

**Faculty Assembly Meeting Minutes
Via Zoom**

Wednesday, March 17, 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 February 10, 2021 meeting were approved as written.

3. Items of New Business

No items.

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

A melancholy 1-year anniversary of meeting remotely. We are 6 weeks away from the end of the semester, and an academic year like no other. Some updates:

- *Pitt announced plans for an in-person commencement to be spread out over several days in several different locations. Of course, these plans are tentative and contingent on us continuing to engage in masking, distancing, and hand hygiene. Reports about large student gathering over the past weekend are concerning, and I hope does not jeopardize our chances of in-person commencement. Given everything our academic community has endured over the past 12 months, I am hopeful we can have an in-person commencement to recognize the accomplishments of our students.*
- *There are currently national searches ongoing for the Dean of Students and Vice Chancellor for Human Resources positions. While these may seem to be tangential to our work here, several of our committees work closely on issues related to student life and benefits. Thus, the Senate has made recommendations for individuals to serve on those committees. I want to thank those colleagues who have agreed to serve.*
- *You should have received, or will received shortly, the link to the MyDisclosures portal. Please be sure to submit this; last year we have over 99% compliance, which is outstanding. Failure to disclose funding sources, appointments at other universities, etc. could result in violation of federal law. Please protect yourself and fill out the form accurately and completely.*
- *The Senate Plenary is fast approaching. I will turn it over to David for an update....*

Salcido updated the Assembly on the Senate Plenary “**Anti-Racism and Equity**,” scheduled for April 7, 2021 at noon to 2:30 pm. Program will include 3 panel discussions on building an equitable institution, development of Pitt’s anti-racism course, and Senate Committees findings on racism, equity and justice at Pitt. During the last panel, we will hear from EPC, EIADAC, and SAAA committees. Senate Plenary will be accompanied by an additional panel

discussion on the documentary “Picture a Scientist” organized by the Senate Research Committee on April 8, 2021 at 2 pm.

Next, President Bonneau continued with his report.

- *Senate Elections are also happening soon. We have an excellent group of candidates, so please take the time to learn about them and vote. The University Times will be publishing a Q&A with all the candidates for President and Vice President on March 26. Later today, Lori will be walking through the new elections portal.*
- *The salary benchmarking resolution we approved last meeting met with unanimous approval at Senate Council. The Chancellor and Provost both acknowledged the importance of this issue and committed to working to ensure we are compliant with our own policies. I can say this was a topic discussed at this week’s University Planning & Budgeting Committee meeting, so action is being taken on this. Thanks again to the Senate Planning and Budgeting for making this a priority and drafting the resolution.*
- *The Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board rejected a challenge to the graduate student union election filed by the United Steelworkers. Thus, the choice of the graduate students not to unionize (as indicated by the failure of the election) has been upheld.*
- *The Bylaws Committee will be making a motion to change the bylaws to increase the terms of office for Senate officers for 2 years. The President and Secretary will be elected in odd-numbered years, and the Vice-President is even-numbered years. A person would be permitted to serve no more than two consecutive terms in an office. If approved, this means that the candidates winning the offices of President and Secretary this year would not stand for reelection until 2023, while the candidate who won for Vice President would run again next year. Staggering and lengthening terms this way provides for continuity among the officers and increases the desirability of the positions. I want to thank the Bylaws Committee for working on this and recommending this change.*
- *Many of you have been asking about what the fall semester will look like. Keep your eyes out for an announcement about this in the coming days.*
- *And finally, since it is St. Patrick’s Day, I leave you with a limerick*
It’s been a year since we did quarantine
Staying home, masking up, keeping clean
I can see the end
It’s around the bend
When we all finally get the vaccine

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

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

Balaban run through all the changes and edits made to the policy, which reflected the discussion the Assembly had had on it last month.

Vote: YES - 44, NO – 0, ABSTAIN – 1

Passed.

B. Bylaws and Procedures Committee – Dr. Nicholas Bircher, Chair

Bircher introduced the Resolution to Amend the University Senate Bylaws to alter the terms of office of University Senate Officers. The alteration included a change of term from one year to two-year, change of number of successive terms one can hold the office from three to two times, and the addition of staggering the election, when election of the president and secretary will happen during the odd years, and the vice president in even numbered years.

As the result of discussion following this introduction, the friendly amendment was proposed to elect the President and Vice President together, and stagger the election of the Secretary.

Vote: YES –45, NO- 0, ABSTAIN -2

Passed.

6. Unfinished Business and/or New Business

A. Voting Demonstration – Elections Lori Molinaro, Senate Director

Molinaro introduced the new platform, on which the Senate elections will happen this year – Qualtrics. The casted votes are anonymous and everyone can cast only one vote as it was before. The new feature includes the email with two separate links: one for Senate Officers election and one for Faculty Assembly election. There is also a new “I chose not to vote” button, which will let you vote for the remaining positions and submit the ballot even if you chose not to vote for one of them. She finished her presentation by thanking Linda SantaCasa and Michael Spring for their work.

The results of the election will not be known by the next FA meeting, but they will be available before the next Senate Council meeting.

7. Announcements

Bonneau announced that next Wednesday is the second self-care day. He encouraged everyone to take it.

Adams announced that the virtual Pitt Day at Harrisburg is next Tuesday and encourage everyone to participate and lobby for Pitt.

8. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 3:45 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:

Adams, Almarza, Anderson, Beck, Bench, Bickford, Bircher, Bonneau, Brodt, Bungler, Conley, Darnell, Denman, de Vallejo, Falcione, Fort, Frieze, Goundappa, Guterman, Hall, Henker, Jeong, Judd, Kanthak, Kiesling, Kiselyov, Klem, Gregg-Byers, Labrinidis, Loughlin, Maier, Molinaro, Murtazashvili, Newman, Oylar, Pacella-LaBarbara, Paterson, Rauktis, Salcido, Sant, Schuster, Scott, Spiess, Spring, Streeter, Swigonova, Taboas, Tashbook, Vento, Wilson, Wood, Zack

Members not attending:

Allison, Aziz, Bratman, Buchanich, Gramm, Jeffrey, Jones, Kohanbash, Kory, Kovacs, Morel, Mostern, Munro, Nelson, Paljug, Poljak, Popovich, Potoski, Roberts, Stoner, Sukits, Triplette, Yearwood

*Excused attendance:

Berenbrok, Bove, Cousins, Kucan, Mulvaney

Others attending:

Balaban, Christof, Davitt, Decima, Do, Gabler, Harrell, Hitter, Holland, Jones, Manges, Rutenbar, SantaCasa, Suppok, Tenney, Tuttle, Wallace, Wang, Zwick

*Notified Senate Office