

**Faculty Assembly Meeting Minutes**  
**Via Zoom**  
**Wednesday, May 12, 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 April 14, 2021 meeting were approved as written.

**3. Items of New Business**

No items.

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

*Well, we have reached the end of another academic year as well as the end of my tenure. As of July 1, I will transition to Immediate Past President and Frank will transition to Past Immediate Past President. Our new President will be a familiar face to many of you, Robin Kear. Gosia Fort will continue as Secretary. And our new Vice President will be....Kristin Kanthak. Prior to be notified, Kanthak went for a walk with her dog and was struck in a crosswalk by a car who ran a stop sign. Seriously. Both Kanthak and the dog are fine, though she will have to undergo some intensive physical therapy.*

*If you read the Chancellor's interview in the University Times, he said, "it's not obvious we have support for our appropriation" from the state legislature. Since the state-related schools are "nonpreferred" appropriations, they require approval by 2/3 of each chamber. This is definitely something we need to keep an eye on, because it could have devastating and far-ranging effects on our institution. I am hopeful that we remain funded at the current level.*

*Today we will be discussing resolutions on from the Budget Policies Committee as well as a COVID vaccination requirement before returning to campus. Both resolutions were sent around with the meeting materials. On the vaccination resolution, I have done some research since our last meeting. Before turning to the business at hand today, since this is my last report to this body, I want to take a stroll down memory lane and reflect a bit on the past 3 years. As I went through my previous reports in preparation for this, I was struck at how much we were able to get done together in advancing the interests of faculty at the University. Of course, a list doesn't do justice to the amount of time and effort many of you put in to achieving these things. So, let's look at back on what we've done, as well as some things that will be on the forefront over the upcoming years. These are [abbreviated from the slides]: new Provost, Canvas master plan, Pitt Success Program, extension of a tenure clock in SOM, Title IX stats more public, appointment stream faculty (ASF), institutionalized senate officers with compensation, COI portal and policy, promise of Pitt carbon neutral by 2037, Provost Committee on Tenure and Promotion, closing for COVID-19 and reopening, Title IX rules change, new guideline for review of faculty, new SVC for Health Sciences, gift and renaming policy, IP policy, Plan for Pitt, antiracism class and resolution, no layoffs, budget ReSTART, and some bylaws modifications.*

*Finally, I want to thank all of you for your time and dedication to the faculty over the past 3 years. I particularly want to thank outgoing VP David Salcido for his thoughtfulness, insight, and partnership*

*over the past 2 years and Frank Wilson for his mentorship. David, Frank, Lori, and Gosia indulged my crazy ideas, 3am emails, and the RARE expletive-laden phone call. It's been fun.*

## **5. Unfinished Business and /or New Business**

### **a. Vaccination Discussion**

**Geovette Washington, Senior Vice Chancellor and Chief Legal Officer and Dr. John V. Williams, Director of the CMRO**

The new draft of Vaccination Resolution was distributed before the meeting. The discussion was moved up on the agenda to accommodate the guests' schedules. President Bonneau asked Dr. Williams for comments. Dr. Williams talked about the herd immunity, which would be achieved if enough people were vaccinated and about the disruptions brought by not being vaccinated. Vaccination is important because it brings us closer to normal (there is no need to isolate or quarantine for vaccinated people). People with weak immune systems do not respond well to vaccine, but they produce antibodies. The least we can do for them is to get vaccinated. He did not want to speak for political issues. He said that from the medical point of view we needed to be vaccinated.

SVC Washington spoke to the difficulties in mandating the vaccination. Everybody knows that the more people we vaccinate, the better. Educating people about it is better than mandating it. Even the institutions who already require vaccination have different approaches: some required only students or just the students in dorms to get vaccines but not faculty or staff. Mandating, in practical terms, means that someone unvaccinated cannot be on campus. This approach worked during the last year with the Flex@Pitt, but will it work for normal year? It is possible to implement by creating different rules for different groups. However, having two sets of rules is also problematic. Issues to consider: who will enforce and how, who will know the vaccination status (access to this information is a privacy issue), who will collect and manage the nondisclosure information.

The guests' comments were followed by questions:

De Vallejo: Vaccination is free, but people report that they are asked for insurance info. Is there a clinic at Pitt where people can be vaccinated without any questions?

Williams: Yes. The clinics from Peterson moved to Nordenberg Hall. Everybody from Pitt is invited to go there. They also accept walk-ins if they have open slots or vaccines. Vaccines are free. Nobody should pay for them.

Washington: People should skip the insurance info on the signup sheets and not pay for vaccinations.

Tashbook: Are there any incentives for vaccines?

Washington: We are working with UPMC on what they could be (cash incentives, gift card

Collister [in chat]: What about opportunities on the regional campuses? Is Pitt having clinics on the Bradford, Johnstown, and Greensburg campuses as well?

Williams: Yes. We sent several surveys and continually collect this info, but we know that there are still unvaccinated people at Pitt.

Mostern: International students may not be able to get vaccine or get a different vaccine, which is not accepted here.

Williams: CDC works on providing the info on which vaccine has adequate protection and is acceptable.

Bratman: Can the University legally ask if people are vaccinated?

Washington: Yes, we can ask, but the problem is what we can do if people do not provide this information.

Williams: If you are vaccinated you do not have to quarantine even if you are exposed to COVID

Washington: We collect this info for students

Bratman: What needs to happen so we can teach without masks?

Washington: CDC guidelines need to change, they need to lift the requirement, but we want to have open and safe campus.

Kregg-Byers: Can I ask for proof of vaccination to assure the clinical setting that people are legit to work there?

Washington: Let's talk off line so I can correctly understand the facts.

Denman: If there is no Flex@Pitt, how we will balance faculty desire to be safe and the preferences of other people?

Washington: We are still working on this issue. Without Flex@Pitt, we do not have the same flexibility. One option is not let unvaccinated people into setting, but for some people it could endanger their jobs or have two sets of rules.

Labrinidis: Easy solution – vaccinate yourself to be safe, but what if faculty is immuno-compromised and vaccine is not the best option for them?

Washington: For people with medical conditions, ADA rules can be utilized.

Denman: We enroll students, as it would be a full normal class in the fall. What will happen if we have to have mitigation in place? The room assignments might not work.

McCarthy: We have plan B for when we have to follow a different distancing requirements (not with full capacity).

Bonneau suggested voting for the resolution. Bickford called the motion and De Vallejo seconded it.

Taboas suggested including a phrase "FDA fully approved," but since it is not a legal requirement and other people (Bickford, Bratman) stressed importance of this resolution aiming at protecting all Pitt community, the vote was for the resolution as it is.

Vote: YES – 45, NO – 3, ABSTAIN – 2 PASSED

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

### **A. Budget Policies Committee – Professor Tyler Bickford, Chair**

Bickford said that the BPC already discussed and passed the resolution on the agenda. *Resolution on strengthening shared governance as part of the University of Pittsburgh's budget model revision* has been distributed ahead of today's meeting. It focuses on not forming new bodies but used the existing structures of shared governance for support and tweaking it so it is robust enough to handle RCM model on unit level.

He asked Stephany to comment on what Staff Council did in terms of passing similar resolution calling for more staff involvement in the process.

Labrinidis: I am in support. Can you clarify distinction between costs center and unit level BPC in this model?

Bickford: Cost centers do not generate revenue.

Labrinidis: Are we talking about units at the school level or department level.

Bickford: Huron informed us that new model extends only to school level not department level.

Bircher: Historically SOM had BPC which has not been active since 1998, so this resolution is an opportunity to revive it.

Vote: YES – 48, NO – 0, ABSTAIN –1 PASSED

## **B. Education Policies Committee - Professors Bonnie Falcione & John Stoner, EPC Co-Chairs**

Stoner introduced two newly revised policies: Provost Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Programs (PACUP) and University Council on Graduate Studies (UCGS) Policies. They were brought up-to-day and in more alignment with one each other. Falcione talked about changes that happened after the public review period.

Bircher: Can you explain the rational of making them closed meetings?

Stoner: It was not a change in how this committee functioned, so we did not question it.

McCarthy explained (and gave example from the past) that since the committee has only an advisory role, the advice given to the Provost should not be public, so he/she can consider the advice without any pressures.

Godley, McCarthy and Bickford discussed briefly the meaning of committee advisory role.

Then, FA voted in sequence

Vote for UCGS policy: YES – 34, NO – 3, ABSTAIN – 6

Vote for PACUP policy: YES – 33, NO – 4, ABSTAIN – 4

Both PASSED.

## **7. Announcements**

Bonneau announced that Penn State had just passed the similar Vaccine Resolution.

Munro suggested keeping FA meetings online next year, too.

De Vallejo suggested that future Exec. Officers initiate revising the grievance policy. There is a need to align it with AAUP guidelines.

## 8. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 4: 43 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:

Allison, Anderson, Aziz, Bench, Berenbrok, Bickford, Bircher, Bonneau, Bove, Bratman, Brodt, Buchanich, Bunger, Cousins, Denman, de Vallejo, Falcione, Fort, Frieze, Goundappa, Gramm, Guterman, Jeong, Judd, Kiesling, Kiselyov, Klem, Kohanbash, Kregg-Byers, Kucan, Labrinidis, Maier, Molinaro, Morel, Mostern, Mulvaney, Munro, Murtazashvili, Nelson, Newman, Pacella-LaBarbara, Paljug, Paterson, Poljak, Rauktis, Roberts, Salcido, Sant, Schuster, Scott, Spiess, Spring, Stoner, Streeter, Swigonova, Taboas, Tashbook, Wilson, Wood, Zack

Members not attending:

Adams, Almarza, Beck, Hall, Henker, Jeffrey, Jones, Kanthak, Kory, Loughlin, Mulcahy, Oyler, Popovich, Potoski, Sukits, Triplette, Vento, Yearwood

\*Excused attendance:

Conley, Darnell, Kovacs

Others attending:

Aiyangar, Collister, Epstein, Godley, Harrell, Hitter, Houser, Jones, Kear, Manges, McCarthy, Melnick, Pil, SantaCasa, Stephany, Suppok, Tenney, Wallace, Wang, Washington, Watt, Williams, Yates, Zwick

\*Notified Senate Office