

**Faculty Assembly Meeting Minutes
Via Zoom**

Wednesday, February 16, 2022

1. Call to Order

President Robin Kear called the meeting to order at 3:01 pm.

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

Kear asked for motion to approve the minutes. On a motion duly made and seconded the minutes of the January 19, 2022 Faculty Assembly Meeting were approved as written.

3. Items of New Business.

David Salcido, Co-Chair of PUP will present a request to change the name of the Plant Utilization and Planning (PUP) Committee after the CMRO presentation.

4. Report of the Senate President, Robin Kear (submitted in written form)

As we have many items to discuss, I will keep my report relatively brief today. Antisemitism is real and it hurts people. The officers and I condemn any anti-Semitic comments, analogies, jokes, or actions in our community. These types of comments have no place in an institution of higher education and serve to create an environment that is hostile to learning and harmful to our community. Regardless of intention, jokes cause harm. We are accountable for our words and actions. We live in a time fraught with tension, consequence, and blame. We should take the time to understand antisemitism and reflect on our own possible biases. What is our collective responsibility? What is my responsibility? What is your responsibility? What harm does this do to our goals of an inclusive university, to an inclusive environment for learning? Do our Jewish students feel safe? How many incidents go unmentioned, do our students just absorb the trauma and move on silently, and we never know? I acknowledge the harm incidents like these cause our Jewish students and I support the path they want to take. I stand with and support our Jewish colleagues that have been harmed by overtly anti-Semitic utterances. We cannot look away but must acknowledge, repair, and always strive to do better.

I have been in touch with colleagues from our Dietrich School Jewish Studies Program, who encourage all of us to take seriously our mandate to educate ourselves, and our students, about

the destructive legacies of antisemitism. For those of you who may not feel you have the proper expertise in this area, the Jewish studies program has resources to help you. They can provide grants to faculty who would like to bring a scholar of Jewish studies to their classroom to discuss how your course content relates to antisemitism or Jewish studies more broadly. The program also provides larger grants of up to \$10,000 to any professor who would like to create a course with Jewish studies content, or revamp a course to include more Jewish Studies content. Please reach out to Jewish studies director Rachel Kranson to develop an application, due March 18. <https://www.jewishstudies.pitt.edu/faculty/funding>

In-person Return Updates

- *Please continue to update me on any issues or concerns with the return to in person instruction.*

Dependent Care Ad Hoc Committee

- *The Dependent Care Ad Hoc Committee met last week and has made progress on one issue of concern. At the Committee's request, Tom Hitter in the policy office examined an issue related to policy FN28 and the reimbursement of dependent care in the context of externally funded grants that some graduate students and postdocs receive. The CFOs office has created a blanket exception for these dependent care costs in these specific cases. Information has been sent to grants administrators, workflow has been created, and hopefully this process will be made easier for these cases. The committee is clarifying application of the blanket exception. Amanda Godley in the Provost's Office is working to get the word out to graduate students.*
- *When the full policy review of FN28 (University Travel, Business Entertainment, Honoraria, and Miscellaneous Reimbursable Expenses) is conducted, the section on dependent care reimbursement will be examined and updated. That policy charter is being created now.*
- *The Committee has turned its attention to other questions and continues its work.*

Policy Work

- *Vaccine Requirement Permanent Policy is meeting biweekly.*
- *There are several policies in motion, including new ones that call for faculty involvement from our Senate Committees. Thank you to those who assist with the policy work to represent the interests of faculty.*
- *The Chancellor has approved two University Policies, both in the category of Community Standards.*
 - [*Policy CS 17, Protection of Children from Abuse*](#)
 - [*Policy CS 30, HIPAA*](#)

Spring Plenary

- *Please join us on March 1st for the Senate Plenary taking place as the first portion of the Community Engaged Scholarship Forum, starting at noon. Lori will be sending out a read green.*
- *The Senate Plenary portion will be opened by the Chancellor, a keynote given by Lynette Young Overby from the University of Delaware with a talk titled: “Engaged Scholarship through the arts: A Pathway to Social and Cultural Equity”. Immediately following the keynote and Q&A led by Kris Kanthak, will be an Engaged Scholars Roundtable led by VC Lina Dostilio. Provost Cudd will wrap up the Senate Plenary portion. The Forum will continue with about 20 more programs and posters, including on Environmental Justice and Health Equity.*
- *I hope you will be able to join us, please register through the forum platform for your free ticket and access to the sessions. If you register and log in, you will have access to all the recordings of the programs.*
- *Thank you to the Jamie Ducar in the Office of Community & Governmental Relations, all of the other forum organizers, and Vice President Kanthak who worked with the Community Relations and Research Committees to assist with planning the Spring Plenary.*

There were no questions for the President Kear.

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

A. EIADAC – Holistic Admissions for Graduate Students Professors Ally Bove and Natasha Tokowicz, Co-Chairs

Tokowicz explained the origins of the current document, which is an extension of the work on the use of GRE done earlier. The goal is to provide a user friendly and concise document on holistic admissions to inform our faculty. Each suggestion has also reason and source (scholarly publication) attached to it.

There were no questions or comments.

Kear added that this document was shared with Amanda Godley VP for Graduate Studies.

B. TAFC - Draft Policy on Gifts that Support Projects Professor Carey Balaban, TAFC member

Balaban presented a new policy which complements the Policy AO45 on gift acceptance and naming. It deals with sponsored programs and projects. It provides the guidelines and procedures for the efficient management of such projects supported by gifts.

Questions about the “select” list of private and corporate foundations in the procedure asked by Taboas led to a brief discussion and explanations from Cooper and Crawford. The policy and procedure applies to all donors not only those from the select list, which includes high traffic foundations. Friendly amendment to clarify the language around this issue was suggested.

Paljug asked about whether projects and collaborations with outside businesses (internships) are covered by this policy.

Cooper explained that only gifts, which are considered gifts from the IRS point of view, fall under this policy.

Kear called for a vote with the friendly amendment to add a sentence to the preamble in the procedure section iii that the policy applies to all gifts but there are special considerations given to the entities who have multiples relations with the University.

Vote: Yes – 50, NO – 0, ABSTAIN – 2

Passed.

6. Unfinished Business and /or New Business

A. CMRO Update – Dr. John Williams and Melissa McGivney

Dr. Williams gave a brief overview. We are doing well. Cases are down. Vaccination rates are fantastic at 98%. We have small number of people with exemptions that have to be tested every week. We cannot get rid of the masks yet, because we have to be in compliance with federal guidelines and we have the immunocompromised people among us. Around 1000 vulnerable students (and with staff and faculty this number is much higher). That is a lot of people that need to be protected. But we can see the future without masks, but not yet. Williams thanked faculty and students and said that the students were secret to the University’s success.

McGivney expressed the similar view of faculty, students and staff being in this together as community. She added that according to the CDC guideline fully vaccinated means vaccinated and having booster. We are not there. Boosters are effective and we have access to vaccines on campus. We are preparing for our youngest population to be vaccinated. The University is collecting information about boosters, because this knowledge will inform our decisions and policies. She encouraged everyone to provide this information to the university. It is very easy and quick process.

Reed: Is it anticipated that the booster will be required?

Kear: We are considering this through the permanent vaccine requirement policy. My hope is it

will be in place for the fall term.

Reed: Is it feasible that we will be without masks in the fall?

Williams: It is very likely, though I do not have my crystal ball and I was wrong before. Boosters like vaccinations do not prevent infections, but they do protect against hospitalizations, vaccinated people have milder symptoms and they do shed less virus for a shorter time.

Songer: What are the factors we need to look at (other than counting cases), if we want to move away from transmission while considering our policies (from CMRO update)

Williams: We are moving from pandemic to endemic state, which earlier happened also with influenza. When a new virus appears, it spreads everywhere because people have no immunity to it. However, once some resistance to virus is achieved in any population, even with new variants of the virus, we do not track cases anymore, because of natural or vaccine immunity, severity of the cases is low and mild illnesses are not really disruptive. We have plenty of viruses around us but we do not track all of them. We are heading towards endemic, and though we are not there yet, we can stop counting cases of COVID-19.

Songer: We have more COVID related policies than masking. Are we using this new information to reconsider other policies like card swiping for building access? Is it still necessary to have those other policies in place, including the visitor policy?

Kear: Yes, we want to be out of the business of card swiping for sure.

Bonneau: We know that it is not feasible to maintain access to the buildings this way indefinitely, but no decisions have been made yet. I would guess that we can expect changes before the fall semester.

B. Name change of Plant Utilization and Planning (PUP) – David Salcido, Co-Chair

Salcido introduced the issue on behalf of PUP committee. He said that during the revision of committee's mission, the idea was born to change the name to better accommodate all elements which are in the committee's purview. Among many issues, advising on safety and accessibility on campus, sparked a discussion to adjust the name. There is no Senate "Safety" Committee, and none of current committees has a high-level Public Safety liaison. This represents a blind spot in shared governance, which PUP committee can fix. Therefore, (1) VC for Public Safety is joining PUP as administrative liaison, and (2) we are creating a regular spot in our agenda to discuss Public Safety & Emergency Management issues, (3) our member will be appointed to the University Environmental Health & Safety committee. Finally, we want to change the name to include campus safety. We propose "Campus Utilization, Planning and

Safety (CUPS)” as our new name, which disambiguates the “plant utilization” problem and explicitly addresses safety.

After a short delay caused by technology, the vote was done via poll and by hand raising in the room:

YES – 45, NO- 0, ABSTAIN – 1

Passed.

7. Announcements

Linda Tashbook explained that the BWC tried to arrange coverage of night guards in our dental benefit plan. She asked the members to respond to the survey which was sent this afternoon. The BWC wants to know what interest this issue will gain.

8. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 4: 11 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, Bircher, Bonneau, Bove, Brodt, Buchanich, Bungler, Burton, Collister, Conley, Covington-Ward, Damiani, Darnell, Denman, De Vallejo, Falcione, Fort, Frieze, Glynn, Guterman, Henker, Jeffrey, R. Jones, Judd, Kanthak, Kear, Kiesling, Klem, Kovacs, Kregg-Byers, Maier, Massanelli, McCormick, Melnick, Molinaro, J. Murtazashvili, Newman, Nguyen, Oyler, Pacella-LaBarbara, Paljug, Paterson, Rauktis, Reed, Roberts, Salcido, Schuster, Shafiq, Songer, Stoner, Streeter, Swigonova, Taboas, Tashbook, Tokowicz, Wiggins, Wood, Zack

Members not attending:

Anderson, Archibald, Bench, Bickford, Hall, Jeong, A. Jones, Kiselyov, Kohanbash, Labrinidis, Lewin, Mahboobin, Morel, Mulcahy, I. Murtazashvili, Potoski, Scott, Triplette, Tudorascu, Vento, Yates

*Excused attendance:

Sant, Yearwood

Others attending:

Balaban, Cooper, Crawford, Dressler, Golden, Harrell, Houser, Jones, Manges, McGivney, Rutenbar, SantaCasa, Tenney, Tuttle, Williams, Woodward

*Notified Senate Office