit, government, tech, and industry, but her father was a college professor.

She described how she saw a real opportunity to raise the profile of Pitt and to highlight the achievements of the university, its faculty and students. She provided and introduction to the new Pitt identity and brand positioning project. She presented slides to describe the project.
The plan is in support of Chancellor Gabel and is aligned to the strategic plan.
There have been few brand projects at the university – the last one was in 2019-2020. It is important to build on this and work on differentiating Pitt and highlighting the research and achievements happening here
The elements of the plan include positioning and strengthening the brand positioning which means how we talk about ourselves. The stories from different units will be coordinated to create consistent story telling. This is a 12 month integrated marketing plan and will engage members of the university, alumni and members of the local community to create story amplification and connect the University to these constituencies. We have been communicating with school and units to understand their needs and storytelling.

She described the scope of this work that includes: Strategy development; Activation Planning and execution; Brand identity refinements

They conducted a search for an agency that would work on this with Pitt. Two finalists were interviewed by an integrated team from across the University, and the agency chosen is called 160/90 – based on high blood pressure. This agency has a wide portfolio in and out of higher ed and has been the agency of record for UVA for 10 years. The work they have done with UVA exhibits a lot of similarities with what they might do with Pitt. They also do a lot with entertainment, sports and fashion.

The current phase is Discovery during which the agency is given a lot of information about the university. Data sharing started on Feb 5th, including all of the original research. The agency came on campus for Interviews/immersion on Feb 21-23. They have met with many constituents of the university, including the Chancellor, students and they visited several sites such as the Assembly, the CVR. There will also be a quantitative survey of up to 2400 prospective students and parents.

The next stage is refinements and marketing plan and developing the creative aspects of the plan.
The brand launch is planned for mid August to December 2024

At the moment there is a period of stakeholder engagement that includes the Board of Trustees, Faculty Assembly and others. We also have an advisory group that we meet with on a regular basis to provide feedback on the plan.

Two faculty focus groups are planned, this is to hear from faculty about what is strong about Pitt and how we should tell our story: Tuesday March 12, 11-11;30 and Tuesday March 12, 3-3:30pm
We are looking for volunteers, so please consider this we are trying to get 7-8 people in a focus groups. Questions?

Kear: Thank you. We will send out the information to the faculty. Please contact Lori if you are interested.
McCormick: Chancellor Gabel mentioned that we expand global positioning as a part of the strategic plan. How are you thinking about this?
Richelieu: We are looking into this and are engaging with several people to how to connect with different constituencies around the world.
Kear: We are looking forward to the creative storytelling. Will I know it when I see it?
Richelieu: I hope so. That is the goal.

7. Announcements
None

8. Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 pm

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

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

Respectfully submitted,

Penelope (Penny) Morel
Secretary, University Senate

Members attending: Adams, Balaban, Bircher, Bonneau, Bove, Burton, Caldwell, Dallal, Damiani, DiCesaro, Falcione, Ferdinand, Fort, Glynn, Good, Guterman, Hall, Jenkins, Kanthak, Kear, Keown, Kohanbash, Lemery, Maier, Massanelli, Mattern, Mauk, McCormick, Molinaro, Morel, Murtazashvili, Paljug, Parker, Pitetti, Reed, Schuster, Scott, Shephard, Stoner, Tashbook, Wiggins, Wood, Zack

Members not attending: Almarza, Archibald, Bell, Boulder, Cutsumbis, Epitropoulos, Flick, Glass, Heffernan, Holding, Jacobs, Khader, Lewin, Mahboobin, Melnick, Morris, Nguyen, Potoski, Salcido, Schmidt, Shafiq, Skledar, Taboas, Tudorascu, Wert, Williams, Yates

*Excused attendance: Cousins, Dietz, Jones, Kovacs, Songer, Swigonova

Others attending: Culley, Frieze, Graham, Houser, Jones S., Kelley, Richelieu, Rose, SantaCasa, Schackner, Stonesifer, Tuttle, Wells, Wisniewski

*Notified Senate Office