

**Faculty Assembly Meeting Minutes
Via Zoom**

Wednesday, February 10, 2021

1. Call to Order

President Chris Bonneau called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

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

Minutes from the January 13, 2021 meeting were approved as written.

3. Items of New Business

Bircher said that Bylaws Committee would consider change in the officers' term, and Bonneau suggested discussing this during the announcements.

There were no other new business items.

4. Report of the Senate President, Chris Bonneau (submitted in written)

Welcome to the annual Faculty Assembly Valentine's meeting. As you can see, we have a full agenda with several action items. I am not going to take time here to discuss them—I'll leave that to the committee chairs—except to say that I am fully supportive of both the resolution from the Budget Policies Committee and the proposed policy regarding gift naming.

Some quick updates:

- *We have completed the repopulation of campus. In terms of numbers, while our enrollments remain steady, we do have about 450 fewer students using on-campus housing. Some decided to remain home after the fall semester, though that was mitigated by some who were home in the fall but decided to come for the spring. Housing at the regional campuses is also lower than it was in the fall.*
- *On the vaccine front, as of yesterday (<https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/public-health/states-ranked-by-percentage-of-covid-19-vaccines-administered.html>), PA ranked 46th out of 50 in terms of vaccines distributed as a percentage of those received. PA has received 2,292,500 doses and only administered 1,441,358 of them, for a 62.87% distribution/administration ratio. Only RI, KS, AK, and AL have a worse rate. This is shameful. Pitt still has not received any supply of vaccine. Once we do, we will proceed with distribution in line with public health prioritization.*

I'll end here for now since we have a lot to do today. But, I will leave you with a little Valentine's poem:

*Roses Are Red
COVID is Blue
Please mask and Distance
So You Don't Get It Too*

Taboas: Does the administration prefer any vaccine?

Bonneau: Probably not, they are equally effective, so whatever we receive will be good.

De Vallejo: We, in health sciences, have received our vaccines, but it is not very clear who is sending the messages and how the communication flows.

Bonneau: CMRO is in daily contact with UPMC and Allegheny County Health Department.

Loughlin: How are the students vaccinated?

Bonneau: The students who are working in hospitals and clinics are vaccinated from the pool of UPMC vaccines for front line workers meeting the 1A group requirements.

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

A. Budget Policies Committee, Professor Tyler Bickford, Chair

Bickford brought the Proposed FA Resolution on Meeting Salary Targets for Lecturers, Instructors and Assistant Professors. He introduced the Salary Increase Policy (ER 14, formerly 07-09-01), which governs salaries for full-time faculty outside the School of Medicine and establishes specific targets for faculty salaries at the Pittsburgh campus. He explained the oversight role of Budget Committee in monitoring this policy and the work they have done to fulfil that role. This included reviewing an annual peer-group analysis of average faculty salaries at each rank, sampling the annual evaluations received by the Provost Office (the sample lacked unsatisfactory evaluations), and checking whether all units have the procedures for salary appeal process (they do and they are quite uniformed).

While comparing the faculty salaries to those of AAU institutions, it became evident that in the rank of Lecturers, Instructors and Assistant Professors, we fell short of the salary targets set by the policy, which says that “average faculty salaries at the Pittsburgh campus are at or above the median (for each rank) of AAU universities.” In addition, benchmarking of certain groups will be difficult this year due to the changes to faculty titles, replacing Lecturer titles with Teaching Professor titles.

Therefore, the resolution asks the Provost and Chancellor to take action as part of the 2021-22 budget to achieve measurable progress toward compliance with the goals in the Salary Increase Policy, and to continue to benchmark Teaching Professors salaries to those of Lecturers until they meet the target for that peer group.

Tashbook: Who sets targets for faculty librarians, Library Committee or the Provost?

Bickford: The policy just says that there should be a target, up to 2015 librarians were included in the benchmarking report, but they sort of disappeared, so we need to follow up.

Bonneau: It is also important to know that regional campuses have different benchmarking groups, too.

Loughlin: What group research professor and research assistant fall? It seems that Pitt does not have a clear distinction between titles of those in tenure and non-tenure stream.

Bickford: Right now, they are in the same group as corresponding AAU categories of associate professors or assistant professors.

De Vallejo: Policy refers also to the staff. Did you look at staff salaries?

Bickford: No, we did not have the data for staff salaries.

Labrinidis commented on the negative impact on hiring when the assistant professors salaries are behind targets and the importance of timeline in the motion.

Vote: yes - 50, no - 0, abstain - 2

Resolution passed.

B. Gift Acceptance and Naming Policy - Professor Carey Balaban, TAFC

Balaban gave an overview of the Policy for Gift Acceptance and Naming. Any gift will be accepted with affirmation of academic independence. Office of Philanthropic & Alumni Engagement will oversee and administer University's review, acceptance and processing of gifts and naming. Gifts accepted by the University must reflect the University's values, mission, and priorities. Gifts with associated naming are governed by the same policy, but the naming of a building must be approved by the University's Board of Trustees.

Sparked by the questions from **Murtazashvili, Taboas, Loughlin, Mostern, Kovacs and Kregs-Byers**, the short discussion followed. Items discussed:

- Unwanted public scrutiny (**Davitt**: language chosen so the donors understand that we will not accept their reputational risk),
- Definition of value (**Davitt**: we accept only gifts that have already went through internal academic review),
- Faculty involvement in determining whether a gift is in alignment with this policy,
- Possibility of a more formal role than just "advisory."

Faculty was also interested in clarification of differences between gifts, research contracts and charitable donations for research (**Rutenbar**: funding research is governed by different policy) and why grants and contracts are part of gift policy (**Davitt**: can be clarified that we mean charitable funders)

Bonneau: Can committee agree to a friendly amendment to remove grants & contracts from the appendix?

Davitt said that she could make the suggested word changes and bring back this draft policy for vote in March.

6. Unfinished Business and/or New Business

A. Two statements on childcare and the use of OMET from EIADAC and Benefits and Welfare Committees

Berenbrok summarized the childcare issue that was brought to FA attention in January. Subsequently, it was discussed by EIADAC and Benefits & Welfare Committees. The result is the statement urging the University Administration to pursue additional options to support faculty whose childcare options have

been removed or changed due to the pandemics.

In response to the statement, **VC DeJong** talked about the HR work with UPMC and CMU to offer more options to parents. He presented all the resources currently available to them: YMCA & Boys and Girls Club facilities, Proctoring Center at CMU among others. There are also talks about the after school programs for the post pandemics times and possibility of adding to benefits services like those offered by the care.com. HR understands the need, but they are doing a lot to help parents.

Murtazashvili commented on the short-term need and reasons why parents are reluctant to use some of the offered services.

Voting poll was launched and the presented statement was unanimously accepted.

Then, **Berenbrok** introduced the second statement on the use of OMETS, in which both committees urge the Provost to make OMET surveys optional for the duration of pandemics and suggest that Administration offers alternative means of assessing teaching effectiveness.

The ensuing discussion focused on the use of “optional.” We need to be clear that the students have the way to express their opinion and their voice heard. The suggested wording change to “optional for the purpose of evaluating faculty,” as the one better aligned with the initial intent, was supported by many. **Wang** reminded everyone that all schools were asked to come up with alternative ways of evaluating faculty and that work was still going on. **Kovacs** suggested getting this information to faculty so they know what work is being done on how to evaluate them. **Kanthak** and **Taboas** pointed that OMETS were lacking as an evaluation tool during the normal circumstances, and they were not designed for Flex@Pitt model.

Voting poll was launched to support the statement: YES - 34, NO - 3, ABSTAIN - 8

B. Oakland Plan Letter David Salcido, Senate Vice President

Salcido said the Interim Development Letter was prepared because the full Oakland Plan policy is not ready yet. He introduced the main points of the letter, all of which urge that any new developments in Oakland take into account the community goals and values. He asked if he could sign this letter on behalf of the University as its Faculty Representative.

There were no objections to signing this letter.

7. Announcements

Wilson provided updates on the upcoming elections: for officers and FA on April 1-16 we have the following candidates: David Salcido and Robin Kear for president, Jeff Wood for vice president, and

Gosia Fort for secretary. Having choices is important, so it is not too late to put your name on the ballot. Currently, the term is still one year, though Bylaws Committee is considering the change.

The election for committees is scheduled for April 23 to May 5 and we are in early stage for putting the details for this.

Bircher said that Bylaws is considering the change from a one-year term to two-year term for officers. We want to make sure that candidates have enough notice for this possible change. It will be brought to FA on March or April meeting. If approved and changed it will start in July. The advantage of this change is continuity and a learning curve.

DeJong introduced the winner of do-it yourself poem challenge, which started with DeJong's fill in blank limerick – Linda Tashbook and her poem.

8. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 5:08 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, Anderson, Aziz, Beck, Bench, Berenbrok, Bickford, Bircher, Bonneau, Bove, Bratman, Brodt, Buchanich, Bunger, Conley, Darnell, Denman, de Vallejo, Fort, Frieze, Goundappa, Guterman, Henker, Jeffrey, Judd, Kanthak, Kiesling, Kiselyov, Klem, Kovacs, Gregg-Byers, Labrinidis, Landsittel, Loughlin, Maier, Molinaro, Morel, Mostern, Mulvaney, Munro, Murtazashvili, Newman, Oyler, Pacella-LaBarbara, Paljug, Paterson, Poljak, Potoski, Rauktis, Roberts, Salcido, Sant, Schuster, Scott, Spring, Streeter, Swigonova, Taboas, Tashbook, Vento, Wilson, Wood, Yearwood, Zack

Members not attending:

Adams, Allison, Jeong, Jones, Kohanbash, Mulcahy, Nelson, Popovich, Spiess, Stoner, Sukits, Triplette

*Excused attendance:

Cousins, Gramm, Hall, Kucan

Others attending:

Armony, Balaban, Bishal, Christof, Davitt, DeJong, Gabler, Harrell, Jones, Manges, Pil, Rutenbar, SantaCasa, Slevin, Suppok, Tananis, Tenney, Wang, Yates, Zwick

*Notified Senate Office