

Senate Council Meeting Minutes
(Hybrid format)
Thursday, January 27, 2022

I. Call to Order

President Robin Kear called the meeting to order at 3 pm and gave the reminder for the roll to use chat if your name does not appear on screen.

II. Approval of the Minutes of the Past Senate Council Meeting

The minutes from the December 9, 2021 meeting were approved as written.

III. Items of New Business

No items of new business were raised.

IV. Report of the Chancellor, Patrick Gallagher

Chancellor Gallagher opened the first meeting of the year with a warm welcome and observation that the beginning of the semester is once again marked by a new virus variant. Despite that, we want to resume our activities as close to normal as possible. While waiting for Dr. Williams to join the meeting, he commented that though we were not past COVID yet, we hope to establish a new equilibrium of practice that would feel normal, practice that would be refocused from containment and isolation towards health management. He encouraged everyone to read CMRO updates. Then, he let Dr. Williams to deliver the CMRO report.

According to Williams, new cases soar but the situation is different. We have highly vaccinated population on campus and in surrounding community. The new omicron virus is less virulent, we are vaccinated and past the peak. Almost all hospitalizations happen to unvaccinated individuals. The risks of disease or death among students due to mental illness or suicide are much higher than those caused by COVID.

Gallagher added that we will continue to carry on. The call for continued flexibility is being addressed. We understand how important it is. What is different is that the flexibility is being shifted from central, one-fits-all approach to faculty and first line supervisors to adjust that flexibility in a more focused way.

Pitt is offering vaccination clinics and encouraging everyone to get boosters. Boosters are part of immunization. Our requirement is that everyone is vaccinated or has a valid exemption. The number of uncompliant persons is very small, less than 60 on all campuses. Our goal is to make them compliant and not to take a disciplinary action.

Notable highlights include:

- Marshall Scholarship – 2022 winner is Maja Lynn (only 11th Pitt student to receive this scholarship), who will pursue a Master of Arts in Conflict Transformation and Social Justice at Queen's University Belfast
- AAAS class admits four Pitt faculty as fellows: Kay Brummond, Sarah Gaffen, Steven R. Little and Jerry Vockley
- Scott Morgernstern receives Fulbright Specialist Program award

Other news:

- 51st Jazz Seminar and Concert is virtual this year and celebrates Erroll Garner
- Black History Month begins next week

- PittServes rescheduled MLK Day of Service for Saturday January 26
- Pitt Seed Funding Program has been expended (pre award grant and scale grant)
- We have new investment officer – Jeffer Choudhry. This is the person responsible for the investments in the endowments for the university

Kear relayed the question via chat about availability of N95 masks and buildings

Hitter: At the moment 3 places have them today WPU, Commons Room in the Cathedral and Peterson Center and then they will be distributed to buildings with concierge desks.

Sant commented that there is confusion about testing for arriving students that test positive, confusion about Quest processing, isolation and quarantine.

Gallagher said that there was always room for improvement and asked Williams to talk about the current guidelines.

Williams: We hear it too. There are two problems. Guidance changes constantly, we share it with residence halls via all possible channels, but it happens that people sometimes consult not the most recent updated version of the guidance.

Hitter added that Quest processing improved.

There were no more questions for Chancellor Gallagher.

V. Report of Senate President, Robin Kear (submitted in written)

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.

In-person Return Updates

- *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.*
- *I recommend reading the CMRO updates on Thursdays. There was a statement in the last two emails from CMRO 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."*
 - *John Williams from the CMRO office will speak to Faculty Assembly next month about this necessary shift in thinking.*

Vaccine Requirement Permanent Policy

- *The interim policy for a vaccine requirement is in force. 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 have approved the Gifts That Support Projects policy and procedure and it is being set on the Faculty Assembly agenda.*

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.*

Pitt Sustainability

- *Faculty Assembly heard an update on Pitt sustainability efforts from Aurora Sharrard, Pitt's Director of Sustainability. We heard of the many efforts her office is working on and coordinating with, including the work of the Mascaro Center for Sustainable Innovation. We heard an update on Pitt's Climate Action Plan, to be carbon neutral by 2037.*
- *Besides the ongoing work with PUP committee and sustainability, Aurora and I have already communicated on issues that are relevant to other Senate Committees.*

Spring Meetings

- *We will continue to hold our meetings in a hybrid format for the foreseeable future.*
- *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. Also, congratulations to our EIADAC co-chair, Ally Bove, for her Jeopardy appearance.*

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?

No questions.

VI. Reports of Student Members of Senate Council:

A. Student Government Board (SGB), Harshitha Ramanan

Ramanan gave a very brief report. They are transitioning back to being in person with all their activities. They continue to work with Dr. Pickett and SAAA on Lauren's Promise brought up a month ago and on the resources related to student safety. It is also election season for SGB. They have 12 candidates running and they are excited to see what ideas the candidates will bring. To the race. She concluded with announcing the next event - ACC Advocacy Days.

No questions.

B. College of General Studies Student Government (CGSSG), Ryan Yeager

The College of General Studies Student Government (CGSSG) is pleased to update you on some of our plans for the upcoming semester.

I. Looking Ahead

● *Initiatives and Events:*

- *Sexual assault awareness and utilizing the Rave Guardian app*
- *Wellness Yoga Event*
- *Fundraiser for Veterans*

As we start the spring semester, CGSSG is looking to make changes to our constitution and organizational structure as a whole to ensure that future boards are well prepared to build off the progress we have made this year. As public health conditions hopefully improve, we look forward to continuing to offer more programming for CGS students.

No questions.

C. Graduate and Professional Schools Student Government (GPSSG), Morgan Pierce

Pierce delivered a short report: We are also in election season ramping up efforts for our Executive Board elections. We are excited to start events in person (there are plans for coffee hours, self-defense event for International Woman's Month). The two biggest ones will be in April: River's Casino and National Grad Appreciation Week.

No questions.

VII. Report of the President of the Postdoctoral Association, Dave Gau

Gau said that they had a focus group to discuss postdocs concerns. One reoccurring ask is for consistent messaging about services available to them. They continue to work with Provost Godley to centralize all resources for postdocs in one place.

They also hope to have some events in person and plan for research symposium in May and June.

No questions.

VIII. Report of the President of the Staff Council, Angela Coldren (submitted in written)

Good afternoon, President Kear, Chancellor Gallagher, Senate Council officers and members of Senate Council.

*We are accepting applications for the **Staff Council Endowed Book Fund** through February 14, 2022 at 5 p.m. For more information, go to our website, staffcouncil@pitt.edu and click on Awards. We plan to announce the winner(s) of this award at the Staff Council Spring Assembly.*

*Just a reminder that **Pitt Day of Giving** is February 22, 2022. All monies raised through Staff Council will go to our Staff Professional Development Award in honor of Ronald W. Frisch and the Staff Council Endowed Book Fund.*

*The **2022 Staff Council Spring Assembly** is set for March 9, 2022 from 9 a.m. to Noon. The keynote speaker will be Felicia Savage Friedman, founder and CEO of Yoga Roots on Location ([YROL](#)). Felicia's approach is embodied, joy-centered, and takes audience members on a journey into their hearts and minds to explore what actions they can take to create a more just and loving society. Her talks explore what collective liberation could look like and are rooted in unconditional love for humanity. The workshops unpack how we may dismantle racism, patriarchy, and capitalism in a way that centers our histories, our present, and unconditional love. These engagements build capacity for professionals to examine systems of oppression, their roles in them, and how to create change in the systems they interact with. An OEDI Mini Grant was awarded for this event.*

*Our **Operations Committee** is assembling an elections subcommittee to update guidance.*

*The **Staff Life Committee** is preparing for the Spring Safety Assembly.*

Our next (open) general meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 16, 2022, at Noon. This meeting, and future meetings for at least 6-12 months, will be held virtually. If you would like to attend, feel free to reach out to Lola at sc@pitt.edu for a virtual invitation. This concludes our report. Thank you for your attention "bundle up out there"!

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

None

X. Unfinished Business and/or New Business:

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

Salcido introduced the Policy. He said that it passed the review of PUP and SAAA committees, as well as FA. It intends to provide a timely information to keep you safe on campus. The Policy AO 07 replaces the existing, very concise policy, updates the language to conform to the "Clery Act" and elaborates in more details on Pitt processes (alerts, ENS).

There were no questions but one comment from the Chancellor that he will abstain from voting.

The vote was via poll (for those on zoom) and by raising hand (for those in the room). Results: YES - 39.
NO - 0, ABSTAIN – 1

Policy passed.

XI. Announcements

None.

XII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 pm.

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

<https://www.univsenate.pitt.edu/senate-council>

Respectfully submitted,

Małgorzata (Gosia) Fort

Secretary, University Senate

Members attending:

Almarza, Bonner, Brodt, Buchanich, Coldren, Conley, Cudd, Denman, DeJong, De Vallejo, Doty, Fort, Gallagher, Gau, Gregerson, Henker, Jeong, Judd, Kanthak, Kear, Kieselyov, Kiesling, Kleebank, Klem, Labrinidis, Maier, McCormick, Molinaro, Newman, Pacella-LaBarbara, Paljug, Paterson, Pierce, Ramanan, Rauktis, Roberts, Rutenbar, Sant, Sastry, Schuster, Shekhar, Tashbook, Washington, Yeager, Zack

Members not attending:

Bench, Bunger, Cilli, Floyd, Hall, A. Jones, Kesbhat, Khan, Kory, Kovacs, Mulcahy, Murphy, Murtazashvili, Oyler, Potoski, Scott, Taboas, Vento, Wood, Yearwood

*Excused attendance:

Bonneau

Others attending:

Anderson, Ayars, Buccigrossi, Chou, Finder, Harding, Harrell, Hitter, Jones, LaBar, Lalo, Lancaster, McGrane, Moran, Panzella, Pelt, Pickett, Roadman, Salcido, SantaCasa, Staresinic, Tenney, Walker, Washo, Williams

*Notified Senate Office