

**Faculty Assembly Meeting Minutes
Via Zoom**

Wednesday, January 19, 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

Bircher asked for spelling correction. Minutes from the December 1, 2021 meeting were approved with the requested correction.

3. Items of New Business

No items.

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

Welcome to our new year and our new semester. I hope that you had a relaxing winter break. I did take time to relax and disengage my brain from Senate work, although it takes a few days for me to get there. I want to acknowledge those at Pitt who were still working over the break, including those working on Pitt's response to the omicron variant. I know that we are all tired and frustrated but maybe there is reason to hope that our vaccines will continue to work, omicron is showing early signs of receding, COVID-19 will become endemic, and it will no longer be news when someone announces a positive test. I sincerely cannot wait for the day when I do not have to update you on vaccines, masks, and boosters.

In-person Return Updates

- *We are returning to on-campus instruction next Thursday January 27th.*
- *The updated guidance for teaching this Spring from the Provost's office was disseminated near the end of last term and twice this month by the Teaching Center. It is also available on the front page of the Teaching Center website.*
 - *Thanks to Faculty Affairs Committee and the Provost's Office for working on this updated guidance.*
 - *I want to note that it is not required to provide synchronous remote and in-person teaching. Whether or not to record your class (or part of your class) is up to your professional judgement, it is your decision.*
- *Higher quality masks will be available at all concierge desks upon entrance to buildings in the coming days. These include upgraded masks: medically certified surgical masks and N95 masks. Please pick one up while entering the buildings and encourage your students to do the same. The goal is to have as many as are needed.*
 - *CMRO is updating language on mask wearing on the coronavirus website.*
 - *The Healthcare Advisory Group (HCAG) met last week, and they did not recommend a requirement related to having a certain type of mask in the classroom.*

- *Boosters are not required at this time to be on campus.*
 - *The permanent vaccine requirement policy committee will be considering what ‘fully vaccinated’ means and how to handle it.*
 - *While receiving a booster is clearly applicable for some, for many others it is not; there are many individual situations to consider.*
 - *Campus community members may not be eligible yet, a person may have been vaccinated with two doses – had a breakthrough case of COVID – and their doctor recommends waiting for the booster; a person may have had a breakthrough case – received an antibody treatment – and the booster is not yet recommended.*
 - *Pitt is still promoting boosters for those eligible and working on communication strategies. CMRO is creating an FAQ related to boosters for the coronavirus website.*
- *I recommend reading the CMRO updates on Thursdays. There was a statement in last weeks in case you missed it:*
 - *“At this stage in the pandemic, we should begin shifting focus away from case counts as the key measure of how SARS-CoV-2 is affecting regular life.”*
 - *I plan to invite a representative from the CMRO’s office to speak to us next month about this necessary shift in thinking.*

Kear paused for questions.

McCormick asked where the new masks would be available if a building does not have a concierge.

Kear said that she would need to clarify that and then she continued with her report.

Vaccine Requirement Permanent Policy

- *The interim policy for a vaccine requirement has been sent to all Pitt faculty, staff, and students and is in force immediately. The deadline to comply was Dec. 6th. There were minimal numbers of faculty/staff/students who were out of compliance just before the start of the term.*
- *Tom Hitter in the policy office set the charge and committee for the permanent vaccine requirement policy, which has Senate representatives, committee review, and faculty assembly/senate council approval. We met for the first time on Jan. 11th.*
- *Linda Tashbook, chair of Benefits and Welfare, and I are serving on this policy committee and the policy will be reviewed by Benefits and Welfare and Faculty Affairs before coming to Faculty Assembly and Senate Council.*

Other Policy Work

- *Research and TAFC are reviewing the Gifts That Support Projects policy and procedure.*

Shared Governance Reminders

- *We are still in an interim period of uncertainty for some issues of importance for shared governance. The vote to form a union for part of Pitt’s faculty has been affirmed, but formal negotiation work has not yet begun.*
- *We are in the process of learning from other institutions that have both unions and robust shared governance via University Senates. We remain committed to that ideal and we are*

mindful that many of our colleagues on the organizing committee also serve as members of the Faculty Assembly and the University Senate.

- We are confident that the eventual union leadership will share our commitment. We have no reason to believe that the relationship between the Senate and the union will be anything but cooperative.*
- Although it might be murky right now, as the union and the university administration work out the specifics of that relationship, we think open lines of communication will help us all navigate this interim period.*
- This interim period introduces new ways of working for some of our Senate Committees, especially for the Faculty Affairs Committee, whose mission most closely aligns with items that may be collectively bargained.*
- I remind our committee Chairs and Co-Chairs to please have agendas solidified in advance so that the Chancellor appointees know what will be discussed and can be prepared.*
- While discussion and conversation are very productive avenues for solving issues in shared governance, there may be times when the appointed administrators must decline to answer a question or discuss an item. It is possible that the question or item overlaps with topics for collective bargaining. Although rarely used, committees have the option of a closed session for private deliberation.*
- **Until there is more clarity from the administration and the union on any topics that are off-limits,** I think that we should all proceed as usual with the items, issues, and concerns that are most important to us as a shared governance body. If there is an obstacle to an item, I am happy to strategize and clarify.*

Spring Meetings

- We will continue to hold our meetings in a hybrid format for the foreseeable future.*
- As I attend as many committee meetings as I can, I know that our committees are very busy working not only on policies but on many other issues. We will be seeing the fruits of this labor in the coming months.*

Spring Plenary

- Vice President Kanthak continues to work with the Community Relations and Research Committees to plan the Spring Plenary and confirm their keynote speaker. It will be based on community-engaged scholarship and is in tandem with the community-engaged scholarship forum on March 1st. More details will follow soon.*

Any questions or comments on my report?

There were no more questions.

To accommodate the guest schedule, Kear allowed Aurora Sharrard speak first.

5. Unfinished Business and/or New Business **Sustainability at Pitt - Aurora Sharrard, Director of Sustainability**

Sharrard gave a short presentation describing the efforts to achieve sustainability at Pitt, marked by significant events such as opening of Mascaro Center for Sustainable Innovation, gaining badges and

certifications and rankings (most recently 2021 Gold Star by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education), including sustainability as one of the 6 core values in Plan for Pitt, and commitment to be carbon neutral campus by 2037. She said that they were going to share the data with the public through the new Sustainability [dashboard](#). Sharrard explained the office structure and talked about the Mascaro Center, which has many open grants available for faculty and students, including research and global engagement grants, and other grants for students. MSCI launched Sustainability Transcript Distinction and Covestro Circular Economy Program (1st US program for PhDs).

She paused her presentation for questions.

Frieze asked about interaction of the Sustainability Office with Senate Committees.

Sharrard answered that she annually reports at PUP committee and then, she continued with her presentation talking about releasing Pitt Greenhouse Gas Inventory data as part of Pitt Climate Action. She explained that the drop in two recent years was impacted by pandemic and travel.

Taboas asked how they estimate data on commuter and air travel.

Sharrard said that commuter data is estimated but also supported by survey data. The air travel data is real from the University sponsored travel data.

She talked then in more detail about Carbon Neutral by 2037 plan (waiting for BOT approval). Pitt pathway to this neutrality is to take many small steps that together will help us to reach the goal. She concluded by talking about Pitt energy buildings efficiency (you can check each building on campus via dashboard), tracking the energy flows, working on renewables (we have 3 solar installations that we control, the 4th will be in Bradford) and two local partnerships (for low-impact hydropower facility and Gaucho Solar installation near airport). There are many opportunities to get involved to advance these goals together.

Kregg-Byers: Are you considering informing the community about the efforts we are making, acting as a role model, so that the message is: “you see what we are doing, maybe you could do it too”.

Sharrard: We are already answering a lot of questions and helping community (solar installations, pollinator friendly gardens).

Songer via chat: Is there integration with CMU on climate action plan?

Sharrard: They do not have the plan yet, but they are part of the 10 local universities we collaborate with, and we have some good conversations with CMU.

Paterson: Is there any timeline for the fossil fuel divestment that locks together with the carbon neutral plan? Or any parallel plan in order for this to occur as well.

Sharrard: You may remember the work of the socially responsible investment committee in 2019, which led to the exposure of fossil fuel endowment. The office of finance will be putting out first ESG report on endowments. I cannot answer question on that, but once it is out, you should reach out to the office of

finance.

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

A. Draft Policy on Campus Crime Awareness - Professor David Salcido, PUP Co-Chair

Salcido introduced the policy, including the background for the policy which is based in the requirement that University has to comply with federal laws, state and local on reporting about safety threats. The key federal law, “Clery Act” defines reportable crimes and helps the University to shape reporting practices. Reporting is the responsibility of UPPD, CSA (Campus Security Authority) and everyone at Pitt is encouraged to report. The Policy AO 07 governs crime awareness processes at Pitt. A draft has been under review since the fall. PUP committee did not find any issues with the policy and voted to send it to Faculty Assembly. After summarizing the policy, Salcido asked for comments.

Morel: If I see something serious, I call 911. Will it get to the Pitt Police?

Buccigrossi: The 911 call will be directed to the nearest police department.

Songer: How is this policy different from the one before?

Salcido: It has more detailed information about the DNS alerts.

Buccigrossi: We added more details about our processes and a new procedure document.

McCormick: Did the comment about the safety we have recently heard from SGB inform this policy?

Glynn: SGB president is a member of SAAA committee and we were the other group that reviewed this policy, so SGB provided the input and approved the draft policy.

Scott, via chat, wanted to know if it applies to UPMC buildings and hospitals.

Buccigrossi: We are in contact with UPMC, so though we do not have Pitt police in these buildings, we would issue notification if needed. So yes it applies to these buildings.

The vote was via poll. All were in favor. YES – 50, No – 0, ABSTAIN – 0

Policy passed.

7. Announcements

None.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4 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, Archibald, Bircher, Bonneau, Bove, Brodt, Buchanich, Bungler, Burton, Conley, Damiani, Darnell, Denman, Falcione, Fort, Frieze, Glynn, Guterman, Henker, Jeong, R. Jones, Judd, Kanthak, Kear, Kiesling, Kiselyov, Klem, Kregg-Byers, Lewin, Maier, Massanelli, McCormick, Melnick, Molinaro, Morel, Newman, Nguyen, Pacella-LaBarbara, Paljug, Paterson, Rauptis, Reed, Roberts, Salcido, Sant, Schuster, Scott, Shafiq, Songer, Streeter, Swigonova, Taboas, Tashbook, Wiggins, Zack

Members not attending:

Bench, Bickford, Collister, Covington-Ward, Hall, Jeffrey, A. Jones, Kohanbash, Kory, Mahboobin, Mulcahy, I. Murtazashvili, J. Murtazashvili, Oyler, Potoski, Stoner, Tokowicz, Triplette, Tudorascu, Vento, Wood, Yates

*Excused attendance:

De Vallejo, Kovacs, Labrinidis, Yearwood

Others attending:

Buccigrossi, Geib, Godley, Harrell, Houser, Manges, Sharrard, Tananis, Tenney, Troy, Tuttle, Wilson, Woods,

*Notified Senate Office